SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

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COMPLETE WORKS
OF
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

VOLUME TEN

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ABOUT THE COMPLETE WORKS
TENTH VOLUME

Now we offer to the reading public the tenth volume of the COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA, published on the occasion of the Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration, 1966-67. This volume contains "Leaves from My Diary"—the day to day account from August 6th, 1897 to May 3rd, 1899, "Epistles" or the letters from Swamiji Maharaj to his spiritual brothers and disciples and to Holy Mother, "The Hindu Preacher", the article published in the *Brahmavadin* (Madras) on the 23rd November, 1895, "Goddess Durga", "The Divine Energy", "Notes on Symbols", "Two Religious Poets", "Questions and Answers", "The Fulfilment of All Desires", "Hindu Philosophy in India", published in Contemporary Indian Philosophy, "Thoughts on Yoga, Upanishad and Gita", the English translation of the Bengali Book, "Tirtharenu" and "My Life-Story" (an Autobiograph), i.e., the English translation of the Bengali Book, "Amar Jivankatha", written by the Swami himself.

It is to note that all the lectures contained in the tenth volume, have been critically edited and prefaces have been added in respective books. The Bengali book, "Tirtharenu" (or the Class-lectures of Swami Abhedananda) has been translated into English by Swami Prajnanananda, "The Goddess Durga", the Bengali preface to "Sri Durga" (Bengali book), has been translated into English by Prof. K. B. Kundu, and the Bengali book "Amār Jivankathā", by Sri Jasoda Kanta Roy, M.Sc., I.A.S.

Now, we express our sense of gratitude to Sri Suresh Chandra Choudhury, Sri Ajit Ghosh, Sri Sunil Kumar Dey, Swami Prasantananda, Sri Ashutosh Ghosh, Sri Debasish Hore and Sri Hem Chandra Ghosh for helping us in proof-readings and in many other matters. We also owe our sense of gratitude to the Government of West Bengal for giving us financial help partly to meet our expenses for printing these precious Centenary Volumes. We also express our thanks to Messrs. Sri Gouranga Press Private Ltd. for their neat printing

of the volumes and also express our thanks to Messrs. Blue Print for printing of the Jackets of the volumes of the Complete Works.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA,
General Secretary,
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Dated 15th July, 1970.

PREFACE

"LEAVES FROM MY DIARY" is an illuminating record of the activities and achievements of Swami Abhedananda in America and Europe in the propagation of Truth as embodied in the *Upanishads* and in the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna.

Born at Ahiritola in the northern part of Calcutta, on 2nd of October, 1866, Kali Prasad as the Swami was then called, received the rudiments of education at a school in the neighbourhood, known as Jadu Pandit's School. Subsequently he joined the Oriental Seminary, which towards the middle of the nineteenth century, was a nursery of great men and Rasik Lal Chandra, the father of Kali Prasad, who was a veteran teacher of English in that Institution, was held in high esteem for his ripe scholarship, his lofty character, and above all, for his magnetic personality. The enthusiastic teacher was never weary of sowing seeds of future greatness in the minds of his pupils among whom may be mentioned the names of Krishna Das Pal, Girish Chandra Ghose, Amrita Lal Bose. Young Kali Prasad inherited in an ample measure his father's insatiable thirst for knowledge, deep devotion to truth, resolute will-to-follow the right in scorn of consequence. To that high-souled lady, Nayantara Devi, his mother, who was rich in the abundance of her faith in the goodness of God he owes his vision beyond the world of something unworldly, his longing for the Great Unknown, behind the mysterious veil of phenomena—the Great Unknown which is at the same time the most assuredly known in one's own self-consciousness.

As an earnest student, who delighted in the poetry of Kalidas, Bhababhuti, Banabhatta, and argued about the inspiring philosophy of Hume, Mill, Spencer, Kali Prasad was looked upon as a prodigy. He passed the Entrance Examination in the University of Calcutta held in 1882. But great things were predicted of him. The prophecy has come true, but not in the sense in which it was then interpreted. The path of glory that ends in death, he has not chosen to tread. He has sought immortal life in the glorious company of Sri Ramakrishna.

The crisis came in 1883. Drawn into the magnetic influ-

ence of Sri Ramakrishna he saw life in a new light,—life as realization and service,—life as the fulfilment of the law that elevates the individual to the Universal. Swami Abhedananda was in intimate relationship of his Master and was duly initiated into the mysteries of *sadhana* of Yoga. With Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda, and others he belonged to the innermost circle of the blessed eleven round the Prophet. In 1886, the world-seer cast off his coarse bodily garment and the young Sannyasin Abhedananda set out on his extensive travels in India. In 1896, Swami Vivekananda needed his help in London and Swami Abhedananda threw himself heart and soul into the work of preaching, to the people of the West, Vedanta as represented and realized in the luminous life of his Divine Master, Sri Ramakrishna. He gathered round him a whole host of admirers and men like Max Müller, Paul Deussen, who marvelled at the depth of his learning, the wide catholicity of his mind, and the purity of his soul. The return of Swami Vivekananda to India, in 1897, was a source of great disappointment to his numerous friends and disciples in America. At the earnest solicitation of Miss Philips, the secretary of the New York Vedanta Society and at the request of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda proceeded to New York in 1897 and became the spiritual head of the Institution. As a devout religious teacher, as a powerful preacher who carried conviction into the hearts of the people, and as a saintly man, the name of Swami Abhedananda soon spread far and wide into the homes of the people of America—the United States, Canada, Alaska, Mexico, Brazil, the Argentine Republic.

"LEAVES FROM MY DIARY" will thus prove to be of perennial interest to those who love and value the civilization and culture of India. It will also bring to view many a sealed page in the history of the Ramakrishna Movement. It will afford much food for serious thought to the present generation of men and women in India, who are bewitched by the glamour of the West. True the winds have shifted, the tides have ebbed and flowed, and true the boat swings, but let the anchor hold.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

LEAVES FROM MY DIARY

RECORD I

On Friday, August 6th, 1897 A.D., at 3-30 P.M. after sailing from Southampton by S.S. St. Paul of the American Line, I landed at the port of New York, the commercial capital of the United States of America. I had with me a box of Sanskrit books on the Vedas, Upanishads and Six Systems of Hindu Philosophy, which I brought from India at the request of Swami Vivekananda. At that time Dingley Bill on tariff (prohibitive Customs duty) on all foreign goods was passed in U.S.A. By this bill every foreigner landing at any of the American ports was obliged to pay Customs duty as high as one half of the value of foreign goods as appraised by the American Custom officers of the ports. I was in a great fix as I was alone and no one was at the port to receive me, because the steamer arrived at the port before the scheduled time. The Customs officers demanded exhorbitant duty on those Sanskrit books which I had no money with me to pay. I explained to those officers that the Sanskrit books were not for sale, but they were books for reference and for my own personal use. Therefore they ought not to charge any duty on those Sanskrit books. The Customs officers did not konw the Sanskrit language and therefore could not read any title of the books. At last after long consideration they decided to let me go free of all Customs duty for those books. My anxiety was removed by this act of mercy as I was penniless when I landed at the dock.

All the passengers gradually went away. but I was left alone waiting to meet somebody who might come there to receive and welcome me. I waited there for sometime and seeing that nobody came for me I decided to take a Hansom Cab with my luggage and asked the driver to drive to Miss Mary Phillips' house at 19 West 31st Street which address fortunately I had with me. Miss Phillips was a student of Swami Vivekananda who requested her to act as the Secretary of the infant Vedanta Society of New York which was started by him at the request of some of his students there. I drove

up to her home alone in that cab and rang the front door Electric Bell at 19 West 31st Street. A maid-servant answered the Bell and opened the door. I asked her: "Is Miss Phillips in?" She answered, "Yes". I handed my visiting card to her and asked her to give it to Miss Phillips. I waited inside the door while the maid-servant went in. Miss Phillips hurried down from upstairs and was very much surprised to see me alone at the door. She asked, "Why are you alone? Where are Mr. Van Haagen and others who went to meet you at the dock? Did you not meet them?"

"No, I did not meet anybody although I waited at the dock for a long time after all the passengers of the steamer had gone away. I was left alone and finding no other alternative, I hired a Cab and asked the driver to drive up to your address which I fortunately had with me." Hearing this Miss Phillips admired my courage and presence of mind and exclaimed: "You are a perfect Yankee"[1] i.e. an American in the true sense of the word. Miss Phillips then asked me to come upstairs with her and told her servants to bring up my luggage. I went up to the fifth floor of the house with Miss Phillips who showed me a small room which was arranged for my stay.

After some time Mr. Van Haagen and others returned from the dock in despair and said to Miss Phillips that they missed the Swami and could not tell what became of him. Miss Phillips laughingly replied that Swamijee was safe in his room on the fifth floor. At this good news there was a relief in the minds of those who went to the dock to meet me. Mr. Van Haagen was a Dutchman of Holland. He met Swami Vivekananda, heard his lectures, attended his Yoga classes and became interested in the teachings of Vedanta and Raja Yoga. He called himself a Brahmachari disciple of Swami Vivekananda. He was about twenty-five and was not married. He was so pleased to see me that he became my companion and a guide. He used to take me round and showed me all places of interest in New York City.

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[1] Yankee—The American Red Indians could not pronounce Englishman. So they used the word Yankee instead. It was in later days applied solely to the American White Settlers.

Miss Phillips was a good old unmarried lady. She had a boarding-house where a number of good people lived as paying guests. After hearing Swami Vivekananda and meeting him she became a great admirer of him. Swami Vivekananda nominally formed a Vedanta Society with Miss Phillips as its Secretary and Mr. Van Haagen, Miss Waldo and Mr. and Mrs. Goodyear as its members.

In the evening, Mr. Van Haagen took me out for a walk in the main Streets of New York City. I was surprised to see the beautiful tall buildings and clean Street and Avenues running in straight lines with Cross Streets named after the numericals like 1st Ave., 2nd Ave., etc. and 1st Street, 2nd Street etc. at right angles to the Avenues. The city was planned in an entirely different way from the city of London. The Avenues ran from north to south and Cross Streets ran from east to west with a Broadway crossing diagonally all the Avenues and streets of the city. On both sides of the Broadway and main Avenues there were wide footpaths and the ground-floor rooms had shops of all kinds, stores and restaurants and bars. If all the liquor-shops of the city were placed side by side, they would have covered 14 miles in length. There were many big hotels scattered in all parts of the city. There were tall sky-scrapers, the highest one has 56 stories. It is known as "Woolworth Building".

As we were walking along Broadway, we saw a man on the footpath with a big telescope with six inch lens fixed on the planet Saturn. He was asking the passers-by to see through his telescope the planet with its luminous rings and eleven satellites or moons round it. This was the first time I saw the Saturn through a large telescope. I was struck with wonder at the sight of the planet with eleven moons round it as well as with a luminous ring. I was also deeply impressed with the method of educating the people of the street by giving practical demonstration of the truths of the science of astronomy.

Next morning I went with Mr. Van Haagen to the Central Park of the city where there was a zoological garden. For the first time I saw the white majestic Polar Bears brought from the Arctic Zone.

New York is the commercial capital of the United States

and the principal seaport of America. It is situated on the Manhatten Island surrounded on two sides north and west by the Atlantic Ocean, on the east by the Hudson river and on the south by a branch of the Hudson. The city is five miles in length and two miles wide. Along the Hudson river on the east, there is a broad road named "Riverside Drive" where hundreds of men and women used to take a drive in the afternoon and evening, get fresh air and enjoy the beautiful scenery of the river as well as of the surrounding landscape.

Next day Mr. Van Haagen took me for a walk on this "Riverside Drive" and showed me the most imposing tomb of General Grant who fought battles against the British in the American struggle for independence.

From there we took the Ferry Boat and crossed the Hudson river and went to the town of New Ark in the State of New Jersey and enjoyed the trip as well as the new scenery in a new country. Thus I took rest and spent every day in sight-seeing and gaining new experiences.

On the 12th August 1897, I went with Mr. Van Haagen to the Acquarium where I saw most wonderful sea fishes and animals kept alive in glass tanks with great care.

On the following evening I went to the Savoy Theatre to see the newly invented Electroscope and Phonograph. I also saw through the big telescope the full moon as a globe brought so close to our eyes that I could see the mountains and valleys of the moon in minute details. The astronomer had a chart of the moon from which he told the different names of valleys and mountains of this satellite of our earth.

On August 14th I called on Mr. Leggett and Miss MacLeod the two great admirers and friends of Swami Vivekananda.

On August 19th I went to see the Produce Exchange and the Stock Exchange where I saw crowds of men betting and gambling to get rich quick.

On August 21st I went to see the Brooklyn Suspension Bridge between New York and Brooklyn hanging on two pillars, 1595 ft. long×900 ft. on each side and 135 ft. above the surface of the water.

On August 22nd Mr. Van Haagen took me to Glen Island by a steamer from New York. It took nearly two hours to reach there. It is a small island with Acquarium, Mena-

gerie, Museum, flower garden, Park, etc. It belongs to a wealthy American Mr. Starin by name. On Sundays and holidays hundreds of people go to see this beautiful place.

On August 25th Miss Phillips invited her friends both in the afternoon and evening to meet me and arranged a grand reception for me in her drawing-room. She introduced me to her friends and I gave an informal talk about my works in London where I stayed for one year and took charge of the classes which were started by Swami Vivekananda and gave public lectures in different places. In that meeting were present all the students, friends, and disciples of Swami Vivekananda. They were delighted to welcome me to New York and were pleased to have me in their midst as an accredited teacher of Vedanta and a spiritual brother (*guru bhai*) of Swami Vivekananda. They admired my simple manners, good voice, faith in God, childlike purity of heart and love for truth. Here I met Miss Waldo who was named Yatimata by Swami Vivekananda, Mr. and Mrs. Goodyear who were students of Swami Vivekananda and others. All of them liked my lucid explanation on various subjects connected with Raja Yoga and Vedanta philosophy.

On my arrival at New York I wrote a letter to Swami Vivekananda in which I requested him to write to his American friends to come forward and help me in my new field of work. In reply Swami Vivekananda wrote to me from Calcutta that I must not depend on his friends, that I should get my new people to help me and that I should stand on my own feet and struggle. I was very much surprised at this advice, but instead of being discouraged I was inspired with grim determination to depend entirely upon the will of our Lord and to go on working with the resolute heart of a brave soldier neither thinking of the morrow nor of the results of my work. I remembered the saying of Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavat Gita*: "To work thou hast the right and not to the fruits thereof", and resolved that I shall prove by my works that I am a true Karmayogi and a real Sannyasin.

Next morning Mr. Van Haagen and I left New York by train for Philadelphia, a large city and capital of the State of Pensylvania. There I stopped with Mr. Van Haagen in a small house where his relatives were living.

Philadelphia is a large city beautifully situated on the coast of the Atlantic Ocean. In the heart of the city there is a park in which there is a Tower 300 ft. high. I walked up to it and enjoyed the grand view of the Atlantic Ocean as well as of the surrounding country. Then went to the City Hall, and returned to our room where I stayed one night.

I came to Philadelphia on my way to pay a visit to the French Countess Dademar who was a fellow-passenger on the S.S. St. Paul by which I had sailed from England for New York. She became deeply interested in my mission and invited me to meet her husband the French Count at Fredericksberg in Virginia. She was an American lady but she married this French Count. I accepted her kind invitation and started from New York with the permission of Miss Phillips who arranged for my journey via Philadelphia.

On Friday, August 26th, 1897, I left Philadelphia at 7-20 A.M. by train and arrived at Fredericksberg in the State of Virginia at about 10 A.M. The son of the Count Dademar met me at the station and we had luncheon together in a restaurant and then we drove in a buggy to Moss Neck in Carolina County in Virginia, U.S.A., where the Count and the Countess Dademar gave me a most cordial reception in their home. It was a lovely quiet place with beautiful surroundings. They had Negro servants whose forefathers were slaves in Cotton-plantation until they were emancipated by President Abraham Lincoln. Now the Negroes are free people and perform all the works of menial servants like washing clothes and dishes, sweeping and other works of a household of the White Americans. These Negro servants are mostly obedient and faithful to their White Masters.

I stayed with this hospitable Count for five days and took a quiet rest in their peaceful home, most of the time talking about Indian culture and Hindu philosophy and disseminating the high ideals of the universal religion of Vedanta. The Count and the Countess became more and more interested in Vedanta and expressed their desire to help me in my new mission in New York and America.

On September 2nd, 1897, I left them and drove from Moss Neck to Fredericksberg in their buggy and took the train for Washington D.C., the capital of the United States where the

President of U.S.A. lives in the White House. I stopped at La Fetra's Hotel in the corner of 11th Street and G. Street. Here the Cross Streets are named after the English alphabets. I visited the capitol, the House of Representative Senators and the newly built Congressional Library. I left Washington by train at 6-50 P.M. and arrived at New York at 1-15 A.M.

On Sunday, September 5th, 1897, some of our friends of New York took me to Coney Island, Manhattan Beach and Brighton Beach on the Atlantic coast. These are the places of amusement where most people go on Sundays and holidays to bathe in the Atlantic Ocean and spend the day with amusements of all kinds like Merry-go-round, shooting boat,[2] various shows of a circus. On a warm day when the temperature goes up to 104 degrees, the city people frequent these places to get cool ocean breeze.

Miss S. E. Waldo (Yatimata), a lady disciple of Swami Vivekananda and a great admirer of Vedanta philosophy came to see me in New York and wished to take me to some of her friends who met Swami Vivekananda in New York and attended his classes. They lived in New Paltz.

On September 16th at the earnest request of Mr. Jackson, Miss Waldo and I started from New York by a boat on the Hudson river and arrived at Poughkipsi and thence by Electric Tramway to New Paltz. There we were cordially received by Mrs. Arthur Smith, whom Swami Vivekananda used to call Mother Smith, in her cottage. She was born in India. Her father was an American Missionary in India. She was deeply interested in Hindu culture and philosophy. She invited her friends to meet and hear me.

On September 17th, 1897, an informal meeting was arranged in her cottage. About 30 ladies and gentlemen came and asked me several questions about Vedanta and the Hindu people of India. The meeting lasted for three hours from 7-30 P.M. I answered all questions and spoke on the sublime

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[2] It is a curious pastime of American Holiday-makers who enjoy the thrill by riding on boats darting down a waterfall, natural or artificial. A platform is erected above the waterfall, where a number of boats is arrayed in order, with necessary requisites. Having seated themselves Pastime makers let go the boat down the current, which darts like a shooting star and falls in the reservoir below with a splash.

teachings of Vedanta and Raja Yoga in general. On Sunday I went to their church and attended the service. The minister and the parishioners were immensely pleased to see me in their church and to find me so broad and liberal.

New Paltz was the place where the Old Hugenot people from Holland first settled in the early part of the 18th century. I went to see the Old Hugenot House which was built in 1712 A.D. as well as the old Hugenot church.

On September 21st, 1897, I went with Mr. Jackson, Miss Waldo, Miss Harriet, A. Smith to Mohank Mountain situated not very far from New Paltz, nearly 1,700 ft. high, with beautiful scenery and a lake. There was a deep crevice in the mountain through which we walked and climbed up to the top of the mountain and enjoyed the grand view of the woods and surrounding hills in company of an old gentleman Mr. Smile who was a Christian Missionary in India.

On September 24th another meeting was arranged where I spoke on 'Hindu Religion' for one hour and answered several questions of the audience. Next day Miss Waldo and I returned to New York.

On September 27th, 1897, Swami Saradanandá came from Boston to New York to see me. He was sent there from London by Swami Vivekananda at the request of Mrs. Ole Bull of Cambridge, Mass., a suburb of Boston, just before I arrived in London in 1896. Swami Saradananda delivered several lectures on Vedanta in New York and Boston. But this was the first time I met him after he had left India nearly two years ago. I spent the whole day with him talking on different subjects and especially on the works he was doing in America. It was a great delight to me to meet my beloved Gurubhai after such a long time in a foreign country. It reminded me of the days when we lived together and served our Divine Master Sri Ramakrishna in Cossipore garden house near Calcutta and after the *mahasamadhi* of our Lord how we lived together with Swami Vivekananda who used to call us Kelua and Bhulua, for we were his personal attendants as well as his staunch followers in our struggles for spiritual attainments at Baranagore Math; how we travelled together to Puri and lived together accompanied by Baburam (Swami Premananda) for six months at Emar Math of Achari Vaishnavas

of Sri Ramanuja Sect of Vishistadvaita Vedantists; how we performed austerities and long penances of various kinds; how we went to see the ruins of the great Sun temple of Kanarak and walked over the sandy beach of the Bay of Bengal to Chilka Lake; how we went together to see the ancient Buddhist Caves of Khanda Giri and Udaya Giri and the Dhauli Rock Inscriptions of Asoka who lived in the 3rd century B.C., how in that jungle we tasted the milk of a tigress and narrowly escaped her attack when we were searching for a Yogi at the mouth of a cave where she with her cubs lived quietly; how the Swami Saradananda nursed me with the greatest brotherly love that I have ever heard of, for four months at the Alambazar Math when I had seven operations on my left foot on account of an attack of Guinee worm which I had caught in my foot while travelling bare-footed through Guzerat to Dwarka and Pravash Teertha, on pilgrimage. All these and many other incidents of our spiritual lives together in India became vivid in my memory when I met Swami Saradananda in New York. It was a day of unbounded joy and peace which I can never forget.

I felt that by the will of our Great Master we have come to New York after travelling over twelve thousand miles and crossing many seas and the Atlantic Ocean on the same mission to preach the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna among foreign people of Christian Faith like the ancient Buddhist monks who preached the Gospel of Buddha from Siberia to Ceylon and from China and Japan to Egypt. I felt within me the adventurous spirit of a modern Christian Missionary who travels all over the world to preach the Gospel of Christ among heathen nations, going through all kinds of privation, suffering and hardship.

RECORD II

At that time I was a strict vegetarian living on boiled vegetables, bread and milk. Swami Saradananda told me that he was a strict vegetarian and that I should also set an example of the same, if I wanted to have success in my mission and works. I respected his advice and lived up to the ideals of a strict vegetarian and a teetotaller. Swami Saradananda inspired me with the idea that the American people were eager to learn the truths of Vedanta in general and the practical teachings of Raja Yoga as explained by Swami Vivekananda in his class lectures on Raja Yoga. From that time I made up my mind to make Swamiji's Raja Yoga as the text book in my Raja Yoga classes in New York, which I did later on. But as the Raja Yoga was published by Longmans and Green in London and the expenses were paid by Swami Vivekananda himself, it was difficult to get the book from London to New York for there was imposed a heavy Customs duty on all foreign publications. For this reason, Swami Vivekananda's American students headed by Miss Mary Phillips published an American edition of his *Raja Yoga* in New York. I made necessary corrections and made a Glossary of Sanskrit words in the text.

On September 29th, 1897, the Mott Memorial Hall was engaged by Miss Phillips as Secretary of the Vedanta Society for my public lectures and classes on Raja Yoga. In the evening I was introduced by Mr. Edward Emerson, a relative of the famous Ralph Waldo Emerson and I delivered my first lecture on *What is Vedanta*, in New York before an audience of about forty ladies and gentlemen who were interested in the teachings of Vedanta.

At 9 P.M. after the meeting was over, I accompanied Miss Waldo and went to her house in Brooklyn to stay with her. Miss Waldo was a motherly old lady well-educated in Western philosophy and a devoted disciple of Swami Vivekananda who initiated her as a Brahmacharini. She never married and was about 45 years old. It was she who corrected and edited all the lectures of Swami Vivekananda which were

afterwards published in book form. I occupied her sitting room on the second floor and slept on a folding bed which was fixed as an upholstered couch during the day. She was a vegetarian and lived mostly on rice and curried vegetables which she learned to cook from Swami Vivekananda. She had a maid-servant who used to do all houseworks and was a good cook as well. I was taken care of by Miss Waldo in such a good manner as I had no occasion to feel that I was a guest of a stranger in a strange country. I was given all comforts of a simple living.

On the following day I met another devotee of Swami Vivekananda who was a Swedish lady Siri Swanander by name. She used to live near Miss Waldo's house and was an intimate friend of her.

On October, 2nd, 1897, I came to New York and held a class on Raja Yoga in the Mott Memorial Hall. The audience numbered about 30.

On Sunday, October 3rd I delivered a popular lecture before an audience of about 80 people. After each lecture voluntary collection was taken from the audience as it was customary in Christian churches to meet the expenses of renting the hall and of other contingencies. From now on I held Raja Yoga classes twice every week on Wednesdays and Saturdays and delivered public lectures on Sunday afternoons. The notices of all my lectures and classes were advertised in daily newspapers of New York. People from distant towns in the suburbs of New York used to come to hear my lectures and attended my Raja Yoga classes. A lady-friend of Miss Waldo, Mrs. Wheeler by name who lived in Montclair, new Jersey, invited me with Miss Waldo to come to her house on October 11th 1897 where we drove to meet Swami Saradananda who was staying there as a guest of Mrs. Wheeler. Mrs. Wheeler was a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda as well as of Swami Saradananda. We stayed there at Mrs. Wheeler's house with Swami Saradananda.

On October 12th, 1897, Mrs. Wheeler drove Swami Saradananda and me in a carriage to the Country Club in Orange County, New Jersey in the afternoon where we met several of her friends. On the following morning Mrs. Wheeler took Swami Saradananda and me to Ampere Electri-

cal Works of Mr. Thomas Edison, the inventor of Electric light, Electrical machine for Tramway, Electric Heater, Electric fan, Gramophone. I met Mr. Edison and had a talk with him on Hindu philosophy in which he was deeply interested. I saw his private study where Mr. Edison used to spend most of his time in solving all the problems connected with his electrical inventions. He would sit up at his desk for hours deeply absorbed in concentration like a great Indian Yogi. Sometimes he would sit up all night without sleeping or eating his meals. His breakfast, luncheon and dinner would be brought in and placed on a table at the corner of his study. Mr. Edison would not move from his seat until he found solution of his problems. Nobody would call him to his meals which when got cold would be taken away leaving him undisturbed at his desk. By his marvellous power of concentration he succeeded in becoming the world-renowned inventor of the most useful electrical machines which have benefitted all the civilised nations of the earth.

On October 13th, 1897, Swami Saradananda delivered a lecture on *Concentration* at Mrs. Wheeler's house in the afternoon before the invited friends of our hostess. This was the first time I heard Swami Saradananda's speech. I was impressed by his method of delivery. He had good voice and was eloquent. But when he raised his voice to a high pitch it sounded metallic in tone.

Next day Swami Saradananda left for Cambridge, Mass. at the invitation of Mrs. Ole Bull who arranged all of his movements, lectures and classes. I stayed at Mrs. Wheeler's with Miss Waldo and arranged for my lectures in the town of Montclair, New Jersey. Mrs. Wheeler was a good driver of ponies and horses of her own and gave me lessons in driving ponies. Of course at that time automobiles and motor-cars were not invented.

Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler used to play Golf in the Country Club. On October 15th, 1897, they took me to the Golf links and urged me to play Golf. They gave me first lesson in playing Golf. I tried and hit the stick so hard on the ground that I broke it. I was very sorry for this accident but was consoled by Mrs. Wheeler who said that every body who learns to play Golf breaks many of the sticks. An English-

man remarked about Golf play by saying, "Golf play is like this:—you take a ball as large as a quinine pill, place it on the ground and drive it with a stick and search after it for the whole day". What a wonderful game!

After enjoying this outing at Montclair for five days and meeting Swami Saradananda and his friends, Miss Waldo and I returned to New York on October 16th and stopped in a room at 8 West 38th Street and lectured on *Concentration* in my class.

On Sunday October 17th I delivered a public lecture in the Mott Memorial Hall on *Individuality versus Personality* before an audience of about 70.

On October 18th I removed to a room at 229 West 38th Street. Next day I removed again from that room to a room at 170, Lexington Avenue because Miss Waldo and other friends told me that the houses on West 38th Street were notorious for gambling and were occupied by fast men and women.

On the following Sunday I gave a public lecture on *Maya*. The audience was nearly 60 in number.

Next morning I went to Brooklyn, took lunch with Miss Waldo. In the afternoon at 4-30 P.M., went with her to the Twentieth Century Club in Brooklyn. There I met Dr. Nansen, the great Arctic explorer who gave an interesting talk about his experiences on his march towards the North Pole. He was a great Norwegian adventurer. I had the opportunity of speaking with him about Indian and Hindu philosophy of Vedanta which he admired very much. At 7 P.M. I returned to New York.

On October 27th I lectured on *Concentration* before an audience of 128. After hearing my lecture, Mrs. Wheeler and her friends invited me to deliver the same lecture in Montclair. I accepted their invitation and went there on November 1st, 1897, and lectured on *Concentration* which was afterwards published in my *Spiritual Unfoldment*, before an audience of about 60. Those who heard Swami Saradananda's lecture on the same subject admired my method of handling that subject as well as my voice and delivery. Next day I returned to New York and held my classes regularly

on Wednesdays and Saturdays and public lectures on Sundays.

On November 3rd, 1897, at 8 P.M. I lectured on *The Aim of Life* at the Mott Memorial Hall, New York.

On November 6th at 11 A.M. I lectured on *Self-control* which was afterwards published.

On next Sunday, November 7th I delivered a public lecture on the *Universality of Vedanta,* in the Mott Memorial Hall before an audience of about 70. In the evening I was invited to a wedding of one of my students. There I gave a short address on the sacred ceremony of Hindu marriage and the spiritual ideals of husbands and wives in India, that a wife was regarded by the Hindus as a spiritual helpmate. I also told them how Sri Ramakrishna worshipped his consort Sarada Devi as a living representative of the Divine Mother of the universe; that the real marriage was a relation between two souls and not a physical union for sense pleasure; that there was no occasion in real marriage for divorce on account of incompatibility of temper or selfish motive. At the end I blessed the newly married couple.

Every Monday I used to lecture in Montclair where I gave my second lecture on *Self-control,* on November 8th, 1897, before an audience of about 50.

On November 10th 8 P.M. I lectured on *Renunciation, Its Real Meaning.*

On November 13th 11 A.M. on *Pratyahara the Preliminary to Concentration.*

On November 14th 3 P.M. on *Are We Born Sinners?* On November 17th 8 P.M. on *Immortality.* On November 20th at 11 A.M. I gave a class lecture on *Pranayama* in New York before an audience of about 54, which was afterwards published in my book entitled *How to be a Yogi.* On November 21st at 3 P.M. I gave a public lecture on *Reincarnation* before an audience of 130. It was afterwards published.

On November 22nd I went to Montclair and lectured on *The Attributes of God* before an audience of about 65. This lecture was highly appreciated by all and was afterwards published in my book entitled *Divine Heritage of Man.*

After my return from Montclair to New York in the even-

ing, I was delighted to see for the first time a heavy snowfall at about 11-30 P.M.

On November 24th 8 P.M. I lectured at the Mott Memorial Hall on *Unity in Variety.*

On November 27th 11 A.M. on *Samadhi* or *Superconscious State* at the M. M. Hall.

On November 28th 3 P.M. on *Is Vedanta Practical?*

These lectures were sustained by voluntary contributions and subscriptions. Mr. S. C. Waters was the treasurer.

From November 29th I lived on milk diet and continued my class lectures on Raja Yoga twice a week and public lectures on Sunday afternoon. I used to go out for my meals in restaurants and paid all my lodging and boarding expenses as well as the rent of the hall etc. from the voluntary collections which were taken in my lectures.

At M. M. Hall on December 1st 8 P.M. on *Non-attachment.*

On December 4th 11 A.M. on *Modifications of the Mind Substance.*

On December 5th 3 P.M. on *Various Aspects and Names of One God.*

On December 8th 8 P.M. on *The Secret of Devotion.*

On December 9th, 1897, I went to hear a lecture on *Taj Mahal in Agra.* Next evening I went with Miss Phillips to Patria Club to hear a lecture on the *Annexation of Hawian Islands* in the mid-Pacific Ocean by the United States of America which I visited in 1921 on my final return from U.S.A.

At M. M. Hall on December 11th 11 A.M. on *The Sankhya System.*

On Sunday December 12th I delivered a public lecture in New York on *God in Everything* before an audience of 100.

Miss Josephine MacLeod and her sister Mrs. Francis H. Legett the two great admirers and friends of Swami Vivekananda became interested in my lectures and classes and invited me to come to their house on 34th Street to lunch with them and to meet Dr. Elmar Gates of Washington, D.C. who was making psycho-physical experiments on various subjects to prove that the "Mind" has the controlling power over matter. I accepted their invitation on December 16th, 1897, and met Dr. Elmar Gates and had a long conversation with him on

the powers of concentration and Raja Yoga in which he was deeply interested.

At M. M. Hall on December 15th 8 P.M. on *Salvation in this Life.*

On December 18th 11 A.M. on *Egoism—Its Nature.* In the evening I was invited to speak on Vedanta philosophy before the Twentieth Century Club in Brooklyn with Mr. Virchand Gandhi who represented the Jain Philosophy at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893 and who was a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda whom he met there.

On December 19th 3 P.M. on *Brahman and Maya* at M. M. Hall.

On December 22nd 8 P.M. on *Scriptures—What do they Teach*? at M. M. Hall.

On December 24th, 1897, I went to see Dr. Lion's Baby Incubator the most wonderful apparatus for feeding the babies placed in a glass case. One nurse could take care of dozens of babies and save the lives of those poor orphans from untimely death.

On December 27th I went to Montclair, lectured and stayed at Mrs. Wheeler's and met Swami Saradananda again. Next day, on December 29th a farewell reception was given to Swami Saradananda at Mrs. Wheeler's house in Montclair.

On December 30th I returned to New York and was invited by Mrs. Legett at a tea party where I met several of her friends and went back to Montclair.

On January 1st 1888, I went to see Miss Schroeder who was a devoted student of Swami Saradananda in Montclair on my way back to New York in the afternoon and dined with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett. Next evening I went to see Miss Phillips and had supper with her.

On January 3rd I went to a reception given by Miss Bergh, dined with Mr. Allen and afterwards went to Mr. Leggett's to meet Miss Emma Thursby a music teacher, Miss Adams an eloqutionist, Mrs. Gibson, the admirers of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Saradananda.

At M. M. Hall on January 5th 8 P.M. on *Monism and Monotheism.*

On January 6th, 1898, I went in the evening to St. Denis Hotel and dined with Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler and Miss Schroeder

of Montclair. There I was invited to deliver an after-dinner speech before the Twilight Club which had a meeting there. I was allowed to speak for five minutes. The subject of my discourse was *Looking Backward and Forward.* I spoke about the rush-habit of the American people and how much they would gain in future if they practised self-control and how better they would be able to work if they abandoned "worry" and worked without seeking the results of their actions. It was a great mistake to think that worry was like the steam of a locomotive without which no activity would have any incentive behind it. "To work thou hast the right and not to the fruits thereof"—says the *Gita.*

At M. M. Hall on January 8th 11 A.M. on *The Secret of Spiritual Progress.*

On January 9th 3 P.M. on *Karma Yoga.*

On January 10th Swami Saradananda came to see me in my room at 170, Lexington Avenue at 10-30 P.M. and slept there and told me that he was going back to India at the call of Swami Vivekananda and would sail from New York with Mrs. Ole Bull and Miss MacLeod on January 12th, 1898.

Next evening I was invited to dine with Mrs. Ole Bull and Swami Saradananda at the Murry Hill Hotel in New York. This was the first time I saw Mrs. Ole Bull about whom I had heard so much from Swami Vivekananda and also from Swami Saradananda. She was a wealthy American lady who married Mr. Ole Bull the great Norwegian Violinist of renown. It was she who donated a large sum of money to Swami Vivekananda toward purchasing the land where Belur Math stands to-day. She also donated a large sum of money to Sir J. C. Bose for building the Bose Institute in Calcutta.

On January 12th Swami Saradananda accompanied by Mrs. Ole Bull and Miss MacLeod sailed for India from New York. I said good-bye to them in the house of Mr. Leggett. At 8 P.M. I lectured on *Duty* at M. M. Hall.

On January 14th I went with Miss Phillips to the Patria Club to hear Rev. Mackenzie D. D. the eloquent speaker of New England who lectured on *Republic.*

On January 15th 11 A.M. on *The Attainment of Truth* at M. M. Hall.

On Sunday January 16th I gave a public lecture on *Self-*

control (repeated by request). The audience numbered about 136. In the evening I held a private meeting of the students of Vedanta at Mrs. Coulston's parlour and discussed the ways and means of having a permanent headquarter of the Vedanta Society in New York City. Mrs. Coulston attended some classes and lectures of Swami Vivekananda.

On January 17th I went to Brooklyn at the invitation of Mrs. Peerce and lectured for the first time on the *Bhagavat Gita* in her parlour.

On January 19th, 8 P.M. I lectured in my class on the *Basis of Morality*. The audience was about 75. On my return to my room I was astonished to see the floor covered with pieces of thick sand plaster which fell from the ceiling. Fortunately I was absent when it happened in the evening. Had I been in my room it would have killed me. I called the land-lady who was dumbfounded at the sight and exclaimed "Somebody must have saved your life. You are lucky". She was a Roman Catholic Bhakta.

On January 21st I was invited to lecture before the Brooklyn Metaphysical League on the *Vedanta Philosophy* in the afternoon.

At M. M. Hall on January 22nd 11 A.M. on *God the Teacher of All Teachers.*

On January 23rd 8 P.M. I gave a public lecture in the Mott Memorial Hall in the evening on *Science and Religion.* The audience numbered about 128. I spent the evening at Mr. Leggett's house.

On January 25th I was invited to dine with Rev. Dr. Heber Newton D. D of the Episcopal Church. He was the most liberal-minded and prominent Christian Minister in New York City. I had brought a letter of introduction to him from Rev. Mr. Hawies of London who used to attend my lectures. Dr. Heber Newton was very kind and cordial to me. He was a great scholar and had a saintly character. He never met Swami Vivekananda but he was interested in the universal principles of the Vedanta Philosophy. He met Rev. Protap Chunder Mazumdar the great leader of the Brahmo Samaj and admired his *Oriental Christ.* Dr. Heber Newton was a reformer of the orthodox doctrines, creeds and dogmas of Christian churches. He did not believe in the immaculate

conception and miraculous birth of Jesus the Christ. For this reason he was considered as a heretic by the orthodox leaders of Christian churches.

I spent the evening with him talking on various religious subjects specially on the all-embracing teachings of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. He became deeply impressed by my broad views and universal ideals. From that day he took great interest in my lectures and classes which he used to announce to his audience after delivering his sermons on Sundays and asked them to attend my lectures, the printed notices of which he used to keep along with his church leaflets. He had a private library which contained valuable works on the *Ecclesiastical History, Higher Criticism of the Bible* as well as the *Sacred Books of the East* edited by Prof. Max Muller. He gave me a free access to his library. Mrs. Newton loved me like her own son, and used to come to my lectures. Later on, Dr. Heber Newton became an honorary member of the Vedanta Society of New York after I had it organised. He allowed his name to be printed on the circulars of the Vedanta Society. This removed the prejudices from the minds of the Church-going Christian community and gave a firm footing to my mission.

He introduced me to his friends and other ministers of other churches and invited me to speak before Religious Conferences of Christian Ministers which he had organised in New York City. In these Conferences I lectured with him many times from the same platform.

On January 26th 8 P.M. on *The Attributes of God* (repeated by request).

On January 27th I went to hear Rev. Dr. Mc. Arthur's lecture on "Calcutta" in the evening, and was introduced to him after the lecture. He was a prominent minister in New York at that time.

On January 29th 11 A.M. on *Obstacles to Samadhi* at M. M. Hall.

Next Sunday afternoon January 30th I gave a public lecture on *God Impersonal* before an audience of 145. After the lecture I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett and then went to the meeting of my Vedanta students at Mrs. Coulston's parlour.

On January 31st it snowed heavily for whole day. In that heavy snow I went to Brooklyn and delivered my last lecture on the *Bhagavat Gita.*

At M. M. Hall on February 2nd 8 P.M. on *Raja Yoga—What is it?*

On February 3rd 1898, I went to the Union Theological Seminary to hear Dr. J. H. Barrow's lecture on *The Cross and Crescent.* He was the Secretary of the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893 and he invited Swami Vivekananda to dine with him in his house in Chicago. He was the same Dr. Barrows who delivered a series of addresses in Madras and Calcutta. On his return from his lecturing tour in India this was the first lecture he gave in New York.

On February 5th 11 A.M. I began my Gita Class lecture in New York City. The audience numbered about 66. I went to see Mr. Flagg, a wealthy American, who was interested in the science of Yoga and wrote and published a book on Yoga after attending some of the lectures on Raja Yoga by Swami Vivekananda.

RECORD III

On Sunday February 6th 3 P.M I gave a public lecture on *The Visible can be Explained by the Invisible* in the Mott Memorial Hall. The audience numbered about 150.

On February 7th I went to hear Dr. Barrows again at the Union Theological Seminary. When I heard him speak against Swami Vivekananda I stood up to protest, but I was not allowed to say anything.

Next day I called upon Dr. Guerensi, a noted physician of New York city who was a great admirer of Swami Vivekananda. Mrs. Guerensi told me that they had a son who died just before they met Swami Vivekananda whose features resembled those of their dead son. For this reason, they had great regards for Swami Vivekananda and loved him as their own son.

On February 9th 8 P.M. Mr. and Mrs. Leggett with their friends attended my lecture on *Cosmic Life-Principle* (Raja Yoga) for the first time in the M. M. Hall.

On February 10th I went to hear Dr. Barrows again.

On February 12th 11 A.M. class on *Bhagavat Gita.*

AT M. M. HALL

On February 13th 8 P.M. on *Reincarnation* (repeated by request).

On February 16th 8 P.M. on *Rhythmic Breathing* (Raja Yoga).

On February 17th I went to Montclair at the invitation of Mr. and Mrs. Platt and stayed with them till February 19th when I returned to New York and gave class lecture on *Bhagavat Gita.* From now on every Wednesday I held classes on Raja Yoga and every Saturday class lectures on *Gita* and every Sunday public lectures.

AT M. M. HALL

On February 19th 11 A.M. class on *Bhagavat Gita.*

On February 20th 3 P.M. on *"Is our Spirit Subject to Evolution?*

On February 21st was the birthday anniversary of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. I fasted and meditated with Mr. Van Haagen in his room before the picture of Sri Ramakrishna in the afternoon. In the evening I dined with Miss Haskel and gave a lecture at a meeting held in Mrs. Bilquist's parlour at 8 P.M. and became acquainted with many new people.

On February 22nd I went with Mr. Van Haagen to the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences to hear a lecture on the *Vedas* delivered by Prof. Jackson of Columbia University of New York city where he was the Professor of Sanskrit and Iranian languages. He was a great Sanskrit scholar. He studied the Vedas and the Zend Avesta, the scriptures of the Parsees and wrote the authentic life of Zoroaster after making researches for several years. After the lecture I was introduced to him. He took great interest in my Vedanta Mission in America and afterwards became an honorary member of our Vedanta Society of New York, and wanted to help me in my works. Later on he invited me to his Sanskrit classes at the Columbia University and requested me to give correct pronunciation of Sanskrit words in the *Sakuntala* of Kalidasa which he was teaching in his class of American students. I used to go to his classes and through him I became acquainted with other Professors, and Faculty of the University.

After the lecture I visited Shri Swanander where I met Miss Waldo and spending the evening with them returned to New York.

On February 23rd, I gave a class lecture on the *Science of Breathing* before an audience numbering about 115.

At M. M. Hall on the same day at 8 P.M. on *First Step to Concentration* (Raja Yoga).

On February 24th, Mr. Walter Goodyear, an admirer of Swami Vivekananda, called upon me in the evening and took me to the Circle of Divine Ministry where I heard a lecture on *Mental Healing* delivered by Prof. Horatio Dresser of Boston. After the lecture I was introduced to him. Dr. Dresser was a

mental healer. His method of healing all kinds of diseases by the power of mind without using any Allopathic drug or Homeopathic medicine differed from that of Mrs. Mary Baker G. Eddy the founder of the sect known as *Christian Science*, and the writer of the book entitled *Science and Health*. (See my pamphlet on *Christian Science and Vedanta.*)

Dr. Dresser wrote an article in the Metaphysical Magazine of New York in which he attached the system of Vedanta. I gave a reply to his article which was published in the same magazine.

AT M. M. HALL

On February 26th 11 A.M. class on *Bhagavat Gita.*

On February 27th 3 P.M. on *Scriptures, What do They Teach*" (Repeated by request).

On the same day I delivered a public lecture on *The Healing Power of Breath* before an audience of about 130. In the evening I went to Mr. Leggett's and then to the meeting of Vedanta students at Mrs. Coulston's parlour. Next evening I was invited by Mr. Goodyear to dine and spend the evening with them. He talked on Swami Vivekananda's experiences in New York.

On March 1st, 1898, I went to hear Prof. Jackson's lecture on the *Vedas* at the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences at 4 P.M. Then had dinner at Miss Waldo's. Prof. Dresser made an appointment for calling upon me in forenoon. But he did not come. For the first time I experienced that a gentleman did not keep his appointment. It made a bad impression on my mind and I lost all respects for him. On the following day in my class lecture on Raja Yoga audience increased to 105.

At M. M. Hall on March 2nd 8 P.M. on *Concentration* (repeated by request).

On March 3rd Swami Yogananda, one of the three Sannyasin disciples of Swami Vivekananda in America called on me and spent the morning talking on psychic experiences he had acquired by crystal gazing. He could foretell events by looking intently on a ball of white crystal placing it on a small

table in front. This is called *Tratak Yoga* in India. He had practised this branch of Hatha Yoga for many years before he met Swami Vivekananda and attended his classes on Raja Yoga in New York city. Swami Vivekananda was pleased to know him and admired his psychic powers. Afterwards he made him his Sannyasin disciple and gave him the name of Swami Yogananda. His former name was Dr. Street. He was a student of Egyptian mysticism and wrote a book on that subject. He was a clairvoyant, that is, with the help of his crystal he gained the psychic vision of things or events happening at a long distance. I was told that on the eve of the Spanish American War in 1898 Dr. Street was sitting in his room with a group of young American ladies and gentlemen who were gazing at the crystal ball with him. He suddenly declared that the American Battleship called "Maine" was blown up by the Spaniards in the port of Santiago in the Island of Cuba and that this disaster would bring on the war between U.S.A. and Spain. His vision and statement were correct in every way and the war was declared against Spain by U.S. Government. This was one of the tests of the psychic power of clairvoyance which Dr. Street had demonstrated. This was reported to me later by Mrs. Agnes Thomas who belonged to the group of sitters on that evening at Dr. Street's room. I spent the morning in talking with Swami Yogananda (Dr. Street) on the psychic powers of an Indian Yogi as compared with his own experiences. From that day the Swami Yogananda used to come to my classes and public lectures. The Swami was honest, simple, amiable and a great mystic. The one peculiar thing I noticed in his talk that he pronounced Vandanta for Vedanta. That amused me very much.

After the war had been declared against Spain by U.S.A. one afternoon I was going to the Mott Memorial Hall at 64 Madison Avenue to deliver my public lecture. When I was walking along that Avenue my turban and orange coloured robe (*gerua* colour) attracted the attention of the street boys who expressed their hatred against the Spaniards by shouting at me, "Here is a Spaniard, kill him" and threw stones at me from behind. I turned round and facing them shouted aloud, "Come along". Then the boys ran away and I walked on to the Hall and delivered a lecture before a large audience.

AT M. M. HALL

On March 5th 11 A.M. on *Renunciation through Love.*

On March 6th 3 P.M. on *Shall We lose our Individuality?*

In the evening of March 7th, 1898, I called on Rev. Dr. Rainsford the noted liberal-minded Minister of the Episcopal denomination and presented the letter of introduction which Rev. Mr. Haweis gave to me in London. I had a long talk with him on the ideals of the universal religion of Vedanta. He took great interest in my broad views and promised to help me in my mission. Mrs. Rainsford came to my classes several times and introduced me to their church-going Christian friends. It was necessary for me to become acquainted with the broad-minded Ministers of churches for they had tremendous influence upon the minds of the respectable and educated inhabitants of New York city. Without their help and recognition my works had no chance to prosper and to make a headway. My policy was to march along the line of least resistance and not to antagonise the sectarian leaders of Christian churches who had full control over the minds of the people in all secular and religious matters. If they were not friendly to me and if they advised their parishioners not to attend my classes and public lectures on Vedanta then I could not get influential people in my audience. Therefore, I had to work hard to arouse the interest of the good people of the city and to persuade them to help me in making the Vedanta Society a powerful religious organisation in a Christian country. I was determined to find ways and means for making a success of the Vedanta work in New York which was started by Swami Vivekananda. There were neither funds nor donations to carry on my work. I had to earn my living, pay the room-rent as well as for my meals in restaurants, the rent of the hall and meet my personal expenses and the expenses of weekly advertisements in various newspapers. I had no other source of income than the voluntary contributions taken in a basket after my classes and public lectures which were not enough to meet all these expenses. Therefore I tried to economise and sacrifice my personal comforts by accepting the invitations for my meals from the students of my classes. This was like the *bhikshavritti* of the Hindu Sannyasins in India.

On March 9th 8 P.M., I delivered my class lecture on *Meditation* which was afterwards published. The audience numbered about 126.

On March 10th I went to Mrs. Coulston's flat and cooked Indian dishes and taught her how to cook them. She liked the taste of curried vegetables, *pareta, chapatis* etc. which she had never tasted before. Mr. Goodyear came there and we spent a pleasant evening talking on the teachings of the Vedanta philosophy.

On March 11th I went to Vandyke Studio and met some students there with Mrs. Arthur Smith, dined with Mrs. Coulston and afterwards went with her to Brooklyn to see Pratt's Institute for technical instruction on various branches of Art and Science.

On March 12th 11 A.M. after my class lecture on *Immortality* I lunched with Mrs. A Smith and went with her to Union League Club where I was introduced to her friends.

On Sunday afternoon March 13th 3 P.M. I delivered a lecture on *Evolution and Reincarnation* (which was afterwards published) before an audience of about 200. The lecture was highly appreciated by all who were present in the hall. After the lecture was over I went to Mr. Leggett's house, took my supper with him and then went to the meeting at Mrs. Coulstons' apartment.

In the evening of March 15th I held a private meeting at Leggett's to discuss the ways and means of organizing the Vedanta Society in order to make its foundation firm and strong. It was attended by Mr. Goodyear, Mr. Thomson, Mr. Higgins of Brooklyn and Mrs. Coulston. They were the students of my classes and attended my public lectures regularly. They became deeply interested in my classes and wanted to help me to build up the Vedanta Society. Mr. Leggett who was at first indifferent to me became more and more interested in Vedanta after coming in close contact with me and attending my lectures. Mr. Leggett was a thorough businessman and was the proprietor of a large wholsale grocery store in New York city which was named after him—Francis H. Leggett's Grocery Store. Through this business he became a multi-millionaire and was very influential in the city amongst other businessmen of New York. I had the intention of making him

the first president of the Vedanta Society after it was organized and legally incorporated. I was therefore working my way to accomplish that end.

On March 16th 8 P.M. I lectured in my Raja Yoga class on *Superconsciousness*. The audience grew to 109.

On March 18th Mrs. Coulston called on me in the morning. I went with her to see Miss Phillips and then to the Metropolitan Museum of Arts where I found a large collection of the paintings of the noted European Artists of different countries.

At M. M. Hall on March 19th 11 A.M. on *Vedantic Conception of God*.

On Sunday March 20th 3 P.M. after my public lecture on *Sin and Sinners* in the Mott Memorial Hall Mr. Leggett took me in his carriage drawn by beautiful horses and gave me a long drive in the Central Park which is situated in the heart of the city. On our return to Mr. Leggett's house, I met for the first time Mr. Leo Lansburg, a Jewish scholar of Poland in Europe who was made a Sannyasi disciple by Swami Vivekananda and was given by him the name of Swami Kripananda. Mr. Lansburg used to work in the New York Tribune, a daily newspaper of the city and had the charge of its Question Box. He wrote some scholarly articles in the Brahmavadin Magazine which was started in Madras by some of the devotees of Swami Vivekananda in 1894 A.D. In his articles Mr. Lansburg expounded the doctrines of the Jewish scriptures especially of Talmud and Cabala. I had a long talk with him. After hearing the report of my lecture on *Sin and Sinners*, Mr. Bradford the editor and proprietor of the "Outlook"—a maganize of the orthodox Christian community of New York invited me to give an interview. I accepted the invitation and went next day March 21st at 12-30 P.M. and had a long discussion with him on the subject of original sin of the first man Adam as described in the Genesis of the Old Testament of the Christian Bible. I gave him the Vedantic view point on that subject. The Editor of the "Outlook" was deeply impressed by what I said about the origin of sin. Returning from the Outlook Office I went to Mr. Leggett's and told him all about my conversation with Dr. Bradford.

In the afternoon I held a meditation class in an apartment

of one of my students, Miss Linquist, a Swedish lady who was afterwards employed in the Government Office of Stockholm (Sweden) as the first woman employee.

On March 22nd I was invited by the Vegetarian Society of New York to lecture on *Why a Hindu is a Vegetarian.* This lecture was afterward printed in a pamphlet form.

At M. M. Hall on March 23rd 8 P.M. on *Egoism* (repeated by request).

On March 24th at 8 P.M. I went with Mr. Van Haagen, Mrs. and Miss Coulston to the Metropolitan Opera House to hear a concert conducted by the famous musician Mr. Emil Paur.

AT M. M. HALL

On March 26th 11 A.M. on *Salvation is Freedom.*

On March 27th 3 P.M. on *Secret of Work.*

On this day appeared an article by Swami Kripananda (Mr. Leo Lansburg) in the New York Herald. It was illustrated with cartoons of Swami Vivekananda in different postures teaching Raja Yoga among some of his lady students of New York city. The article was written to ridicule Swami Vivekananda and his Raja Yoga teachings by one of his own disciples. I read the article and was surprised when I discovered that it was written by Kripananda who was a Sannyasi disciple of Swami Vivekananda. I called on Mr. Leggett and showed him the damaging article against Swami Vivekananda by Kripananda. While I was talking with Mr. Leggett in his library room on the second floor, Kripananda suddenly called on Mr. Leggett and entered into the library. Mr. Leggett was enraged at the sight of that Polish Jew who scandalised his own Master through newspapers for the sake of gaining a few dollars. Mr. Leggett got up from his chair and rushed toward the door of the library and sharply asked Kripananda the question: "Did you write that article in the New York Sunday Herald? Kripananda said, Yes". Mr. Leggett asked, "How much did you get for the article?" Kripananda replied, "Not much. Only fifty dollars". Mr. Leggett then scolded him by saying, "For fifty dollars you have turned against your spiritual Master and have

ridiculed him? You are very mean and selfish. You get out of my house and never come again". Kripananda walked out as fast as he could and never after this incident did he come to Mr. Leggett's house. I stood aghast at the ungrateful behaviour of that mean Jew who acted like Judas who betrayed his own Master Christ for a few pieces of coin.

On March 28th I conducted the Raja Yoga class and gave practical lessons on *Pranayama and Meditation.*

On March 29th I saw Buffalo Bill's parade of the American Red Indians in the streets of New York City, with their peculiar head dresses made of long feathers of Eagles and other American birds of wild forests. In the evening I dined with Mr. Leggett and met several of his friends who were interested in the teachings of Vedanta.

On March 30th I was invited to have my breakfast with him in his house. In the evening I delivered a public lecture on *Self-control* (repeated by request). The audience numbered about 150. This lecture was afterwards printed and published by the Vedanta Society of New York.

On March 31st I had breakfast with Mr. Leggett who afterwards went with me to get some heavy wollen cloth for my robe of ochre colour. He selected a very expensive Billiard table cloth of terracota colour for my robe and ordered his tailor to take my measures and to make a good fitting garment. Swami Vivekananda used to wear his robe of terra-cota colour in New York and for that reason Mr. Leggett preferred that colour and also because it was less conspicuous.

Then I called on Miss Phillips who took me to the Metropolitan Opera House to hear the funeral services of Mr. Seidle, the celebrated musician. Mr. Seidle was a Roman Catholic Christian but before his death he had expressed his wish to have his body cremated. For this reason the Catholic Church had ordained that no Roman Catholic priest should take part in Mr. Seidle's funeral service. The Catholic Churches teach that the dead bodies should be buried and never cremated. Because they entertain a belief that on the last day of Judgement when the Angels will blow their trumpets the dead bodies of the Roman Catholic Christians will miraculously rise from their graves and will go to heaven. On account of this dogma, cremation is condemned by the Roman Catholic

Church was held in the Metropolitan Opera House where Mr. White, a Unitarian Minister, conducted his funeral service. This created a great sensation among all classes of the inhabitants of New York City. Hence I must mention that the Unitarians are not regarded as true Christians by the othodox churches whether Protestant or Roman Catholic.

The Unitarian Christians do not believe in the Divinity of Jesus Christ, but regard him as the greatest spiritual man on earth. Like the reformed Brahmos of India they do not believe in the incarnation of God in a human form. They do not believe in the doctrines of eternal hell fire and damnation of non-christian peoples. They believe in the rectitude of the character of God and hold the idea that God could not be just and merciful if such doctrines were true. They do not believe in the orthodox doctrine of original sin, that is, a man is a born sinner on account of the sins of Adam the first man as described in the Old Testament of the Christian Bible, but they admit that every human being has divine possibilities slumbering within him however low and depraved he might appear to be at present. They do not believe religion should be founded on blind faith but they advocate the sacredness of reason and of soul-liberty. They do not believe in the Trinitarian doctrines of the orthodox churches.

The founder of the reformed church of Unitarianism was William E. Channing who may be regarded as the American Luther and may be described as America's Ram Mohon Roy the celebrated religious reformer of Calcutta. Channing was born in New England of America in 1780. His birthplace was Newport, the capital of the State of Rhode Island in U.S.A. At first he was an orthodox pastor and preacher in his own church for thirteen years from 1802 to 1815 A.D. Then he publicly denounced the Calvinistic doctrines of eternal hell fire and became the acknowledged leader of Unitarianism in America between 1815 and 1830. Channing was a powerful speaker. His broad and liberal views created a revolution in the minds of orthodox Christians of New England. The first Unitarian Church was established in Boston. In 1826, the second Unitarian Church was established in New York City. For the first time in America Christianity was founded on a rational basis by Channing. After a successful career of a religious

reformer Channing died in all glory in 1842 A.D. The Brahmo Samaj Missionary, Pratap Chandra Mazumdar, when he went to America, received sympathy and pecuniary help from the Unitarian Christians of Boston. He used to deliver sermons on Oriental Christ from the pupils of Unitarian churches.

On April 2nd in forenoon at 11 A.M. I delivered a class lecture on *Non-attachment* before my students.

On April 3rd 8 P.M. I gave a public lecture in the Hall on *Monism and Monotheism.* In this lecture I showed that Monism or Advaita Vedanta which teaches the oneness of the individual soul (*Atman*) with the Universal Spirit (Brahman) was higher than the dualistic ideal of monotheistic religions like Christianity, Judaism, etc. The audience numbered about 120.

RECORD IV

On April 4th the members of the Vedanta Society held a meeting at Mr. Leggett's Library at 4 P.M. to consider the ways and means of organizing the Vedanta Society of New York.

In the evening I held the meditation class with my students. In these meditation classes, I used to chant in Sanskrit some passages from the *Upanishads*, translated their meanings into English, and then instructed the students by showing how to concentrate their minds on one object or ideal and how to sit in silence and then enter into deep meditation. After the meditation for half an hour I chanted the prayer of the *Upanishad*: "O Lord! Lead me from the unreal to the Real, from darkness to Light, from death to Immortality. Manifest Thyself in me and protect me from all evil thoughts and desires with Thy Compassionate Face. *Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih*—Peace, Peace, Peace to us and to all living creatures."

On April 5th I had breakfast with Mr. Leggett. His tailor took my measures for the robe which was made of the billiard cloth at $14.00 per yard. The robe cost $75.00 about Rs. 225/-.

In the evening I dined with Mrs. Coulston who took me to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West with American Red Indians in the Madison Square Garden where circuses and all big shows take place in New York City. Buffalo Bill was an American, who lived with these Indians for many years in the middle-west of U.S.A. He brought some of these Red Indians whose forefathers were the original inhabitants of America before it was settled by the White people of Europe. In this show, we saw how the brave Indians fought with the new settlers before they were subdued and almost exterminated by them, how the Indians used to dress at the time of the war and how they had their war-dance, how they used to loot the mail coach (stage) and carry away white women and scalp them mercilessly. The show was extremely interesting and instructive to me.

On April 6th I went to breakfast at Mr. Leggett's house

and met Prof. Elmer Gates of Washington D.C. Prof. Elmer Gates was making new discoveries of physical science and its relation to mental science. His laboratory was in Chevy Chase, a suburb of the city of Washington. The Professor wanted to know some of the teachings of Raja Yoga and the effects of breathing exercises which I explained.

In the evening I delivered a public lecture on *What is Yoga?* The audience numbered about 112.

On April 7th I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett who took me again to see Buffalo Bill's Wild West in the Madison Square Garden.

On April 10th I held a class meeting at Mrs. Coulston's rooms which was attended by many of her friends, who were interested in the teachings of Vedanta. Next evening I held a meditation class.

In the evening of April 14th I went with Mr. Miner, a member of our Vedanta Society, to the Natural History Museum to see the annual exhibition of the Academy of Science. There I saw the most wonderful demonstration of Liquid Air recently discovered. The air of the atmosphere was liquified like water under the high pressure of 14 tons to a square inch with a low temperature of 300 degrees below zero. The liquid air was thrown on a table cloth like water and instantly a cloud of vapour went up without wetting the cloth. An egg when dipped in liquid air became as hard as a steel hammer and it could drive a nail on the table or wall without breaking or cracking. A piece of thick bar of steel when kept for a few seconds in liquid air becomes so brittle that it could be broken to pieces with fingers. Liquid air was put in a kettle which was placed on a block of ice. Instantly it began to boil and came out in the form of vapour. If a drop of liquid air is kept on the palm of a hand it will burn the skin and will produce a wound which will not be easily healed. Extreme cold and extreme heat will produce same effects. These experiments opened my eyes to the secret laws of nature and made a deep impression on my mind.

On April 20th, 8 P.M. I gave a public lecture on *Evolution and Reincarnation.* The audience numbered about 120.

At M. M. HALL:

On April 23rd, 11 A.M. on *Evolution and Involution.*

On April 24th, 3 P.M. on *Meditation and Concentration.*
On April 27th, 8 P.M. on *Is Vedanta Practical?*
On April 30th, 11 A.M. on *The Universality of Vedanta.*

I used to deliver three public lectures every week on Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays and hold meditation classes twice. As the season for lectures and classes came to an end, I closed my Sunday lectures on April 24th. The audience numbered 150. Wednesday lectures were closed on April 27th, audience numbering 120. The last lecture on Saturday drew an audience numbering 100.

On May 1st I closed my meditation class and went in Jersey City across the Hudson river, dinner with Miss Bradford at Whittier House and lectured on Vedanta in the evening.

On May 2nd I went with Mr. Jannus to the Electrical Show.

On May 3rd I went to Montclair, saw Dr. Janes of Brooklyn Ethical Society, who was a good friend of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Saradananda. I heard his lecture and spent the night at Mrs. Wheeler's house. He invited me to speak before the Cambridge Conference at Greenacre in Maine.

On May 4th I returned to New York, and arranged to give up my room in the boarding house from May 6th when I started at 9-30 A.M. by train for Washington D.C., the capital of the Uinted States of America. Mr. Leggett kindly gave me a pair of trousers as my trousers were old and worn out. I gave it away as I could not wear anything that was not new and unused by others.

Here I must say that after a successful lecturing season from October 1897 to May 6th, 1898, I conducted the various pioneering works of the Vedanta Society of New York, delivered series of public lectures in different places, held classes on Raja Yoga and Vedanta philosophy, met several prominent American people and laid the foundation of the Vedanta Society of New York on a solid self-supporting basis. All the expenses in connection with my lectures, the rent of the hall etc. including my lodging and boarding expenses were paid from subscriptions and collections in public meetings. As there was no permanent place for me to stay in New York and no fund to meet my expenses when I was not hold-

ing classes and delivering lectures, I was obliged to give up my room in a boarding house and to stay as a guest of my acquaintances who invited me in their homes in other cities. All the belonging of the Vedanta Society which I had packed in my trunk travelled with me wherever I went. After paying all my expenses there was a surplus of about thirty dollars which was deposited in the name of the Vedanta Society with Mr. Walkers, the treasurer of the Vedanta Society. But he never returned the same to us.

In Washington D.C. I was the guest of Mr. and Mrs. Jannus in their home. On Sunday, May 8th, 1898, I gave an informal talk in their parlour in the afternoon.

Next morning I went with Mr. Jannus to see the Zoological Park and in the afternoon went to Dr. Elmer Gates' laboratory at Chevy Chase. Dr. Gates showed me his inventions and invited me to dine with him.

On May 10th I went with Mrs. Jannus to Smithsonian Institute, Museum, Medical Museum and the Acquarium where various kinds of sea fishes were kept alive in waters contained in glass tanks.

In the afternoon I lectured on *What is Vedanta*? at Mrs. Johnson's studio room where she invited her friends to hear my lecture. After the lecture I answered many questions on that subject.

On May 11th I went with Mrs. Jannus to see the Congressional Library recently built in the city. In the afternoon I went to see the Base Ball, the national game of the Americans.

On May 12th I went with Mrs. Jannus and another lady to Mt. Vernon where Washington, the First President of the United States, had lived and died.

In the afternoon I lectured on *Practical Vedanta* at Mrs. Johnson's studio. It was she who was the founder of a church of "Practical Christianity." There Miss E. Mayson (sister Bhavani) heard my lecture and met me for the first time.

In the evening I talked on *The Relation of Vedanta to Theosophy* in an open meeting of the Theosophists at Mrs. Jannus's parlour. At that time the Theosophist movement was very strong and popular in Washington.

On May 13th I was invited to dine with Dr. Cowes who

was an old Theosophist for many years. Madam Blavatsky, the founder of the Theosophical movement, had stayed with Dr. Cowes in his house while she was writing her famous book *Isis Unveiled.* Dr. Cowes told me that Madam Blavatsky had the power to visualise the texts from old books which she published in her *Isis Unveiled* without reading any of those books at any time. At first he believed that those quotations were true. But when he compared several of her quotations with the original texts, he discovered that Madam Blavatsky had falsely visualised them through her vivid imagination. This is what he said to me when I asked Dr. Cowes how Madam Blavatsky could make such quotations in her book if she had not studied those old books herself. I continued: She must have been a profound scholar, and vastly erudite. Was she not? Dr. Cowes said that Madam Blavatsky was a very clever woman but not so scholarly, and that she had been exposed as a fraud. Therefore he had lost faith in her and he was no longer a member of the Theosophical Society. Dr. Cowes asked me whether I had read a booklet entitled *Isis Very-Much Unveiled,* in which Madam Blavatsky's tricks were badly exposed. I had not read it before that time. But afterwards I secured it and read it. I was surprised to find in this book all the tricks she had played in the name of her imaginary Mahatmas Koothoomy and Moria.

On May 14th I went to see Washington Monument and walked up to the top about 600 ft. high. From here I could see the grand view of the whole city of Washington and of the Potomac river flowing nearby.

On May 15th I lectured on *The Religion of the Hindus* before a large audience in "Peoples Church." My lecture was highly appreciated by all present in the congregation. In the afternoon I had a walk and a ride through the city with Mrs. Jannus.

On May 16th I met Mr. John G. Brady, the Governor of Alaska, who lived in Sitka, the capital of Alaska, which belongs to the United States of America. I enquired about the climatic conditions in summer and winter as well as about the original natives, the American Indians. Mr. Brady said that summer in Sitka was warm and very pleasant for three months when the days were long from 3 A.M. to 11 P.M. and the

glorious sun-set could be seen. He invited me to come to Alaska in the summer. But in the winter the temperature went down to 50° below ero (Fahrenheit) and stayed there for three months. It was then awfully cold and very few people could bear it. The days in winter were short and foggy and the nights were long. Aurora Borealis (the north-light) could be seen then. He also said that the Indians of Alaska were of a Mongolian type. Most probably their forefathers originally came from Mongolia in Asia and crossed the ocean over Behring Straits which joined the two continents. There were Mongolian words in their spoken dialect. I was very anxious to see Alaska and its gold-fields where nuggets of gold could be gathered from sand. Hundreds of American gold hunters were then sailing for Klondyke in Alaska from San Francisco every year in search after gold nuggets. Many of them could not bear the cold and snow in the winter and were frozen to death. Those who survived returned home as paupers after losing everything in their expedition. Still there was a great excitement among the poor Americans who desired to get rich quick by going to Klondyke.

In the afternoon I went with Mrs. Jannus to see the camp of soldiers (American) who were getting ready to fight the Spaniards in the Cuban War.

On May 17th I went with Mrs. Jannus to see her friend Mrs. Hay, where I met Mr. Wheels, the inventor of the underground electric tramcar, who explained to me the method of running it and said that he was sure that his method would soon be introduced in New York and other great cities of the United States.

Mrs. Jannus took me to a lady photographer to have my photo taken with my hair shuffled.

On May 18th Mr. Whitman gave me a nice drive in the park around soldiers' home in Washington D.C.

On May 19th, at 11 A.M., I went to the White House with Mr. Urgin, a member of the House, who introduced me to Mr. McKinley, the then President of the United States. The President was very busy in giving diplomatic instructions to the military officers about the Cuban War. The President McKinley gave me a cordial reception and asked me several questions about the Vedanta philosophy on which I was lec-

turing in the city, and showed his interest in the political condition of the people of India under British rule. I was the first Hindu of India who was introduced to the President of the U.S.A. My predecessor Swami Vivekananda never had the opportunity of being introduced to the President in the White House in the capital of the U.S.A.

In the evening I went with Mrs. Jannus to the Observatory in Washington and saw through a 12 inch telescope, Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus, double star (one star revolving around another star), Pole Star, and Nebula Lyre. The American astronomer, in charge of the Observatory, showed me all those planets etc., and explained to me everything connected with them.

On May 21st I went with Mrs. Jannus to the Navy Yard where I saw big 16 inch naval guns which were under construction. Then I saw the soldiers' parade. I went to see Mr. Wheeles' laboratory where he had constructed a miniature electric tram car line and made it run smoothly. This was his first invention.

In the evening I lectured on *Reincarnation* in Mrs. Jannus's parlour before a large number of her friends.

On May 22nd I lectured in the afternoon at 4 P.M. at Rauscher's Hall in the city of Washington on *Unity in Variety*. The audience listened with rapt attention. After the lecture I had a drive to Chevy Chase and went to see Dr. Elmer Gates.

On May 23rd Mrs. Jannus took me to another photographer to have my photo taken.

On May 24th I went with Mrs. Jannus to Arlington, a beautiful suburban town of Washington.

On May 25th I left Washington at 7-30 A.M. by a through train with Mrs. Livermore and arrived at Boston at 8-30 P.M. The whole train with hundreds of passengers in it was put on a ferry steamer to cross the Bay and we did not have to change. This was an unusual experience which I never had had before.

On my arrival at Boston Station Dr. Lewis Janes came to meet me and took me to Mrs. Ole Bull's studio house in Cambridge Mass. in pouring rain. Dr. Janes, who was the President of Brooklyn Ethical Society and Director of Cambridge Religious Conferences, invited me to be one of the speakers

before the Free Religious Association of Boston. He was living in Mrs. Less Ole Bull's studio house, where I was accommodated as his guest.

On May 26th it rained all day and night. I took a stroll in the afternoon with Dr. Janes, who showed me some places of interest in Cambridge.

On the morning of May 27th I spoke before the Free Religious Association on the Vedanta philosophy. Col. Higginson was the president who introduced me to the audience as the accredited teacher from India, on whom had fallen the mantle of the illustrious Swami Vivekananda. In the evening I dined with Dr. Janes and after supper I spoke in the evening festival of the Free Religious Association.

On May 28th Dr. Janes took me to the Harvard University where I met Prof. Royce, who taught Idealistic Philosophy, and Prof. William James, the noted Psychologist and Pragmatist. As it was the last day of the session of the University before summer vacation, I was allowed to sit in their class rooms and listen to their last lectures in which they summed up the lessons of the whole season. It was extremely interesting to me. At first I heard Prof. Royce and after an hour heard Prof. James. Seeing us in the midst of the audience Prof. James began to refute in his discourse the arguments in favour of Unity, of which I took notes.

Afterwards he asked me to speak on *Unity,* when I said it had already been announced that, on the following Sunday, I was going to address a meeting on *Scriptures, What Do They Teach*? at Mrs. Ole Bull's house before the members of the Cambridge Conference. But I would be delighted to speak on *Unity,* if he would kindly attend my lecture. He agreed to be present and so in compliance with his request I changed the subject and announced that I would speak on *Unity in Variety* instead.

Then I went with Dr. Janes to see Boston Public Library, State House, Commons Park and other places of interest in Boston.

On May 29th I went with Dr. Janes in the morning to Mt. Auburn Cemetery where the remains of the celebrated Bostonians were interred. We walked up to the top of the tower

from where we got a beautiful view of the surrounding country.

In the afternoon I delivered my lecture on *Unity in Variety* at Mrs. Ole Bull's house. Dr. Janes presided. Prof. William James and Prof. Lanman, the great Sanskrit scholar, who afterwards edited Whitney's translation of the Atharva Veda, were among the audience. It was a very learned lecture which the audience listened with rapt attention. In my discourse I brought out Prof. James' points against Unity and logically showed how fallacious they were.

Dr. Janes announced after my lecture was over that the Swami would be glad to answer questions. Prof. James had his students with him sitting by his side. He then whispered to them to ask his own questions, which I answered without any hesitation. After I had answered several questions of his students, Dr. Janes remarked: Swamiji will be very happy if Prof. James puts questions to him directly. To this Prof. James replied that it was not the place for him to ask questions. I supposed that the Professor was rather afraid lest he should be refuted in his arguments in the presence of his students.

At the close of the meeting Prof. James shook hands with me and congratulated me for my lucid and logical discourse on the subject of Unity and invited me to come to lunch with him in his house next afternoon. I accepted the invitation and thanked him for coming to my lecture.

In the evening I went with Mrs. Brocklesby to her house in Newton, a beautiful suburban town near Boston, and spent the night there as her guest.

On May 30th I returned from Newton to Cambridge and went with Dr. and Mrs. Janes to hear Prof. Shaler, the author of the scientific book entitled *Matter, Motion and Mind,* at the Memorial Hall. Then went with Dr. Janes to lunch with Prof. William James in his house. There were Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman and Prof. Shaler with us at the table. After lunch, Prof. James started a discussion against Unity with me because he believed in the Plurality of the Infinite and was against the idea of the Unity of the ultimate Truth of the universe. I on the other hand supported Unity (Advaitavada) and refuted his pluralistic arguments. The discussion lasted

for four hours, in which Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman, Prof. Shaler and Dr. Janes supported my arguments against Prof. James, who was at last convinced that the Vedantic point of Unity of Brahman the ultimate Truth was unassailable. Dr. Janes remarked to me after the discussion was over that he never heard such a learned and wonderful discussion before and that he wished that there were a stenographer to take the whole discussion in shorthand writing.

Then Prof. Lanman invited me with Dr. Janes to his house where we spent the whole afternoon. Prof. Lanman showed me his private library in which all the Vedas and Sanskrit scriptures, philosophy, Kavyas in Sanskrit and other works of Sankaracharya etc., a rare collection which he collected from India and other countries. He showed me the *Vedanta-Sutras* with Sankara's commentary (Bombay edition) in three volumes, and asked me whether I read them and could understand *Sankara-Bhashya.* I answered in the affirmative. Thereupon he said putting his forefinger on his head, "My brain cannot understand it." To this I replied: "You needed a Guru, preceptor who would have given you the key to open the secret door of your *buddhi,* the faculty of understanding, to realise the spiritual oneness of Vedanta." The learned Professor bowed to me saying: "You were lucky to find such a *Guru.*"

In the course of our conversation when I repeated the Sanskrit *Sloka*:

अनन्तशास्त्रं बहुवेदितव्यं, स्वल्पश्च कालो
बहवश्च बिघ्नाः ।
यत्सारभूतं तदुपासितव्यं, हंसो यथा
क्षीरमिबाम्बुमिश्रम् ॥

Prof. Lanman asked me how it was possible for a swan to drink the milk and leave the water as it was mentioned in that verse he could not understand. I explained that some acquatic birds possess some kind of acid in their mouth which curdles the milk there. Then it would be easy for the bird to swallow the curd of the milk without drinking the water. Prof. Lanman was very pleased to hear my explanation and

said that it had never occurred to him. How true and wonderful was the illustration! The Professor in his article on "The Milk-drinking Hansas of Sanskrit Poetry," on June 7, 1898, says: "Now by a singular coincidence, Swami Abhedananda . . . calling at my study last week. . . while my mind was upon the subject of this essay. . .had explained the hansa-fable. . . by saying that there was a secretion in bird's mouth which coagulated the milky part of the mixture (somewhat after the fashion of rennet), so that the resulting curdy portions became easily separable. . . The Swami's theory seems to be essentially like that of Sayana." From that day Prof. Lanman became a good friend to me and attended my lectures in Boston and later on became an Honorary member of the Vedanta Society of New York after I had organized it and had it incorporated.

RECORD V

On May 31st, 1898, I went to Newton again as the guest of Mrs. Brocklesby in the morning. In the afternoon Mr. Geismar came and took me to Brooklyn to call on Rev. Mr. Vanness, the Pastor of the 2nd Unitarian Church of Boston, who was the most popular Unitarian Minister and a great scholar. I had a very pleasant interview with him. After spending the night at Newton I returned to Cambridge next afternoon. Then Dr. Janes took me to Medford, another suburban town of Boston, where I was invited to spend the night as the guest of Mrs. Gibson. Next day I stayed in Medford and met some of the friends of Mrs. Gibson who were interested in Vedanta.

On June 3rd, 1898, I returned to Cambridge driving in a surrey carriage drawn by a team of fine horses. The motor cars did not exist at that time. The same evening I went again to Newton, met Mr. Brocklesby and stayed there. Next day it rained all the time.

On June 5th, in the morning, I came with Mr. and Mrs. Brocklesby to see Dr. Janes in Cambridge, and after lunch went to Newton and walked round the reservoir with Mrs. Brocklesby.

On June 6th I came with Mrs. Brocklesby to Boston in the morning, lunched in a restaurant with her and went to the Art Museum and then to the Atheneum Library. In the evening I went back to Newton and gave a talk to her friends who came to see me.

On June 7th I came to Boston Union Station. There I met Mrs. Briggs, a friend of Mrs. Ole Bull, with Dr. and Mrs. Janes. We went by train to Salem and saw the first Puritan Church, the relics of the witches who were burnt alive, the Gallows hill, pins etc., the witch house where the witches used to live, and returned to Cambridge in the evening.

On June 8th Miss Farmer of Greenacre, Maine, came to see me in the morning at Dr. Janes's quarters and had a long talk with her about Swami Vivekananda whom she had met and whose lectures she had heard in Greenacre. She invited me to come to Greenacre and deliver some lectures.

I drove with Mrs. Fox to Medford and was the guest of Mrs. Gibson who invited her friends to meet me. I gave a talk to them at a meeting in her parlour. Afterwards we had a drive in her carriage.

On June 9th I came back to Cambridge in the morning with Mrs. Gibson in her carriage, met Mrs. Briggs who showed me the interior of Mrs. Ole Bull's house which had artistic decorations.

On June 10th I returned to New York and met Mrs. Coulston at the station and stayed with her at No. 300, Manhattan Avenue.

On June 13th I held a meeting of the students of Vedanta at Mrs. Coulston's parlour.

On June 14th I came to see Mr. Leggett and had dinner with him in a first class restaurant.

On June 18th I went with Mrs. Coulston to Montclair, New Jersey. There we stoped at Mrs. Wheeler's and drove to the Country Club for lunch.

On June 26th I conducted the Sunday Service from the pulpit of the Unity Church of Montclair and addressed the congregation of the church numbering over 200 on *True Basis of Morality.* The Unitarian Minister of the Church introduced me to the audience. I opened the service with a prayer by reading a text from the Bible, selected the hymn from the Hymn Book which the audience sang standing, then delivered a Vedantic sermon on *True Basis of Morality,* selected another hymn and afterwards gave benediction. In the evening I returned to New York and stayed with Mrs. Coulston.

On June 29th I called on Mrs. Walter Goodyear, a disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who was living in Upper Montclair. In the afternoon I went to see the wedding ceremony of Miss Bonge Wheeler (Stella), the daughter of Mrs. Wheeler. The wedding was celebrated in the lawn around her house. This was the first time that I saw a Christian wedding ceremony.

On July 1st Prof. Herschel C. Parker of Columbia University invited me to attend the field meeting of the members of the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston. The meeting was held in Montclair. He introduced me to the members of the Club. As I was fond of mountain climbing, I was

enrolled as its member. Prof. Parker was a great mountain climber and he was pleased to have me as his companion in climbing.

I met Miss Emma Thursby, the noted piano music teacher and an admirer of Swami Vivekananda, who came to Mrs. Wheeler's in Montclair. I returned to New York in the evening.

On July 2nd I went to Mrs. Wheeler's again and met Miss Thursby's sister. In the afternoon I drove Mrs. Platt to the Country Club in a Buck board wagon. This was a peculiar kind of wagon with one seat on a spring board placed on four wheels drawn by one horse.

On July 4th I went to New York at noon and lunched with Mrs. Coulston and returned to Montclair in the afternoon with Mrs. and Miss Coulston to see the fireworks in commemoration of the National Day of the Declaration of American Independence. It was a day of great rejoicing. On this day the people of the U.S.A. threw off the British yoke, gained independence and became a free nation.

On the 5th of July I went with Miss Schroeder, devoted disciple of Swami Saradananda, in Montclair, and walked up to the top of the neighbouring hill, called Eagle Rock, from which the view of the surrounding country was grand and beautiful.

In the afternoon I rode on Mrs. Wheeler's Tandon (a two wheeled Buggy drawn by two horses one in front of the other) and drove four miles sight-seeing.

On July 6th I drove with Miss Schroeder to Verona on the other side of the hill, called Eagle Rock, in Montclair in forenoon.

On July 7th I went to New York in the morning and spent from 10-30 A.M. to 1 P.M. in Mr. E. E. Water's office and talked with him about my Vedanta works in New York as he was a lawyer and treasurer of the Vedanta Society. Returned to Montclair in the evening before dinner, and stayed at night at Mrs. Wheeler's home.

On July 9th Mrs. Coulston came with her daughter to see me. I drove them in Mrs. Wheeler's dog cart in the afternoon. Then drove with Miss Schroeder to the Country Club in Orange County.

On July 10th Mrs. Wheeler drove me in the afternoon to Little Falls, nearly four miles outside of Montclair.

On July 11th Mrs. Wheeler drove me with her uncle Mr. Morion to see Mr. Thomas Edison, the great inventor and electrician, and his laboratory in the town of Orange. I had a long talk with Mr. Edison who was stone-deaf, but was deeply interested in the Hindu philosophy, especially in Vedanta. Mr. Edison showed me his wonderful inventions of electrical machines, gramophones, electric bulbs, machine for running tramcar by electricity which was then unknown in the world. I was surprised to know how he worked assiduously sitting at his desk day after day and night after night, with the concentrated mind of a Hindu Yogi until he had solved his problem denying himself of his meals and sleep in his bed. In scientific lines Mr. Thomas Edison may be regarded as a real Yogi.

In the afternoon Mrs. Wheeler drove me to the Country Club where her friend Mrs. Newton read my hand and surprised me by saying that she had never in her life read such a marvellous hand like mine.

On July 12th I left Montclair and went by train to Watkins Glen near Buffalo in New York State where I was invited to visit and lecture on Vedanta Philosophy by Mrs. Mead who lived there. I stayed in her house as her guest. She was extremely hospitable to me and was deeply interested in the teachings of Vedanta philosophy.

On July 13th Mrs. Mead drove me to see the natural spring in the morning. The scenery was grand and beautiful. In the afternoon we went to Lake Seneca about 8 miles north of Watkins and went by a boat to Glenora where we had a picnic. As I was a strict vegetarian, I had to eat nothing but bread and butter with preserved olives which I could not eat before. But I was so hungry that I ate fourteen olives with great relish. From that day I began to like preserved olives. We returned to Watkins in the evening by train.

On July 14th I came to Buffalo from Watkins being invited by Mrs. Movins and dined with Miss Wright who was also interested in the teachings of Vedanta.

On July 15th I took a trip by electric tramway from Buffalo to the Niagara Falls in one hour and thirty minutes

in the morning. The sight of the gigantic waterfalls of the Niagara river was so grand and beautiful that it took my breath away. There are two waterfalls of the Niagara river, the one on the American side which is not very wide but deep, while the other is on the Canadian side very wide and semi-circular like a horse-shoe. There is a small steamer, "The Maid of the Mist" by name, which plies on the river Niagara below the falls and takes passengers close to them. I got on board the boat and went to the 'Cave of the Winds' behind the horse-shoe falls on the Canadian side. There is a narrow path which leads to the 'Cave of the Winds' over the wet and slippery rocks. I had to put on waterproof coat and rubber boots which were supplied to those who wanted to go to the Cave on a nominal charge for hire. In that Cave the wind was constantly blowing like a whirlwind and it almost knocked us out of our feet. There I stood facing the screen of water rushing down rapidly with great velocity. The sunlight falling on the mist-like spray on both sides of the waterfalls produced rainbow colours which were most brilliant and gorgeous to look at. After enjoying this wonderful sight I returned to the boat and sailed to the boat-landing on the other shore. The Niagara river falls down a precipice about 150 ft. high, then whirls round and round in the whirlpool before it can take a straight course. Anything that falls in that whirlpool cannot get out for a long time. I took my luncheon (noon meal) in the European Hotel and returned by electric tramway to Buffalo at 7 P.M. in the evening.

Next day I drove with Mrs. Movins and Miss L. Wright to the Lake Erie, one of the five big inland fresh water lakes viz. Superior, Huron, Michigan, Ontario and Erie, which separate Canada from the United States. Then I went to see the source of the Niagara river which is called "The Front." Then I had my dinner with Mrs. Carey who was Mrs. Movin's sister.

On July 17th, in the morning, I went with Mr. Hall to see the Niagara Falls again, and also the gigantic Power House which uses the water-power of the Falls to generate electricity by huge Turbines. This Power House supplies all current required to run the electric car to Buffalo as well as to light the streets and houses of that city. From there we went

to Lewiston by the Gorge Road and saw the Rapids, the whirlpool mentioned above, Devil's hole and Sister Islands on the Niagara river. Returned to Buffalo at 8 P.M. and stayed as Miss Wright's guest.

On July 18th I drove with Mrs. Movins, Miss Movins and Miss Wright, crossed the Niagara river by a ferry boat to the Canadian shore of Lake Erie. In the evening I gave a talk on Vedanta before a number of friends among whom were Dr. Carey and Mr. Ramsay, the noted scholars of Buffalo.

On July 19th we drove along the riverside and saw many new places with beautiful scenery.

On July 20th I talked with Mrs. Carey on the teachings of Vedanta in her garden in the morning. In the afternoon we drove to see Polo play and told them that Polo game came from India. It was the game of the Rajputs of India. In the evening we drove to see "Shoot the Shoots" on the shore of Lake Erie. It was a daring sight to be on a small boat shooting down from a high platform over a slope and dashing on the surface of the water with a lightning speed. The Americans like the thrills of a Dare-devil.

Returning from there we heard Miss Watson's fine music at Mrs. Movin's house. Next evening I was invited by Miss Watson, the noted musician, to dine with her in her house.

On July 22nd I left Buffalo and returned by train to Watkins. On the way I missed the corresponding train at the junction on the Lake Canandagua (an American Indian name) where I spent the whole afternoon sight-seeing. Then I took the evening train to Watkins and arriving at 8 P.M. became a guest of Mrs. Mead in her house.

On July 30th I left Watkins in the morning and reached Boston by train at 9 P.M. and put up in the U.S.A. Hotel, near Albany station for the night. Next morning I left Boston by train and arrived at Portsmouth in the State of Maine. Dr. Lewis Janes, the director of Cambridge Conferences, met me at the station and drove me to Greenacre where I was invited to lecture. It was the same beautiful country place in Maine where Swami Vivekananda and Swami Saradananda had lectured before.

In the afternoon I attended the meeting held in a large canvas tent where Dr. Du Busy spoke on *True Life*. In the

evening I called on Mr. and Mrs. Pierce where I met Miss Elis and Dr. White who had met Swami Vivekananda.

On August 2nd at 3-15 P.M. I delivered my first lecture in that large circus tent on *Religion and Science.* The tent was full and the audience numbering over one hundred listened with rapt attention.

Next morning at 10 o'clock I lectured in open air under a Pine tree which has been called "Swami's Pine" since the time when Swami Vivekananda lectured under that tree and held meditation classes. My subject was *What is Vedanta?* There I met Mr. Ralph Waldo Trine, the famous author of "In Tune with the Infiinte," who attended my lectures and classes. There I met also Mr. Malloy who was the president of the "Emerson Club." He was a personal friend and disciple of Ralph Waldo Emerson, the greatest Vedantic philosopher in America. Mr. Malloy was at first a cobbler by profession but under the spiritual influence of Emerson he became a profound philosopher and a scholarly interpreter of Emerson's essays and other writings. He asked me the meaning of Emerson's poem on *Brahm* which began thus:

> If the read 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.

He was surprised when I explained that this stanza was a free translation of two verses from the *Bhagavat Gita*:— य एनं वेत्ति हन्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् etc. and देहिनोऽस्मिन् यथा देहे. He said 'Now I understand the true source of Mr. Emerson's inspiration.'

When Ralph Waldo Emerson went to meet Carlyle in London, Carlyle presented to Emerson a copy of the English translation of the *Bhagavat Gita* by Charles Wilkins and said, "I have been inspired by the teachings of the *Bhagavat Gita* and I hope that you will be similarly inspired by them." Emerson after reading the Gita wrote that beautiful poem on *Brahm.* In his essay on *Immortality* Emerson quoted the whole story of Nachiketa from the *Katha Upanishad.* Later on, when I went with Mr. Malloy and Dr. Janes to see Emer-

son's home, I saw in his library the English translation of the *Manu-Samhita* and of the *Vishnu-Purana*.

At Greenacre I was requested to explain the *Bhagavat Gita;* so I held the *Gita* class every morning under the Swami's Pine, read the Sanskrit verses and then explained them in English. The audience enjoyed the musical sound of Sanskrit which was new to their ears.

At Greenacre while I was invited to lecture, I was allowed to have a room in a cottage and board in the Greenacre Inn, free of all charges. I was given a seat in a small room in the cottage and was allowed to take my meals in the inn which was like a boarding mess.

On August 7th I was asked to chant the Sanskrit verses of the *Gita* before a large audience in that big tent. In response to this request I recited some stanzas from the *Gita* (XI, 36-46) in the afternoon.

On August 10th I lectured in that tent on *The Scriptures of the Hindus as compared to Those of other Nations.*

On August 11th in the morning I held the *Gita* class under the Swami's Pine and in the afternoon I heard Mrs. Gibson's lecture on the philosophy of the great Swedish mystic Swedenborg. Next afternoon I heard her second lecture on Swedenborg. Swedenborg was like a Hindu Yogi who possesses *vibhuti,* the psychic powers of clairvoyance, clair-audience etc. He was also a spiritualistic medium and used to hold communications with departed spirits. He was a voluminous writer. Among his writings his book on *Heaven and Hell* is very interesting and instructive.

On August 13th I went in the evening with Mr. Bang to ride in his canoe on the river at Greenacre. It was a new experience for me. Canoe is a light and small boat propelled by paddles. It is somewhat like our Hilsa fishing boat on the Ganges near Calcutta. I was interested to learn how to paddle and steer at the same time. Mr. Bang loved me like his own brother.

On August 15th I went with Mr. Bang to Portsmouth. From there we sailed by a steamer to Appledore and Star Islands. We took our vegetarian lunch at a hotel on Star Island and then came to Appledore to see Celia Thaxter's (1835-1894) picturesque cottage with her beautiful flower

garden. Celia Thaxter was a great admirer of the *Bhagavad Gita.* She had read it again and again and understood the true spirit of its teachings. I went there purposely to see where she lived. I met one of her relatives and learnt that she was a great student and scholarly interpreter of the *Bhagavad Gita.* We returned to Greenacre by a canoe in the evening.

On August 16th I met Mr. Joseph Jefferson, the celebrated actor, dramatist, lecturer and artist (good painter), who came to deliver an address on the *Possibility of Drama* before a large audience in that big tent. The stage in the tent was beautifully decorated with greens and flowers of variegated colours. Miss Farmer made arrangements to have a group photograph taken in which I was included with Joe Jefferson and herself.

On August 17th I lectured in that tent on *Monism and Monotheism.* In this lecture I compared the ideas of the Advaita Vedanta with the teachings of the monotheistic religions of the world.

Here I was a strict vegetarian living on boiled potatoes and beans with white bread and butter. After a few days I suffered from indigestion and Dyspepsia. Dr. Janes came to see me and when I told him that I did not eat any kind of meat, fish or eggs, the good doctor replied: "That would not do for you here. 'When you go to Rome, do as the Romans do.' You have a mission in your life, you must take proper nourishing food, otherwise you will be sick." This friendly advice of Dr. Janes made a great impression on my mind. I went to Mr. Bang's mother and asked her if she would allow me to cook some boiled rice and curried vegetables in her kitchen. She was delighted to allow me to cook my own meal in her kitchen. So I cooked and all the members of her household watched me. After partaking of my meal my indigestion was cured and I felt all right.

On August 24th I went with Dr. Janes and Mr. Keith to see the Spanish prisoners who were captured by the American army in the Cuban war. The prisoners were kept in tents on an island and were provided with good food and comfortable kits.

Before I went to see the Spanish prisoners I lectured in the morning on *Unity in Variety* in that big tent.

On August 27th I went with a party of friends on an excursion to Mount Agamanticas about sixteen miles from *Greenacre*. Mr. Ralph Waldo Trine, the noted author of *In Tune with the Infinite*, went with us. He spent the whole day talking on the sublime ideals of Vedanta and enjoyed the beautiful scenery of the mountain and the surrounding country. Had our picnic under the trees after taking a swim in the lake. We returned to Greenacre in the evening.

On August 28th I chanted the Sanskrit Slokas of the *Gita* before a large audience in the big tent. Afterwards Mr. William Dean Howells, the noted American writer and novelist, lectured on the *Altrurian Traveller* and described the ideal of Altrurianism.

On August 29th I went with Mrs. Staten and Miss Mallet to York Beach. We drove to Kittery and then took the Electric tramcar and took our lunch on the Beach and returned to Greenacre in the evening. On our way we stopped at York Harbour to see Miss Konden, a lady from Chicago who had met Swami Vivekananda.

On August 31st I delivered my last lecture in Greenacre on Raja Yoga and held a meditation class at the request of the people who were interested in the practice of breathing exercises, concentration and the lessons on meditation. In the evening I paddled the canoe with Mr. Bang.

On September 1st I left Greenacre at 9 A.M. in the morning, drove with Mrs. Kate Stanton to Eliot (Maine) and came to Boston. Spending the afternoon there sailed by S. S. Piscilla of the Fall River Line, reached Newport in Rhode Island at 9-30 P.M. and slept in Kay Street House. On the following morning called on Dr. Kate Stanton, went to the Ocean Beach and took a bath in the Atlantic Ocean. In the afternoon we went to the Island Park and came back to the City of New Port by electric tramway.

On September 4th I called on Miss Lawrence at Senator Wetmore's palatial house and took tea with her in a beautiful room decorated with Oriental arts and furniture. The woodworks of this room were made of teak wood which went from India. She was a very aristocratic wealthy lady and was in-

terested in all the best things of the Orient, especially of India. She listened with rapt attention when I spoke to her on the teachings of Raja Yoga.

On September 5th Dr. Stanton took me on the famous ocean drive along the Atlantic Ocean in the afternoon to see the grandeur of the surfs of the Ocean and the beautiful view of the Island. In the evening we called on Miss Elleric, the grand-daughter of General Green who fought against the British during the revolution which made the U.S.A. independent of the British rule.

RECORD VI

On September 6th Miss Ellerie called on me at Dr. Stanton's house at Kay Street and had a long and interesting talk on Vedanta philosophy of which she wished to know more. In the afternoon we took the Cliff-walk along the Atlantic Ocean side which was very rough and slippery. In the evening we went to the Opera House to see the play which showed how the U.S.A. battle-ship named "Maine" was blown up in Cuba by the Spaniards. The Spanish-American War was thus brought about. The play also showed how the Americans avenged themselves on the Spaniards by defeating them.

On September 7th I called on Miss Warring, the noted painter of Newport and had a talk with her on Vedanta philosophy. In the afternoon Dr. Stanton took me to the Horse Show in Newport.

On September 8th I called on Mrs. Craton in the morning. In the afternoon I went to hear the dance recital of Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam at Miss Mason's parlour. There I was introduced to Mrs. Spencer, the wealthy and most influential lady of of Newport.

In the evening I left Newport for New York by S. S. Puritan, a steamer of the Fall River Line.

On September 9th I landed at New York in the morning at 7 A.M., met Mrs. Coulston at the dock and went with her to see Mr. Francis H. Leggett in his Wholesale Grocer's Store. We spent the morning with him and planned for my works in the next season in New York. At noon we came to see Mr. Van Haagen and lunched with him.

In the afternoon I left New York by 3 o'clock train to East Hampton on Long Island. On my arrival at the station met Rev. Heber Newton D.D. at whose invitation I came to be his guest for a few days in his summer home on the cliffs of the Atlantic Ocean. Dr. Heber Newton was a great scholar and an influential and popular clergyman of Episcopal Denomination in New York. He was the minister of All Soul's Church on Madison Avenue in New York City. He was very

broad and liberal in his views and he had a big library containing the scriptures of all religions, the Vedas, Puranas, etc. of the Hindus, the Ecclesiastical History of the Christian church, etc.

Here I had a rare oportunity to learn all the Higher Criticisms of the Bible, the doctrines and dogmas of different sects among the Christians as well as comparative studies of all religions of the world. He was extremely sympathetic with the teachings of Vedanta philosophy which I represented. He treated me like a member of his own family while Mrs. Newton was kind and loving to me as she was to her own son.

I was delighted to be their guest in their home where they looked after my meals and all comforts. They wanted to help me in my Vedanta lectures in every possible way because my views were unsectarian and universal in their scope.

Dr. Newton had a rowboat in the Bay near his house. In the morning after breakfast I used to practise rowing.

On September 11th I bathed in the ocean at noon. The waves were dashing against the rocks of the cliff and as there was no beach it was difficult for bathers.

In the afternoon Dr. Newton gave me a drive in his carriage drawn by two fine horses, which got frightened on the way at the sight of a newspaper sheet on the road side. Dr. Newton who was driving himself had a hard time to manage his shy horses. He said with a smile that some of the horses saw ghosts and had strong power of imagination. Then we went to his studio where he invited his friends to hear my lecture on the Divinity of Jesus the Christ. Among his friends there was Rev. Dr. Greer, a prominent minister of St. Bartholomew's Church in New York City. He was very pleased to hear my interpretation of the Divine Incarnation of Jesus the Christ.

On September 14th I went with Mrs. Newton to the Montauk Point on the Long Island to see the Wikoff Camp where the American soldiers who fought against the Spaniards in the Cuban War were staying. Dr. Newton's son was a volunteer amongst them. Mrs. Newton was proud to see her son returned after winning the laurels of victory. We returned to East Hampton in the evening.

On September 16th after enjoying my visit at East Hamp-

ton I returned to New York and stayed at Mrs. Coulston's apartment in the evening.

On September 18th Prof. Herschel C. Parker of Columbia University called on me and invited me to go with him as his guest to the White Mountains in the State of New Hampshire. I was pleased to accept his kind invitation. Next morning I left New York with Prof. Parker by train. It took whole day by train to arrive at Crawford's Notch at the foot of the White Mountains. After our arrival at 8 P.M. we took our rooms in the hotel. At night the temperature was 40 F. It was quite cold.

On September 20th it rained hard all morning. At 11 A.M. I walked with Prof. Parker and Mr. Bean (Parker's friend) along the Rail Road track to see the Notch. It was a ravine of the mountain, very deep and the surrounding scenery was wild, rocky but beautiful and picturesque. In the afternoon I climbed with Prof. Parker to the top of Mount Willard and saw the snow-covered top of the Mount Washington. The view was grand.

September 21st 1898. I was always extremely fond of mountain climb and adventurous tasks. I was highly pleased when Prof. Parker arranged for our climb to the top of Mt. Washington. We started from Crawford's Notch Hotel at 8-30 A.M. taking our lunch or tiffin which consisted of bread, sandwiches and cheese and walked up along the Bridle Path and our eyes were feasted with beautiful scenery at every step. We climbed up to the neck of Mt. Washington which was covered with light snow about four inches deep. It was about one o'clock when Prof. Parker said to me: We must halt now and take our tiffin or lunch. He thought that there was a fresh water spring nearby where we could get drinking water. At his suggestion we halted and ate our lunch but I was extremely thirsty after such a long climb. Prof. Parker looked for the spring but could not find it as the whole mountain side was covered with snow. At last I wanted to quench my thirst by eating handfuls of snow. I was relieved of my dry mouth and after lunch we began to climb over slippery snow and continued until we reached the top at about 3-30 P.M. There was a hotel on the summit called the Summit House. The whole top was covered with snow and icicles were hanging

down the Summit House and some of them were sticking out about a foot long from the walls of the hotel building. I was fascinated with this grand sight. There we took our rooms for resting at night. I felt so thirsty that I began to drink cold water profusely. I drank fourteen glassfuls of water but still I felt thirsty. Prof. Parker said that this was the bad effect of eating snow. It was a great lesson for me to learn that the eating of snow produces more thirst instead of quenching it. The thermometer registered 16° above zero. My fingers were frozen on account of wearing thin and tight kidgloves. My fingers were so numbed that I could not hold a pen or pencil and had no sensation in my fingers for a week. The distance to the Summit House from Crawford's Notch was nine miles which we climbed in seven hours. We had good rest at night in the hotel where the rooms were comfortably heated with open fire. With all these new experiences I enjoyed the climb to Mt. Washington and found in Prof. Parker a good guide and a delightful companion.

Next morning we left the Summit House at 8 A.M. and walked down the Carriage Road and arrived at Dirby Cottage at 11-15 A.M. The distance was eight miles. There we met Dr. Lewis Janes who came from Greenacre to take rest. From there we took a tram and came to Jackson and lunched at Glen's Inn. Then drove to Glen Station and took 3-50 P.M. train and arrived at Crawford at 5 P.M.

On September 23rd Prof. Parker and I joined with some members of the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston who came there on excursion. We accompanied them and left Crawford by 12-15 o'clock train and came to Colebrook. From there we drove in a stage (which was like a large bus drawn by four strong horses) to Dixville Notch and arrived there at 6 P.M. It took nearly two hours to drive 15 miles on mountainous road in pouring rain.

On September 24th we walked down the Notch in the morning. Prof. Niles, the President of the Appalachian Mountain Club was the Professor of Geology in the Technological Institute of Boston. He went along with us and explained by showing the different strata of the rocks how those notches in the mountains were formed. It was a rare opportunity for

me to get practical demonstrations of the principal points of Geology.

In the evening at 8-30 P.M. I was requested to speak before the members of the Appalachian Mountain Club on my travels on the Himalayas in India. Prof. Niles introduced me to the members of the Club. I delivered an interesting lecture and described the grandeur, the majesty of the Himalayan range of mountains, the beautiful scenery and the grand view of Mt. Everest and Kanchanjungha, the highest peaks of the world. The audience was surprised to hear me say that if the whole range of the White Mountains of New England in America were placed in one of the valleys of the Himalayas, it will be lost into insignificance and no one will be able to find it. I explained the meaning of the Sanskrit word "Himalaya," the abode of snow. The President gave me a vote of thanks for giving such an interesting talk which the members of the Club enjoyed immensely.

Next morning I took a short walk and attended the Sunday Service in the neighbouring church and enjoyed the sermon by Rev. Mr. Peacock.

In the afternoon we went to the fishery to see how the eggs of Trout fish were taken out from their nests in water and how they were hatched. Then we climbed up to the Table Rock and the mountain peak named "Old King." In the evening at 8 P.M. I was requested to lecture on the *Religious Ideals of the Hindus*. The audience had erroneous ideas about the manners, customs and religion of the Hindus. Correcting their errors I spoke for over an hour and the audience listened with rapt attention.

On September 26th I walked down in the afternoon with Prof. Parker to the Flume and Cascades about a mile from the hotel. In the afternoon, a group photo of the members of the A. Mt. Vlub was taken in which I was included.

On September 27th it rained whole day; therefore we could not go out. I took lessons in playing Billiards, Bottle Pool, and Pocket Pool on Billiard Table in the hotel and also learnt how to play the Chinese Franklan or Ping Pong (Table Tennis) and the American game of Crocket.

On September 28th, at 8-30 A.M. we drove to Lake Umbagog and from there we took the small steam-boat and

went up to the Magalloway river. This name was given to the river by the American Indians, the original inhabitants of the country. We had our lunch on the river bank and returned to Balsams Hotel at about 6 P.M. Balsams is a kind of fragrant pine tree which I never saw before anywhere.

On September 29th we played Crocket in the afternoon and enjoyed the fun of the sham Baseball game which some of the members of the Club played.

In the evening at 8 P.M. I attended a meeting of the Club where Mr. Whitman spoke about the Mountains in the Southern State of Georgia. Then Prof. Niles explained the causes of the formation of notches in the mountains from the standpoint of Geology.

On September 30th we left Dixville Notch in New Hampshire at 9 A.M. by train, came to Colebrook and from there to Fabians. From there we had a beautiful view of the snow-covered top of the White Mountain and of the lovely sunset colours on it. We started from there by train at 10-30 P.M. for Springfield, Mass.

Next morning we arrived at Springfield at 7-30 A.M. At 8-35 A.M. we took another train for Albany in New York State arriving there at 12-11 P.M. We changed there and took another train at 2-45 P.M. and arrived at Kingston at 4-45 P.M. There I parted with Prof. Parker who was going to New York City. But I was going to visit Mr. Leggett in his country home at Stone Ridge. I drove from the station in Mr. Leggett's carriage which was waiting to take me over. Mr. Leggett and all the members of his household were delighted to see me in their home. As Miss MacLeod, Mrs. Leggett's sister, was not there, I was given the privilege of occupying her room during my short visit.

On October 2nd Mr. and Mrs. Leggett gave me a drive in the afternoon to see the waterfalls on the mountain side. Mr. Leggett had a Casino which was a separate building where different kinds of indoor games the members of the family used to play. There was a Bowling Alley in which iron balls were rolled to knock down the wooden pins about 18 inches long which were set up standing in a row at the end of the Alley. I never saw this game before. Mr. Leggett's step-son wanted me to play with him. At first I took lessons and then

I could bowl like an expert in that game. Mr. Leggett's friend, Mr. Lathrop, a renowned artist of New York City, came with his wife to Ridgely Manor which was the name of the house, to spend a few days with the Leggetts as their guests. I was introduced to Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop who were interested in the teachings of Vedanta. They used to ask me questions about the religious ideas of the Hindus and I used to answer them elaborately. Mr. and Mrs. Leggett were devoted to Swami Vivekananda and admired his wonderful powers in the presence of their friends and influenced their minds in such a forceful way that they could not help becoming staunch admirers of the Swami in the long run. And as I was Swami Vivekananda's successor in U.S.A. as well as his spiritual brother (*Gurubhai*) and a colleague, they took interest in me and the Vedanta works with which I was entrusted by Swami Vivekananda to do there.

On October 10th I was invited to drive with Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop to Lake Mohunk. From there I went walking with Mr. Lathrop to Lake Minawaska. Thereafter taking our lunch, we drove to the third Lake Awosting in the Catskill range of mountains which was about two miles long at the elevation of 1800 ft. above the sea level. Then returned to Lake Mohunk at 5 P.M. and drove back to Ridgely Manor at 6-30 P.M. The scenery was beautiful and this outing was very pleasant and restful for me after hard climb on the White Mountains with Prof. Parker and the members of the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston.

On October 12 I drove with Mr. Leggett's step-daughter, Alberta to Kingston, met Mr. and Mrs. Lathrop there and drove back to Stone Ridge.

On October 15th I left Stone Ridge with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett and came to New York City by train.

On October 18th I went with Mrs. Leggett and her son, Harry at 2 P.M. to the Brooklyn Navy Yard to see the U.S.A. battle-ships which had returned from Cuba after the Spanish-American War was over. I went on board the "Indiana," the largest of the battle-ships with Lieutenant Jones who showed the 16" inch diameter naval guns, their torrets and other smaller guns and explained everything. I saw the other battle-ships named "Massachusetts," "Brooklyn," "Chicago" and went

on board the flag-ship "New York." Took tea on the battle-ship "Vermont," saw the Torpedo Boat "Winslow" by name, and learnt how Torpedoes were shot through long holes on the sides of the boat like tubes. The battle-ship "Brooklyn" was in the dry dock under repairs. We returned to New York at 7 P.M. This time I stayed at Mr. Leggett's home at 34th Street, New York. This was a unique experience for me.

On October 19th I called on Dr. Guernsey, a consulting physician, who was a friend and admirer of Swami Vivekananda. There I met Mr. Lansberg (Swami Kripananda) and had a pleasant talk with him.

In the evening, I went to see Mrs. Coulston.

On October 27th I moved in the afternoon from Mr. Leggett's home to a small room in a boarding house at 143 East 21st Street, on a weekly rent of fifteen dollars.

In the evening I went with Mr. Van Haagen to the 5th Avenue Theatre to see Mr. Joseph Jefferson (whom I met in Greenacre) as "Bob Acres" in a comic play called the "Rivals." Mr. Jefferson was deaf and could not hear anything; but he played his part marvellously well without hearing any prompting at all. It was a great surprise to me.

My room was next to the elevated Rail Line on the wooden bridge over the street. Express trains were running with terrific noise all night long. That kept me awake and I could not sleep at all. But from the following night I could sleep soundly like a top inspite of the terrific noise of the running trains. This was the effect of my auto-suggestion to the sub-conscious mind which perfectly obeyed my order. And I was not disturbed in my sleep so long I stayed in that room. Was it a kind of Yoga practice?

On October 21st I called on Miss Waldo in Brooklyn but she was out. Then I went to see Miss Fitts, another student of Vedanta. Returned to New York at 4-20 P.M. In the afternoon I called on Mr. Van Haagen and Mrs. Coulston and made plans for my lectures and classes during the coming season. On my way I met Mr. Lansberg (Swami Kripananda) and had a talk with him.

On October 22nd I was invited by Dr. Guernsey to dine there and spend the evening. There I met Mrs. Peeke who

was a friend and admirer of Swami Vivekananda. Just before Dr. Guernsey met Swami Vivekananda, as already mentioned, he had lost his grown-up son whose features resembled those of Swami Vivekananda. So the presence of the Swami aroused filial affection in the hearts of Dr. and Mrs. Guernsey. From that time they were very kind to the Swami who was treated as their own son. They had a daughter who also loved the Swami as her own brother. They made me feel quite at home with them and I enjoyed to listen to their talk about the attractive personality of the Swami.

On October 23rd I went with Mrs. Coulston to hear the Sunday Sermon of Mr. Hugh O. Penticost, a noted Evangelist Christian Minister. Then went to hear Dr. Minot Savage, the noted Unitarian Minister of his church and a friend of our Brahmo preacher Pratap Chandra Mazumdar. In that church I had the pleasure of hearing a sermon on *The Oriental Christ* by Mr. Mazumdar when he came to New York on his third visit.

In the evening I went to hear Mr. Bjereguard, the Librarian of the New York Public Library. He was a great scholar and a good speaker. He was a Norwegian and a believer in Swedenborg's Spiritual Science as well as in the Theosophy of Madan Blavatsky.

On October 24th I went with Mr. Van Haagen to see the Vandeville or Keith's continuous performance like a circus with clowns, acrobats and other amusing short plays. I never saw anything like this before.

On October 25th I spent the evening with Mr. and Mrs. Leggett and met their friends who were admirers of Swami Vivekananda. In this way I became acquainted with influential people who gradually came to my lectures and classes and took interest in my Vedanta work in New York City.

On October 26th I was invited to spend the evening with Miss Burnham and her friends who used to hear my lectures.

On October 27th I moved from that boarding-house to another at No. 33 East 22nd Street where I got a quieter room.

On October 28th, 1898, the Vedanta Society was incorporated.

On October 29th, in the afternoon, I went with Mr. Van Haagen to Miss Waldo's home in Brooklyn where I had the pleasure of meeting Miss Siri Swanander, a young lady disciple of Swami Vivekananda. We spent the evening talking on various subjects as well as on Vedanta. Returned to New York about 11-30 P.M.

On October 31st I went to call on Miss Fitts in Brooklyn. Returned to New York in the afternoon and went to see a new oil-painting by Mr. Lathrop, in St. Bartholomew's Church, which covered the wall above the altar. It was a masterpiece on the Resurrection of Jesus the Christ.

On November 1st Mrs. Grannis, my boarding-house keeper, who was a social reformer, invited me to speak in the evening before the Social Culture Club which held its meeting in her parlour. I spoke on the Ideals of Social Culture. I requested Mr. Leggett to be the first President of Vedanta Society.

As the Vedanta Society of New York was recently incorporated, we had a great difficulty in engaging a hall in the name of the Vedanta Society. It was necessary to have a wealthy man as a guarrantor who should take a lease for the hall at his own risk and pay in advance the rent of the hall before each month began; otherwise we could not engage any hall for my lectures in the city. Therefore I was obliged to request Mr. Leggett to become the President of the Vedanta Society and in doing so my object was that he would engage the hall at his own risk and sign the lease. At first he hesitated because he was not educated enough to become the President, who ought to be a scholar. But I persuaded him to take that position and succeeded at last in making him the first President of the Vedanta Society of New York. Mr. Leggett engaged the Assembly Hall (United Charities Building, No. 109 E. 22nd Street near Fourth Ave., New York), at his own risk, for my lectures and classes during this season beginning from November 2nd. In this Hall, my first lecture—*What is Vedanta* was delivered on 2nd November 1898, at 8-15 P.M. The audience numbered over 153. Here every week I gave public lectures on Wednesday and Sunday evenings and held Raja Yoga classes on Saturday mornings.

On November 3rd I called on Mr. Leggett, who was

pleased to hear of my success in the Assembly Hall. Then I called on Mrs. Coulston in the evening.

On November 5th I held Raja Yoga class in the morning at 11 A.M.

On November 6th Sunday evening, at 3-15 P.M., I gave a public lecture on *Scientific Basis of Religion.* The audience numbered over 100.

On November 9th Wednesday evening, at 8-15 P.M., I lectured on *Is Vedanta Pantheistic*? In this lecture, I showed the difference between Pantheism and Vedantic Monism. The audience numbered about 100.

On November 12th Saturday morning, at 11 A.M., I held Raja Yoga class.

RECORD VII

The following is the Constitution of the New York Vedanta Society:

The Vedanta Society of the City of New York was founded by Swami Vivekananda in 1894, and incorporated according to the Laws of the State of New York by Swami Abhedananda on October 28, 1898.

Certificate of Incorporation.

State and County of New York S.S.:

We, the undersigned, desiring to form a Corporation pursuant to the provisions of the Membership Corporation Law.[3]

All being of full age and two thirds being citizens of the United States and a majority residents of the State of New York, do hereby Certify and State:

First: The name of the proposed Corporation is the Vedanta Society of the City of New York.

Second: The purpose or purposes for which it is to be formed: to explain through logic and reason the spiritual laws on which various sects and creeds of different religions have been founded; to propagate the principles taught by the great religious teachers of different countries and illustrated by their lives; and to help mankind in the practical application of these principles in their spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical needs.

Third: The principal place of meeting of such Society is to be located in the Borough of Manhattan, City, County and State of New York.

Fourth: The number of its trustees is six.

Fifth: The names and places of residence of the persons to be its trustees until its first annual meeting are:

Mr. Francis H. Leggett	...	New York City
Mrs. Bessie Macleod Leggett	. .	do
Mrs. Mary B. Coulston	...	do
Mr. Water Goodyear	...	do
Mrs. Frances B. Goodyear	...	do

[3] Chapter 559 of the Laws of the State of New York, 1895, Act relating to Membership Corporation Law constituting Chapter 43 of the General Laws.

Mr. George H. Thomson. . . Sing Sing, New York.

Sixth: The times of holding its annual meetings are the second Tuesday in October in each year after date of incorporation.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF—We have made and acknowledged this Certificate this 28th day of October A.D. Eighteen hundred and Ninety-eight, in duplicate:

Francis H. Leggett, Frances B. Goodyear, Bessie Macleod Leggett, Walter Goodyear, Mary B. Coulston, G. H. Thomson.

State of New York,
County of New York.
City of New York,
Borough of Manhattan. S S:

On this 28th day of October, 1898, before me personally came Francis H. Leggett, Bessie Macleod Leggett, Mary B. Coulston, Walter Goodyear, Frances B. Goodyear, and George H. Thomson, who are known to me to be persons described in and who executed the foregoing certificate, and they severally duly acknowledged to me that they executed the same.

Signed,
Benjamin F. Shores,
Notary Public, Kings County,
Certificate filed in New York Co.

(Seal.)

The membership roll was opened on March 7, 1900, and the Constitution and Bye-Laws of the Society were then formulated. Certain amendments, proposed on April 4th of the same year, were accepted on May 14th, and since that time a few further modifications, necessitated by the rapid growth of the Society, have been introduced.

The Constitution and By-Laws of the Society as herewith presented were finally accepted by the Society at its Regular Meeting on November 10, 1904.

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I

Name

This Society shall be known as "The Vedanta Society of the City of New York."

ARTICLE II

Objects

The objects of the Vedanta Society shall be:

1. To study and propagate the truths of the Philosophy and Universal Religion of Vedanta as expounded by Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda and such other Hindu Swamis of the same Order and School[1] as may be authorized and appointed by them as their successors.

2. To aid in all reasonable ways the success and growth of the work started by these Swamis.

3. To conduct and manage all the business connected with the work above stated.

ARTICLE III

THE SWAMI

The Swami Vivekananda or Swami Abhedananda or any one of their authorized successors in charge of the Vedanta work in New York, shall counsel and advise the officers and committees of the Society connected therewith. He may be present at all meetings of all Committees of the Society, and in case differences of opinion shall arise, he shall act as umpire and his decision shall be final and binding.

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[1] Swami Vivekananda and Swami Abhedananda belong to the Order and School of Ramakrishna, the headquarters of which are at Belur Math, Calcutta, India.

ARTICLE IV

SEAL

The Corporate Seal of the Society shall be a circular seal with the name of the "Vedanta Society" and dates of establishment and incorporation in a scroll underneath.

ARTICLE X

AMENDMENTS

1. The Constitution shall consist of ten articles. Of these, Articles I, II, III, IV, and Sec. I of Article X can never be amended.

* * * *

On November 13th, Sunday evening, at 3-15 P.M., I lectured on "Vedanta and the Teachings of Jesus the Christ." The audience numbered over 150. In this lecture, I showed the similarity between the teachings of Jesus and those of Vedanta as well as of Sri Krishna and Buddha.

On November 14th I was invited by Miss Waldo (Yatimata) to dine with her at her home, in Brooklyn, and afterwards she took me to hear a lecture on the Phillipine Islands by a Phillipino, whose name was R. R. Lala. In this lecture, he described the manners, customs, religious ideas of the inhabitants in a very interesting way.

On November 15th Mr. Walter Goodyear, a householder admirer of Swami Vivekananda, took me to the horse show, in New York City.

On November 16th, at 8-15 P.M., I lectured in the Assembly Hall on *Is Vedanta Pessimistic*? I had to remove the idea which was in the minds of many that Vedanta teachings lead one to become a pessimist finding fault with the enjoyments of the earthly life.

On November 17th Prof. Parker took me to the Columbia University at 10 A.M., showed me the different classes in session, introduced me to Dr. Seth Low, the President of the University, who was very pleased to know my mission and

the teachings of Vedanta philosophy on which I was delivering public lectures.

I was also introduced to Prof. W. H. Jackson,[6] who was a Sanskrit scholar as well as the Professor of the Iranian language of Persia. He was an authority on the Zendavesta and he wrote the life of Zoroaster, the Prophet of Persia.

Prof. Parker showed me the Library of the University where all sorts of books of reference from all nations of all countries were kept in order. There I saw the Vedas in Sanskrit, the English translation of the Mahabharata and other scriptures of the Hindus. I was invited to take my luncheon with the Professors of the University which I accepted with great pleasure. In the Library was kept Dr. Benjamin Franklin's Chair. At Prof. Parker's request I had the pleasure of sitting on that Chair of the great American scientist.

On November 18th I went with Mr. Van Haagen to Mrs. Arthur Smith's class in the evening. In her classes, Mrs. Smith who was born in India gave talks on the manners, customs and religious ideas of the Hindu people of India. I was requested by her to speak before the members of her classes.

On Saturday November, 19th, at 11 A.M., I held my Raja Yoga class in the Director's room of the Assembly Hall.

On Sunday, November 20th, at 3-15 P.M., I lectured in the evening in that Assembly Hall on *The Ideal of Vedanta and How to Attain It.* The audience numbered over 100.

On November 22nd, Tuesday evening, the Executive Committee meeting of the Vedanta Society which I succeeded in organizing was held in Mr. Leggett's house. I went to that meeting and formally proposed Mr. Leggett to be the first President of the Vedanta Society of New York City; and he was unanimously elected as the President. I thanked Mr. Leggett for the interest he was taking for the Society as well as for his generous help in engaging the Assembly Hall at his own risk for my lectures and classes. Mrs. Coulston became the Secretary and Mr. Goodyear, the treasurer of the Society. Such was the beginning of the organization of the Vedanta Society of New York City which was incorporated according to the laws of the City.

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[5] The learned Professor died on the 8th August, 1937.

On November 23rd I lectured on *The Different Stages of Spiritual Development.* The audience numbered about 100.

November 24th was the Thanksgiving Day. It was called by this name to commemorate the day on which the Puritan forefathers of the American people who were the first English settlers in America, after landing on Plymouth rock in the State of Rhode Island, gave thanks to their Lord at the sight of a ship laden with provisions which came to rescue them from starvation and death. This day is celebrated all over the country with special religious services in churches of all denominations of Christianity, with special dinners and all sorts of sports and amusements. It is observed as a public holiday of general rejoicing. In New England States as well as in other States, those who can afford, invite their friends and relatives to dinners and enjoy the feast of roasted Turkey called Gobblers, a kind of large-sized bird (almost as large as a peahen) which was indigenous in the United States of America.

It snowed heavily for three hours in the afternoon beginning at 2 P.M. I never saw such a steady snow-fall before. The streets were covered with one foot of snow. All traffic was stopped and the pedestrians had great difficulty to walk about. I fell on slipery snow as I did not have rubber overshoes to put over leather shoes.

On November 26th I held my Raja Yoga class in the morning. It snowed heavily all afternoon and all night. Miss Waldo çame to see me after the class was over.

On Sunday, November 27th, at 3-15 P.M., there was about 2 ft. of snow on the streets. I had to go out over snow to the Assembly Hall in the evening to lecture on *What is Essential for Spiritual Growth*? The audience was small on account of deep snow on the streets. Still the audience numbered 38 which was a very good attendance under such unfavourable conditions of the weather.

On November 28th I went in the morning with Mr. Van Haagen to the Central Park to see the snow. There I had a ride on a sleigh for the first time in my life. A sleigh is drawn by horses. It is like a Buggy without wheels but has two long steel runners. It slides on snow and the horses have small bells which jingle on their necks when they run. This

was a novel experience for me, and I enjoyed it immensely. I spent the whole morning in the Park. Then called on Dr. Guernsey, got his book and sent it to Swami Vivekananda in India.

In the afternoon Dr. Close called on me. In the evening I held a meditation class in Miss Lindquist's office room of her Employment Bureau. She was a Swedish woman from Stockholm. She was my student. Mr. Heyblom attended my lectures and classes. He was a Dutchman from Amsterdam and knew several European languages.

On November 30th, at 8-15 P.M., I lectured on *What becomes of the Soul after Death*? The audience numbered about 100.

On December 3rd I held a meditation class in the forenoon.

On December 4th, at 3 P.M., I gave a public lecture on *Reincarnation*. The audience numbered about 100.

In the evening I was invited with Miss Waldo to dine at Mr. Goodyear's. Then went with Miss Emma Thursby, a noted Pianist and an admirer of Swami Vivekananda to hear Emil Paur's concert in the Carnegie Hall.

On December 7th I went in the afternoon to the Committee meeting of the Vedanta Society at Mr. Leggett's house.

In the evening, at 8 P.M., I gave a public lecture in the Assembly Hall on *Ego and Egoism*. The audience numbered about 100.

On December 8th Prof. Parker called on me in the afternoon and took me to the Athletic Club in Brooklyn as his guest. There we had games of chess, bottle pool and bowling. We had dinner together and returned late at night.

On December 9th a German student of mine came in the evening to take lessons in Sanskrit. His name was Mr. Kretchmer.

On December 11th, at 3 P.M., I delivered a lecture on *What is Salvation*?

On December 12th I held a meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour.

On December 13th I spoke before the Social Culture Club on *Womanhood in India* at Mrs. Grannis's house. Dr. De

Costa was in the chair. Dr. Bishop read his lecture on *Marriage and its Results.*

On December 14th, at 8 P.M., I delivered a lecture in the Assembly Hall on *Philosophy of Work.* The audience numbered about 100.

On December 15th I was invited by Miss Thursby to meet Prof. Davidson and Dr. Hepworth in the evening as well as to dine with them.

On December 16th a newspaper reporter called on me and I gave him an interview describing the ideals of Vedanta Philosophy. In the evening I called on Mrs. Conner and met her sister Mrs. Carpenter and also Mr. Carpenter.

On December 18th, at 3 P.M., I gave a public lecture on *What is Divine Love?* The audience numbered about 100. In the evening Mr. Groves and his brother called on me and I talked with them on Vedanta.

On December 21st, at 8 P.M., I gave a public lecture on *The Ideal Devotion.*

On December 23rd I called on Miss Waldo and Miss Fitts. In the evening I was invited to dine with Mrs. Conner.

On December 24th I held the morning class on Raja Yoga at 11 A.M.

On December 25th I went to the Christmas Service at St. Xavier's Church with Mr. Neele at 11 A.M. Lunched with Mrs. Leggett at 1-30 P.M. In the evening I was invited to dine with Mr. Jannus.

On December 28th I went to Montclair. Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler took me to the Country Club where we had lunch. There I made acquaintance with Dr. Butler, a minister of the church and his wife also with Mr. and Mrs. Grant and Mr. and Mrs. Rogers. Returned to New York at 11 P.M.

On December 31st I went with Mr. Van Haagen at 2 P.M. to see the famous German Opera "Lohengrin" with John De Rezki as the actor. At 7 P.M. I went to Montclair when it was snowing very hard. Stayed at night at Mr. Wheeler's house.

RECORD VIII

January 1899:

Thus I spent sixteen months in U.S.A. by doing pioneering work—in spreading the teachings of Vedanta by public lectures, by holding classes in New York City during the season and by travelling in different places, by making new acquaintances and by interesting new people who had never heard of Vedanta before. At the same time I earned my living by becoming a guest of different people who were very kind to invite me in their homes where they introduced me to their friends who most cordially rceceived me and took all care to make me comfortable in every possible way. My hosts and hostesses never thought for a moment that I was a stranger and a foreigner of a different nationality, but they always treated me as a dear friend and regarded me as a spiritual master as well as a member of their own family. I could never forget the cordiality and kindness which I had received from those whom I had visited during my stay in different places. Knowing that I had no funds to support myself and that there was no one to help me financially they kept me from starving by inviting me at their meals at noon and in the evening. Thus they gave me an opportunity to learn their mode of living as well as their manners, customs, ettiquette and their likes and dislikes.

During these months I had the privilege of learning many things which I did not know before as well as of gaining new experiences in sight-seeing, travelling, sports and their popular games.

On January 1st New Year's Day:

I was staying in Montclair at Mr. Wheeler's home. In the morning I went with Mrs. Wheeler to hear the sermon of Rev. Mr. Grant in the Unity Church of Montclair. Mr. Grant was a broad-minded Unitarian minister.

In the afternoon I talked with Mr. and Mrs. Rogers who were friends of Mr. and Mrs. Wheeler, on Raja Yoga. Mrs. Rogers told my fortune by reading the tea cup. After drink-

ing tea from the cup, the leaves which remain at the bottom of the cup should be turned round three times and then the cup should be turned upside down. Those leaves will gather together in certain figures, by reading which psychic people can tell fortune of the person whose cup that happens to be.

The night was frightfully cold. The thermometer went down below zero (Fahrenheit). I had never experienced so low temperature before. I shivered all night and could not sleep as there was no heat in my room.

On January 2nd Miss Schroeder came at 10 A.M. in her sleigh to give me a sleigh ride. The roads and house tops were all covered with deep snow and the sun was shining, while bitterly cold wind was blowing. A hot brick, covered with a piece of wollen cloth, was kept under our feet at the bottom of the sleigh to prevent our feet from freezing. As I was very fond of snow I enjoyed the ride immensely for one hour along country roads.

Then I went with Miss Schroeder in that sleigh to call on Mr. and Mrs. Platt. Returned to Mrs. Wheeler's for lunch and started for New York at 1-30 P.M. by train. Arrived at New York at 2-45 P.M. Then I went to the Albany to see Miss Lelie Bergh. In the evening I was invited to dine with Dr. Denslow, met Mr. Jannus there and had a long talk with them. Returned to my room in the Boarding house at 10-30 P.M.

On January 4th at 8 P.M. I lectured on *Theory and Practice of Raja Yoga,* in the Assembly Hall. The audience numbered about 60 on account of heavy snow in the streets.

On January 7th I held Raja Yoga class in the forenoon. The audience numbered about 20.

On Sunday January 8th, at 3 P.M. I delivered a public lecture on *The Motherhood of God,* for the first time. It was liked so much that it was printed in a pamphlet form and it ran through several editions afterwards. The audience numbered about 60. Miss Waldo came to see me after the lecture and she told me how the lecture was appreciated by all.

In the evening I went to the Chickering Hall to hear a lecture against Col. Robert G. Ingersoll's ideas about sectarian orthodox Christianity.

Col. Ingersoll was very broad-minded and an orator. Once he told Swami Vivekananda that he had paved the way

for him in New York City by his strong iconoclastic criticisms on orthodox Christianity. Had it not been for him, Swami Vivekananda would have been stoned in the streets of New York City.

The orthodox Christian ministers of churches were against the broad views of Col. Ingersoll and condemned him as an atheist.

On January 9th I went in the morning to see Mrs. Coulston who was lying ill in a hospital.

In the evening I held a meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour with Gurudas and a few other sincere students who were taking lessons from me on Pranayama and concentration.

On January 11th, at 8 P.M. I delivered a lecture on *Cosmic Life Principle* (Raja Yoga).

On January 13th, Prof. Parker took me to the Crescent Athletic Club in Brooklyn as his guest. There I spent the whole evening after dinner and returned to New York at midnight.

On January 14th I held the Raja Yoga class at 11 A.M. Mrs. Rogers and Miss Schroeder came to the class all the way from Montclair in the State of New Jersey by train and then by ferry steamer across the Hudson river and afterwards by a cable car Tramway. There was no electric tramline at that time in New York City. In some parts of the City, there was horse Tramway.

On Sunday, January, 15th, at 3 P.M. I delivered my lecture in the Assembly Hall on *Evolution and Reincarnation*. The audience numbered over 100 in spite of bad weather. After the lecture I went to take tea at Mrs. Conner's and spent the whole evening and talked on the idea of Reincarnation which was new to her. Returned to my room at 10 O'clock.

On January 16th I went to see Mrs. Coulston at 2 P.M. and met Mrs. Leggett and her daughter Alberta there who also came to see Mrs. Coulston.

On January 17th Mrs. I. Mason called on me at 3 P.M. and stayed for one hour listening to my talk on Vedanta, Raja Yoga and Reincarnation.

On January 18th at 8 P.M. I lectured in the Assembly Hall on *Breathing and Mentation*. The audience numbered about 50. At this lecture came Swami Abhayananda, a Sannyasin

disciple of Swami Vivekananda, who came from Chicago to New York. She was a French woman whose name was Marie Louise, and the name Swami Abhayananda was given her by Swami Vivekananda. This was the first time I met her. She told me that she was on her way to India and that she would sail within a few days.

On January 19th there was a big fire in Camaryar's Shoe Store. It was a five-storeyed large building which was burnt down. I went to see how fire-engines and men of the Fire Brigade fought fire with long hose and ladders. It was so cold that the water coming from the hose froze as it fell on the walls of the building and long icicles were formed. From the on-lookers a voice arose; "All soles were burnt down; none was saved. What a pity!" They meant the soles of shoes.

In the afternoon, I went to see Mrs. Coulston and met her daughter for the first time. In the evening, Mr. Van Haagen came to see me and gave me the account of the sale of books by Swami Vivekananda at my lectures in the Public Hall as he had taken the charge of selling those books on commission.

On January 20th I dined with Dr. Denslow who took me to the German Opera "Faust." In this play, the noted French singers took prominent parts. Monsieur Jean De Reszki, the famous tenor singer took the part of "Faust". His brother Edward De Reszki was Mephistopheles and Emma Eames was Margarita. It was a musical opera sung to the accompaniment of the orchestra. The acting as well as the scenes were grand. I enjoyed it as I never saw anything like this before.

Swami Abhayananda called on Mrs. Coulston and Mr. and Mrs. Goodyears, before she sailed for India.

On January 21st at 11 A.M. I held a class lecture on *Concentration.*

In the afternoon called on Mrs. Coulston and there I met Miss Phillips who still was the Secretary of the Vedanta Society of New York.

On Sunday, January 22nd at 3 P.M. I lectured in the Assembly Hall on *Monism and Monotheism.* The number of audience was about 100.

After the lecture, I went to see Goodyears who had invited me to their simple vegetarian dinner. Then I came to Mr. Leggett's house and spent the evening with them.

On January 23rd Mrs. Conner invited me to visit her sister Mrs. Carpenter who lived in New Rochelle, a suburb of New York. At 11 A.M., we took the train and went to New Rochelle. Mrs. Carpenter was rich lady and was interested in my Vedanta teachings. She was very kind and hospitable. After our lunch she gave me a pleasant drive to the Railway Station. I returned to New York at 5 P.M.

In the evening I held a meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour.

On January 25th I went to see Mrs. Coulston in her daughter's room as she was discharged from the hospital.

In the evening before my lecture Mr. Thompson, a new member of our Society, called on me in my room. The subject of my class lecture at 8 P.M. was *The Preliminary Step to Concentration.* The audience was about 70.

Prof. Parker called on me and presented to me "The Destiny of Man" by the famous scientist John Fiske.

On January 26th Mrs. Lyons, one of my students, called on me in the morning. I went to hear Helen Gardner's reading in the hall of Waldorf Astoria, the most fashionable hotel in New York. Helen Gardner was a young woman blind, deaf and dumb. She was taught to read and write and express her ideas by touching her fingers on the palm of her tutor who interpreted what she was telling. She was really wonderful.

In the afternoon, I was invited to go to Flushing in Long Island by train after crossing the Bay by ferry boat from 34th Street. Mr. Homans took me to his home where I spent the evening after dinner. Returned to my room at midnight.

On January 27th I was invited to dine with Mrs. Pierce in Brooklyn and to meet her friends whom she had invited in her house.

On January 28th I held my class on Raja Yoga at 11 A.M., the number of audience being about 30.

In the afternoon, I called on Mrs. Coulston.

On Sunday, January 29th at 3 P.M. I lectured in the Assembly Hall on *Ethics of Vedanta.* The audience numbered 110. In the evening I went to see Mr. Leggett and had my dinner with him.

On January 30th I went in the afternoon to see Mrs. Coulston.

In the evening I held my meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour. It snowed at night.

On January 31st it snowed the whole day and night. In that snow I went out in the afternoon and took tea with Mrs. Fiske.

On February 1st I was invited to tea at Mrs. Whitman.

In the evening I lectured on *Power of Concentration* in the Assembly Hall at 8 P.M.

On February 2nd I went to see Mr. Van Haagen. Afterwards called on Mrs. Coulston. In the afternoon, I was invited to tea in the "Circle of Divine Ministry". The members of this Circle were New Thoughtists and they practised mental healing under the name of *Divine Healing*.

In the evening, I called on Mrs. Sedgewick and talked with her until 11 P.M.

On February 4th I held the morning class and gave lessons on *Concentration*.

In the afternoon, went to see Mrs. Coulston.

On Sunday, February 5th at 3 P.M. I gave a public lecture on *Which is Scientific—Resurrection or Reincarnation*? The The audience numbered about 100.

It snowed all day and night. In the evening, I called on Mrs. Coulston and then on Mrs. Leggett who was sick in bed.

On February 6th Mrs. Fulton and Dr. Josephine Van Deussen of Philadelphia called on me at 10 A.M. They became interested in the teachings of Vedanta and Raja Yoga. In the afternoon, Mrs. Fiske brought her paralized friend Mr. Miller in a book shop whom I gave some breathing exercises which might help him to get cured.

In the evening, I held my meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour. It was snowing hard when the class was over. Mr. Van Haagen escorted me to my room and stayed until midnight.

On February 7th it began to snow heavily, I walked in deep snow and went to see Mrs Coulston.

In the evening, I gave a talk on Tennyson's poem on *Two Voices* at the "Social Culture Club" of Mrs. Grannis, my boarding-hause keeper. It snowed all night very heavily.

On February 8th it snowed all day very heavily until 5 P.M. I went to the Assembly Hall in the evening at 8 P.M.

and lectured on *Why One Should Learn to Meditate*? The audience on account of deep snow numbered about 50. After the lecture, I went to see Mrs. Coulston. On my return I found Mr. Van Haagen waiting to see me. Mr. Kretchmer came to take lessons in Sanskrit from me. He presented to me three volumes of the *Secret Societies of the World.* At night it was very cold. My thermometer registered +10 above zero. Next morning it went down to −30 below zero.

On February 9th the temperature was −30 below zero. It was awfully cold. The streets were covered with deep snow and were deserted. All trafic stopped. In that terribly cold weather, I walked on heavy snow in the evening and went to Dr. Guernsey's where I was invited to dinner. From there at 8-30 P.M. I came to Mr. Leggett's and stayed there until 10 P.M. and returned to my room. This was the coldest day in New York City since 1872.

On February 10th the temperature went down further in the morning to −70 below zero. Water was frozen in the pipes of my boarding-house, therefore I could not take a bath. In the afternoon at 4 o'clock I went to see Miss Farmer of Greenacre at Miss Emma Thursby's apartment. In the evening I went to Mrs. Conner's and dined with her. Returned to my room at 10 P.M. It was frightfully cold and the wind was high and biting.

On February 11th the temperature was −6.20° below zero. In the afternoon I held my Raja Yoga class with a few sincere students who ventured to face such a severe weather.

In the evening the gas-pipe in my room was frozen and the gas did not burn until a plumber was called to fix it. It snowed heavily all night.

On February 12th (Sunday) it snowed heavily all day. I delivered my public lecture at 3 P.M. on *Is the Soul Immortal*? in the Assembly Hall. On account of heavy snow the audience was small numbering about 50.

After the lecture I went to see Dr. Denslow in his apartments and had my dinner with him. After dinner Dr. and Mrs. Denslow took me to the American Art Gallery on 23rd Street and Broadway to show me the most beautiful oil-paintings of Mr. Clark the noted artist. I escorted Dr. and Mrs.

Denslow to their home walking on slippery snow all the way and returned to my room at 10-30 P.M. It snowed all night.

On February 13th it was one of the severest winter's days in the history of New York City. There was a blizzard with high wind and heavy snowfall. The minimum temperature was +40 above zero. The velocity of wind was 58 miles per hour. All trains and tram cars stopped. The hot water-pipe froze and I could not get a bath. In that terrible blizzard I walked out in the morning and went to the Post Office on 23rd Street. The storm was blinding.

In the evening I held my meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour. All side-walks were blocked with heaps of snow almost knee-deep. I waded through that deep snow to the class. Nothing could prevent me from being punctual about my classes and public lectures. I was not a creature of weather and my punctuality made a good impression upon the minds of my students. There were only five students who attended this class. I returned from the class at 10 P.M. It was still snowing heavily. The snow-fall in 24 hours was 14.6 inches; and the total snow-fall this winter was 4.1710 inches.

On February 14th the morning was bright, the sky was cloudless and the sunshine was glorious. I took a little walk in deep snow in the morning.

In the evening I called on Dr. Holmes where I met different people and I talked on Vedanta until 11 P.M. Returned to my room at 11-30 P.M.

On February 15th the weather was fine with sunshine. The sight of snow on the streets and on house-tops with the sun shining brightly on it—and, reflecting all the colours of the rainbow resembled like that of a Fairyland.

In the evening at 8 P.M. I lectured on *How a Sinner can become Divine*? On account of heavy snow the audience numbered about 50. There were heaps of snow in the streets.

On February 16th in the afternoon, it began to rain hard and the rain water was freezing on snow forming slippery ice. It was as difficult to walk on it as it is on the smooth surface of glass. At 2 P.M. Mrs. Coulston with her daughter called on me. Mr. Swidland who used to attend my lectures called on me at 4 P.M. and talked on the powers of making money. In

the evening after dinner I called on Mrs. Sedgwick and spent the evening talking on Vedanta. When I returned it was raining and freezing.

On February 17th I gave up my boarding at Mrs. Grannis's boarding-house and commenced to take my meals in restaurants.

In the evening at 8 P.M. I went to Miss Forsyth's house on 55th Street to talk to her friends whom she had invited. Returned with Mr. Van Haagen to my room at 12 midnight.

On February 18th I held my class on Raja Yoga in the forenoon. Mrs. Coulston came to my room after the class. It rained in torrents in the afternoon.

On Sunday, February 19th at 3 P.M. I delivered a public lecture in the Assembly Hall on *What is Destiny*? The audience numbered over 125.

After the lecture Mr. Kelly took me to his house where I had my supper with him. Returned to my room at 10-30 P.M.

On February 20th Prof. Landsburg called on me in the afternoon and became interested in the teachings of Vedanta. In the evening I held my meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour. The audience was large and the room was quite full.

When I was taking my dinner at 41 E. 22nd Street, Dr. and Mrs. Denslow called on me.

On February 21st I sent to India to our Holy Mother $170.45 cents (£35/- in English money). This amount I had received as donation from my students in New York. Mrs. Coulston, who was acting as the treasurer of the Society, kept accounts of subscriptions and voluntary contributions at my lectures from which she paid all the expenses connected with my lectures such as hall rent, advertisements, my room rent and board and my pocket-expenses.

Mrs. Coulston gave me 20 dollars for my gerua robe which I used to wear on the platform while lecturing and holding classes.

I met Miss Waldo at Mrs. Coulston's rooms.

On February 22nd Mr. Thompson called on me in the afternoon. I lectured in the evening, at 8 P.M. in the Assembly Hall on *How to master One's Self*? The audience numbered about 100.

On February 23rd I was invited by Mrs. Lorrilard Spencer,

a wealthy and influential American lady of New York to dine with her in her beautiful home in the most fashionable quarter of the City as well as to meet Rev. Dr. Rainsford, the orthodox Christian minister of the Episcopal Church of St. Bartholomew in New York. I had a letter of introduction to Dr. Rainsford which was given to me by Rev. Dr. Hawies in London. Dr. Rainsford was broad-minded and liberal in his views. I had a very pleasant conversation with him and we exchanged our views on religious topics. He became quite interested in the teachings of the Universal Religion of Vedanta. I also met Mr. Lawrence who dined with us.

On February 25th I held my meditation class in the afternoon.

In the afternoon, at 3 P.M. I went to see Dr. Kate Stanton and her brother on board the Clyde Line Steamer which went to Jacksonville, Florida, where they were going for a change. The boat sailed from Pier No. 29 East River near Brooklyn Bridge. On my way back, Mr. Van Haagen accompanied me through the Italian town in the slum quarters of New York City. There I saw how the poor Italians lived in one large room several families together with their beds on the floor. I returned to my room at 5 P.M. Then I went to Bartlelts Second Hand Book Store where I met Rev. Dr. Slicer, a Unitarian Minister, with whom I had a nice talk on Vedanta.

On Sunday, February 26th at 3 P.M. I lectured on *Which is More Potent—Faith in God or the Knowledge of Self*? in the Assembly Hall. The audience numbered about 80. It rained hard the whole of afternoon and evening. After the lecture I called on Mrs. Coulston to find out how much was the collection and returned to my rooms at 11 P.M.

On February 27th I called on my student Miss Kohlsaat and took tea with her.

I took private classes every Monday evening. I held my meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour at 392, Fourth Avenue, 2nd floor.

On February 28th in the morning I went to Smith and Gray's Store to try my Gerua robe on and then called on Mrs. Coulston.

In the afternoon a lady from Memphis in the Southern State of Tennesee called on me. Her name was Mrs. Seldon

She asked me several questions on the practice of breathing exercises and took lessons from me on Raja Yoga.

On March 1st at 8 P.M. I delivered a public lecture on *How Should We Work?* in the Assembly Hall. The number of audience was 80.

On March 2nd, in the morning, at 10 A.M. I took lessons in French from Mrs. Bellevue, a French Teacher whom I had engaged.

RECORD IX

On March 2nd, in the evening, at 9 A.M., we had an informal meeting of the members of the Vedanta Society in the Trustees' room of the United Charities Building; about fifty were present. Many could not come on account of heavy rain in the evening. Mr. Goodyear spoke and gave an outline of the history of Vedanta since Swami Vivekananda's first visit in New York City in 1894.

Before the meeting Dr. Street, who became a Sannyasin disciple of Swami Vivekananda and was named Swami Yogananda, called on me at 7-30 P.M. and had a long talk with me and told me how he became interested in Vedanta after meeting Swami Vivekananda.

On March 3rd I went in the morning to see Dr. Kate Stanton at Mrs. Devenport's house and was invited to take lunch with them. I walked home from Brooklyn Bridge—a distance of about three miles.

In the evening I called on Mrs. Forsyth where I was invited.

On March 4th I held my Class on Raja Yoga and gave lessons on concentration and breathing exercises.

On Sunday, March 5th, at 3 P.M. I delivered a public lecture on *Vedantic Conception of God* in the Assembly Hall. The audience numbered 110.

In the evening I went to Mr. Leggett's house and met Miss MacLeod, Mrs. Leggett's sister, who had recently returned from India. She told me how she liked India and all about Belur Math which Swami Vivekananda had recently established. I was overwhelmed with joy at the news that a permanent Math of the Ramakrishna Order of Sannyasins was at last established by the Swamiji. Returned to my rooms at 11-30 P.M.

On March 6th Mrs. Seldon from Memphis Tennessee called on me and took a lesson in Breathing.

In the evening I held my meditation class at Miss Lindquist's. It began to snow at night.

On March 7th it snowed all day and night with high wind.

In the afternoon I called on Mrs. Coulston and in the evening I went to hear a lecture on Ralph Waldo Emerson by Miss Morton at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel.

On March 8th, at 8 P.M., it was clear and sunny. In the evening I delivered a public lecture on *Is Prayer Necessary?* The audience numbered 100. After the lecture I called on Mrs. Coulston.

On March 9th Mr. Platt called on me at 4-45 P.M. and took me to Montclair by 5-20 train and arrived there at 7 P.M. Then I dined with Mr. and Mrs. Platt and spent the night at their home. At night I had a long talk with Mr. Platt on my mission and Vedanta work in New York.

On March 10th after breakfast I called on Mrs. Wheeler at 9 A.M. and at 11 A.M. called on Miss Schroeder. Lunched with Mrs. Platt and returned to New York by 3-30 train. At 5 P.M. I arrived at New York and at 6 P.M. held an informal meeting in which Miss Crawford and Miss Forsyth recited.

On March 11th I held Raja Yoga class in the forenoon. In the afternoon I corrected the Glossary of Swami Vivekananda's Raja Yoga which was going to be reprinted as the American edition.

In the evening I dined with Mrs. Conner.

On Sunday, March 12th, I gave a public lecture in the Assembly Hall on *Breathing and Meditation* (repeated by request). The audience numbered 135.

It was the birthday anniversay of Sri Ramakrishna which I celebrated with Mrs. Coulston, Miss Waldo, Miss Mulford, Miss Lindquist, Mr. Heyblom, Mr. Van Haagen at Mrs. Coulston's apartment.

I read the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and talked on his wonderful spiritual powers. Then I meditated with them, offered fruits and sweets to our Lord and distributed Prasada amongst them. Returned to my rooms at 11-30 P.M.

On March 13th I called on Miss Farmer of Greenacre in the afternoon who was visiting Miss Emma Thursby, the noted music teacher and admirer of Swami Vivekananda. Dr. Kate Stanton also called.

In the evening I held Meditation Class at Miss Lindquist's parlour.

On March 14th Mrs. Allen and Miss Kohlsaat called on

me in the morning. In the afternoon Mr. Carie called. In the evening I had supper with Miss MacLeod who brought a photograph of our Holy Mother, Sarada Devi from India and gave me a copy. It was taken at the request of Sister Nivedita. Then I called on Mrs. Coulston and returned home at 12 midnight.

On March 15th, at 8 P.M., it rained hard throughout the day. I gave a public lecture on *Evolution and Reincarnation* (repeated by request) for an hour and a half in the Assembly Hall. Prof. Jackson of Columbia came to the lecture and became deeply interested in this subject. The audience numbered about 100.

On March 16th Mr. Price called on me at 10-30 A.M. Then Mr. Witland from Chicago called on me. At 3-30 P.M. I called on Mr. Platt in his office at New York, then on Mr. Van Haagen and Mrs. Coulston. Mr. Van Haagen gave me a book entitled *Basis of the Mystic Knowledge* to read.

On March 17th I held an informal meeting where Miss Farmer spoke about Greenacre and read a poem. Miss Forsyth recited a poem by Celia Thaxter. Miss Florence read from the Light of Asia by Sir Edwin Arnold. Mr. Wright sang beautiful songs. A committee of workers of the Vedanta Society was formed. The number of audience was about 70.

On March 18th light snow fell in the morning. I held Raja Yoga Class in the forenoon. In the afternoon I went with Mrs. Conner to see "The Great Ruby" in Daly's Theatre.

On Sunday, March 19th, at 3 P.M., I gave a public lecture on *What is Perfection*? The audience numbered about 130.

After supper I went to see the ruins of the Windsor Hotel which was gutted down by fire at 8 P.M. when it was hailing heavily. Then I called on the Leggett's to bid good-bye to them as they were going to their country place and returned home at 11 P.M. The night was very cold.

On March 20th I gave my article on *Evolution and Reincarnation* to Dr. Guernsey for publication in his Medical Journal.

It was cold and windy the whole day. In the evening I held meditation class at Miss Lindquist's parlour.

On March 21st I called on Mrs. Conner at 6-15 P.M. Then went to 85th Street in an automobile with Mrs. Conner and

Miss Douglas and dined with Mrs. Glenser who invited us to be her guests. She was the mother of Mr. Glenser who worked in Scribner's Book Store and was interested in the teachings of Vedanta and Raja Yoga.

On March 22nd I lectured at 8 P.M. in the Assembly Hall on *Self-control and Concentration.* The audience numbered about 125.

On March 23rd Mrs. Hay of Chicago called on me in the afternoon and had a long talk with me on the practice of Raja Yoga.

In the evening I went to Dr. Miller's and attended the Committee Meeting of the Vedanta Society. Returned home at 11 P.M.

On March 24th I was invited by Prof. Jackson of Columbia University to lunch with him at 2 P.M. and afterwards spoke on the Upanishads before his students in his class room in the Fairweather Building of the University. After my lecture I answered many questions. Returned home at 6 P.M.

At 8 P.M. I presided over in informal meeting of the members of the Vedanta Society. At this meeting, Miss Elis gave a short speech on the sublime teachings of Vedanta. Miss Waldo (Yatimata) read "The Song of the Sannyasin" by Swami Vivekananda. Miss Florence and Mr. Wright sang a duet, and Miss Forsyth recited a poem on *Freedom and Illusion.* The number of audience was 50. The meeting ended at 11 P.M.

On March 25th I held the Raja Yoga class. This was the last of the season.

On Sunday, March 26th, at 3 P.M., I lectured on *What is Divine Love?* (repeated by request). The audience numbered 125. This was the last of the Sunday evening lectures of the session.

On March 27th I held my evening class. The audience numbered about 41. In the morning I talked to Mrs. Peterson and Mrs. Hurt who lived in the same house. Miss MacLeod called on me in the afternoon and read a letter from Miss Noble (Sister Nivedita) who was then with Swami Vivekananda in India.

On March 28th it rained hard all day long. In the afternoon I went to see Mrs. Coulston at Mr. Leggett's. Mr. Vanderbilt brought to me the proofs of *Reincarnation.* He had

volunteered to have printed 2000 copies at his own cost and present them to me. This was the beginning of my printed works. The proceeds from the sale of *Reincarnation* which at first contained three lectures: (1) *What is Reincarnation?* (2) *Which is Scientific—Resurrection or Reincarnation* and (3) *Evolution and Reincarnation?* were kept separate and sent for printing other lectures and pamphlets. Mr. Vanderbilt told me that these lectures were so good and convincing that he wished every body ought to read them. He deserved my hearty thanks for publishing my lectures on *Reincarnation* under the auspices of the Vedanta Society of New York City.

On March 20th it snowed all morning in large flakes.

In the evening I delivered my last lecture on *The Influence of Vedanta on Modern Thought.* The audience numbered about 130.

On March 30th in the evening I went to the Committee Meeting of the Vedanta Society at Dr. Miller's apartments.

On March 31st it was "Good Friday". I was invited to lunch with Miss MacLeod. In the evening I dined with Dr. Denslow.

I held an informal meeting in which members of the Vedanta Society invited their friends. The audience numbered about 65. The programme was as follows:

1. Violin duet by Miss Chocrane.
2. Talk about India by Miss MacLeod.
3. Recitation of *Song of the Sannyasin* by Miss Forsyth.
4. Recitation of *A Poem on Om* by Mrs. Florence.
5. Readings by Mrs. Arthur Smith.
6. I answered questions.
7. A Violin Solo (Music).
8. Benediction.

On April 1st in the afternoon at 4 P.M., I lectured before Barnard Club in New York City. The members of this Club were aristocratic and influential people of the City. Miss MacLeod and Miss Emma Thursby, the admirers of Swami Vivekananda were present. My subject was *Religious Ideas of the Hindus.* The lecture was well appreciated. In the evening I dined with Mrs. Conner.

On April 2nd it was Easter Sunday. It snowed at noon. Dr. Kate Stanton came from New Port (Rhode Island) and called on me at 3 P.M. She wanted to be initiated as a Brahmacharini. There were five other sincere students who also wanted to take the vow of Brahmacharya. They all assembled at Miss Lindquist's parlour in the evening with flower, fruits and butter in their hands. Miss MacLeod came to see the ceremony. I came to Miss Lindquist's and made five Brahmacharinis and one Brahmachari and gave each a Hindu name. They were as follows:

1.	Mrs. Coulston	Sevaputa
2.	Miss Mulford	Muktikama
3.	Miss Lindquist	Satyakama
4.	Dr. Kate Stanton	Shantikama
5.	Miss Kohlsaat	Premakama
6.	Mr. Heyblom	Gurudasa

(whom I gave Sannyasa in 1921 at the Belur Math and gave the name of Swami Atulananda).

The sacred fire was lighted and each poured melted butter in that fire after repeating the following vows:

1. From this evening of Easter Sunday, April 2nd, 1899, I join the most ancient order of Brahmacharya, to which belonged all the ancient sages of India.
2. From this moment I become a student of Vedanta.
3. I shall live a pure life.
4. I shall be chaste in thought and in deed.
5. I shall always try to control all passions, anger hatred and jealousy.
6. I shall recognise Divinity in all and love all beings equally.
7. I shall try my best to follow the ideals of non-killing and non-injuring others and truthfulness.
8. Recognising the sexless spirit *Atman* in all men and women I renounce my desire for legal or illegal marriage.
9. I consecrate my life to the good of all and to the service of my *Guru* (Preceptor).
10. I shall avoid all temptations. I shall not seek sense pleasures.

11. I shall always remember "I am Brahman"—"I am Spirit Divine".

12. I shall practise meditation every day regularly and obey my *Guru* under all conditions.

PRAYER:

"Oh Lord! Lead me from unreal to Real, from darkness to Light; from death to Immortality. Be always present before me and protect me from all evils with Thy Compassionate Face". *Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih.*

Among these Gurudasa (now Swami Atulananda) is still living as a true Sannyasin at Ramakrishna Kutir, Almora, India. He is my most loving and faithful American Sannyasin disciple.

On April 3rd in the morning I called on Miss Phillips and Miss Kohlsaat in the afternoon.

On April 4th I took tea at Mr. Leggett's. In the evening I dined with Mrs. Jannus and then went to hear Mrs. Crawford's recitation. I walked back and returned home at 12.

On April 5th Mr. Leslie called on me at 9-30 A.M. Mrs. Allen called at 11 A.M.

In the afternoon Prof. Parker called at 4 P.M. and took me as his guest to the Crescent Athletic Club in Brooklyn. Had dinner with him and returned home at 12-30 A.M.

On April 6th I went to Brooklyn and lectured on Vedanta at Mrs. Densmore's parlour.

On April 7th I lunched with Miss MacLeod and met her friends Mr. and Mrs. Gordon.

In the evening Mr. Carie and Mr. Vanderbilt called on me.

At Worcester Mass. From 8th April to 21st April.

On April 8th I left New York by 12 o'clock train for Worcester, a town in the State of Massachusetts, met Miss Porter at the station and came to Mrs. Cochrane's house as her guest. There I met Swami Saradananda's younger brother Satis Chandra Chakravarty who was sent to study Medicine. He was staying as Mrs. Cochrane's guest at Swami Saradananda's request.

After my strenuous works in New York for nearly six months, I badly needed rest and quiet. The two sisters Miss Porter and Mrs. Cochrane, who knew Swami Saradananda and were deeply interested in the teachings of Vedanta, invited me to be their guest in their quiet home and to take a complete rest. They took motherly care of me and showed me all places of interest in their city.

After taking good rest for six days I lectured on the 14th of April, at 8 P.M., in Day Building, Room 19. Rev. Mr. A Garver, the Unitarian Minister of the City took the chair and introduced me to the audience which numbered over 100. I spoke on *Religious Ideas of the Hindus in India.* My lecture was highly appreciated.

Miss Porter was very kind to teach me how to take photographs with her Kodak and how to make blue prints of the photos. I was quick to learn when she gave the first lessons, and I was successful in making blue prints of the good photos of her flower garden and the landscape with public buildings of the city. Gradually I became an expert in photography.

One Wednesday, April 12th, 1899, I went to Waltham in the evening train and lectured on *Aim of Life* at 7-30 and returned to Worcester at 8-30 P.M.

On April 15th I called on Dr. Bliven and talked with him on the teachings of Vedanta and Raja Yoga. He took me to see Mr. Perky's factory for making shredded wheat biscuits from whole wheat untouched by hands with machines which were specially invented to make such biscuits and were run by electricity. Mr. Perky showed us all the machines and explained how biscuits were made from the beginning to the end. I was very much interested in this new kind of wholesome food for all classes of people. Mrs. Freeland, Mr. and Mrs. Adams called in the evening and I talked to them on various subjects.

On April 16th it snowed hard all afternoon from 1 P.M. I enjoyed seeing the heavy snow-fall in the spring season.

On April 17th I lectured on *Reincarnation* in the Day Building, Room 19. The audience numbered over 130.

On April 18th I went in the morning with Miss Porter to see the Kindergarten School of Mrs. Salsbury. I was very much impressed by the method of finding out the natural tendency and inclination of young boys and girls before giving

them lessons in particular lines. A room was arranged with all kinds of toys, musical instruments, drawings, paintings, tools, machines etc. The boys and girls were allowed to handle any of those things according to their taste. The headmistress of the School would watch each of the students and make notes of his tastes and would teach him to suit his tastes. This seems to be the proper way to make the natural tendency of the students develop fully in course of time. The method of education adopted in schools in India is too artificial. It suppresses the natural tendency of the student and forces him to follow a general routine which may eventually hinder his progress and efficiency in natural lines. Miss Porter and I took a long walk and returned home at noon.

On April 19th I went with Miss Porter to see the State Normal School, met Prof. Russel the principal of the School. In these High Schools most of the teachers are educated women who teach boys and girls. Women teachers are kind-hearted and motherly; therefore they are better than male teachers. American women devote their time and energy to the education of boys and girls and to the social reforms. Most of them are unmarried and of pure character.

Miss Tucker who was one of the teachers of the School invited us to luncheon. We spent the whole afternoon with her and returned home at 4 P.M.

AT CAMBRIDGE MASS. TILL 13TH MAY

On April 21st I left Worcester for Cambridge, Mass. by 2-17 train at noon, got off at Huntington Avenue Station at 3-30 P.M. Mr. Fred, Bangs whom I met before at Greenacre came to the station to meet me and took me to his home at 10 Dana Street, Cambridge. Dr. Janes, the Director of Cambridge Conferences, came to see me.

On April 22nd Mr. F. Bangs and I called on Dr. Janes.

On April 23rd I went to hear Prof. Nathaniel Schmidt of Cornell University on *Religion of Arabia before Mohammed.* It was a very interesting lecture.

We had the reunion of the Agamenticus party of the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston of which I was a mem-

ber. In the previous year I travelled with some of this party on the White Mountains.

On April 24th Mr. Charles Bangs went with me to Boston in the morning, we returned before lunch time and had the pleasure of meeting Prof. Schmidt who was invited by Mr. Bangs at the luncheon. In the afternoon I went with Miss Bangs to see the Library of Cambridge University.

On April 25th I went from Cambridge by 1-15 train at noon and arrived at Lynn, Mass., a suburb of Boston, at 2-40 P.M. Miss Townsend came with her carriage to meet me at the station and drove me to the "North Shore Club" where I was invited to speak. It was a Women's Club and the audience numbered about 200. I spoke on Vedanta philosophy for an hour and answered questions.

After the lecture Mrs. Blizzard invited me to be her guest in her home.

In the evening Rev. Mr. Van Buren, a clergyman and a renowned scholar, called on me with his wife. I had a long talk with them on Hindu philosophy. They were very kind and friendly to me.

On April 26th I started from Lynn by 10-24 train in the morning and arrived at Cambridge at 11-15 A.M. At 6-42 P.M. I took the train for Waltham, Mass., another suburban town of Boston. This place is famous for Watch Factory which produces 100 watches every day by wonderful machines. I gave a public lecture from 7-50 P.M. to 9 P.M. on *What is Divine Love*? A Baptist minister was in the audience which numbered about 200. After the lecture I returned to Cambridge at 10-25 P.M.

On April 27th I was invited to lecture before the students of the Episcopal Theological School under the Cambridge University, who had a club under the name of "My Neighbour's Club". In the evening I dined with Mr. George L. Paine the president of that club.

On April 28th I was invited to the studio of the famous painter Mrs. E. Campbell, and there I met Miss Porter of Worcester, Mass. In the afternoon Mr. Fred Bangs took me to Aggasiz Museum where I saw rare collections of Anthropology —the skeletons of lower animals which prove the evolution of man for lower animals.

On April 29th I went in the morning to the Chamber of Commerce in Boston to see Mr. Geismar.

On April 30th I lectured before the Cambridge Conference at Mrs. Ole Bull's studio on *Religious Ideas in Ancient India*. The audience numbered about 100. Dr. Janes was in the chair as he was the Director of the Conference. Prof. Lanman the great Sanskrit scholar was among the audience.

In the evening I went with Mrs. Bangs to hear the great American orator. Mr. Robert Theatre. I was deeply impressed when he said: "When Calvin died Shakespeare was born. What a glorious exchange"!

On May 3rd I went with Dr. Janes at 5-30 P.M. to the Tremont Buildings to meet my friends of the Appalachian Mountain Club of Boston. I spent the whole evening with them and returned home at about 10-30 P.M.

EPISTLES

The letters which were in Bengali,
have been translated into English by
Shri Jasoda Kanta Ray, M.A., I.A.S.

EPISTLES

LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

(1)

C/o. E. T. Sturdy,
High View,
Caversham,
Reading, England,
October, 1895.

To Swami Abhedananda,

You may have got my earlier letter. At present send all letters to me at the above address. Mr. Sturdy[1] is known to Tarakda.[2] He has brought me to his place, and we are both trying to create a stir in England. I shall this year leave again in November for America. So I require a man. . . Now, if you have completely recovered, very well, come;. . . The work is to teach the devotees. I shall be leaving this place, to make them study the Vedanta, to do a little translation work into English, and to deliver occasional lectures. *Karmana bandhyate buddhih*—'Through work the Buddhi (intellect) gets bound' . . . I am sending you a cheque along with this letter. Buy clothes and other necessary things—whoever comes. I am sending the cheque in the name of Master Mahashay Mahendra Babu.[3] Gangadhar's[4] Tibetan choga[5] is in the Math; get the

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[1] Mr. E. T. Sturdy, an English devotee of Swami Vivekananda, who gave immense help to the Vedanta work of the Swami in England.

[2] Swami Shivananda (Mahapurush Maharaj), a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and later President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

[3] Mahendra Nath Gupta, the author of The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna (in original Bengali).

[4] Swami Akhandananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, and later President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

[5] A special kind of loose outer garment, some-what akin to the toga.

tailor to make a similar choga of gerua[6] colour. See that the collar is a little high, that is, the throat and neck should be covered . . . over all, you must have a woollen overcoat, for it is very cold. If you do not put on an overcoat on the ship, you will suffer much. . . I am sending a second-class ticket, as there is not much difference between a first-class and a second-class berth. . . .

Go to Bombay and see Messrs. King & Co., Fort, Bombay and tell them that you are Mr. Sturdy's man. They will then give a you a ticket to England. A letter is being sent from here to the Company with instructions. I am writing to the Maharaja of Khetri to instruct his Bombay agent to look after the booking of your passage. If this sum . . . is not sufficient for your outfit, get the remainder from Rakhal. I shall send him the amount afterwards. . . . Start as quickly as possible. Inform Mahendra Babu that he is my Calcutta agent. Tell him to send a letter to Mr. Sturdy by next mail informing him that he is ready to look after all business transactions in Calcutta on our behalf. In effect, Mr. Sturdy is my secretary in England, Mahendra Babu in Calcutta, and Alasinga[7] in Madras. Send this information to Madras also. Can any work be done unless all of us gird up our loins and be up and doing? '*udyoginam purusasimhamupaiti Laksmih*'—'Fortune shines on the brave and the energetic'. Don't look back-forward! Infinite energy, infinite enthusiasm, infinite daring, and infinite patience-then alone can great deeds be accomplished. We must set the whole world afire.

Now on the day the steamer is due to start, write a letter to Mr. Sturdy informing him by which steamer you are leaving for England. Otherwise there is some likelihood of you having difficulties when you reach London. Take a steamer which will bring you to London direct, for even if it takes a few days longer on the voyage, the fares are less in it. At the moment our purse is lean. In time we shall send preachers in large numbers to all the quarters of the globe.

Vivekananda.

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[6] Ochre dye.

[7] Alasinga Perumal of Madras, a devoted follower of Swami Vivekananda.

(2)

102-E-68th Street,
The 24th July, 1900.

Dear Abhedananda,

I would have gladly remained here but SASTAY KISTI MAT. Got a fine berth one room all to myself on a fine vessel. As soon as August comes—it will be terrible VIR as the companies are reducing price.

Things are going quite all right. Mr. Johnson has returned to their house, and all the rooms are full except two. You write to Mrs. Crane, whether you want to get them or not.

You need not feel the least anxiety about the N. Y. work, it will go as a marriage bull next season. Give my love to Mrs. Coulston and explain to her the circumstances.

With all love,
Vivekananda.

(3)

The Ramakrishna Advaita Ashrama.
Luxa, Benares City,
U.P. India,
The 12th December 1912.

My dear Abhedananda,

Your very affectionate letter of the 25th October came duly to hand. It was with a mixed feeling of sorrow and joy that I completed the reading of the same. I was sorry because you did not care to go on with the work of the Vedanta Society in New York any more but thought it fit to sever your connection with the Society altogether even against the wishes of the trustees and members thereof who naturally must have felt very sad to part with you. And I was glad because the Vedanta Society which was started by Swamiji and so long continued and taken care of by you so well, has not been allowed to stop short but put into the hands of one of Swamiji's disciples on the spot who I feel sure will keep it a going and

thus be the means of spreading the teachings of Vedanta in New York which has been doing so much good for the people there.

I shall write presently to Swami Bodhananda according to your wishes expressed in your letter and hope that you will furnish him with the friendly advices that he may need as long as you are there in America. But would it be too much to ask you again as I have done more than once before to make up your mind to come back to India when you really mean to retire from your work there. Need I tell you how happy we all shall feel to have you amongst us once again, and what a joy it would be all round. Our Holy Mother I understand is eager to see you as she has not seen you for such a long time. You may live here in quiet if you like to enjoy rest after such a strenuous work as you have done for these long years. Nothing will be in your way of doing that and we shall try to do all to make you feel comfortable. Please do think over the matter seriously, my dear Abhedananda, and do not fail to comply with our request and to give into our heartfelt wishes.

We are doing tolerably well and the work of the Mission is progressing. Nirmalananda is doing nice work in the South and other workers also are acquiting themselves nicely. I was glad with the news of your making will as you say you have done.

Hoping this will find you well and prosperous. With Namaskar and best love to you as ever.

Yours affectionately,
Brahmananda.

(4)

138 West 80th Street
New York
Dec. 20th 1908

My dear Mr. Herben,

Many thanks for your cablegram of the 18th instant duly received. I cannot understand why you wish me to commence my Sunday lectures in London from the 17th of January 1909 and why you say "otherwise collapse."

In the first place I know that most of the members do not care for Sunday lectures as they spend the week-end in their country places or among their friends out of town. Secondly, the London season commences practically after the Easter holidays, you know how small was the audience last winter in February, March and April. Is it worth while to begin so early this winter?

Here I am having very large audiences and their number is daily increasing. Besides all this I found on my return to New York that my assistant Swami Paramananda could not hold the audience or attract new members and I am obliged to labour hard to build up the Society. Now it is in the much better condition and I am working here alone as my assistant has gone to Boston at the request of Mrs. Ole Bull. I have shown your message to our secretary here. The reply that I received is this: "You must take your choice between the collapse of New York Society and that of London Society." I do not know what to do. Probably you may help me out by giving me your suggestions.

It seems to me however that I can begin my lectures in London from the 1st Sunday in February and not before that, if there be such an unusually pressing necessity. But it will be easier for me and it will save this Society from collapse if I sail from here about the middle of February and begin my lectures from the 1st Sunday in March. You will have to consider all these circumstances and let me know your decision. If you think that my lectures from the 1st Sunday in February will help the situation you may send my passage money about twenty pounds and arrange to have a room engaged in good neighbouring hotel. All of my living expenses during my stay in London should be paid by the Vedanta Society of London.

The annual meeting of the Society here for the election of the trustees and office-bearers will be held on the 14th of January. My presence then is absolutely necessary, otherwise I would have tried to sail earlier.

Trusting you are well and happy and with kind regards.

I remain

Very sincerely yours,

Swami Abhedananda.

(5)

Hudson, N. Y.
May, 30, 1908.

My dear Swami,

Your very much appreciated letter was received day before yesterday. I was a little bit surprised to learn that you were in London, but pleased and gratified to hear of your success with the new branch you are establishing there. Yet you know joy and happiness is almost invariably mingled with sorrow and disappointments. I am sorry and disappointed because of not having you with us a few days this Spring and Summer. We had looked forward to such a visit from you with many bright anticipations for the further advancement of Truth in this vicinity.

Sometimes, Swami, I think that Truth is of "awful slow growth." No doubt but that I am impatient, but when I see the world of humankind, as it appears to me, is a perfect pandemonium of inconsistencies; graft and greed, selfishness and inhumanity; good and purity, nobility and unselfishness .....all of this in a jumbled mass, I feel like I can imagine Jesus must have felt when he wept over Jerusalem. Absolute unselfishness seems to be a jewel rarely possessed and seldom found. It must be the secret of real greatness, yet it seems to find little place in this greedy world of ours.

I have been mailing you a lodge paper of the Knights of Pythias which I am getting out for them as their official paper, but you have not received it, I know, because of being in England. We have named it "The Pythian News", published monthly, and we have received several complimentary notices through the press regarding the publication. I am mailing you the June number under separate cover. I think that I shall be in a position to do much good through this channel.

With reference to the new secret and fraternal order which we are founding. I cannot now recall exactly what I wrote you about it, hence, may repeat to a certain extent.

Masonry being founded (so supposed) upon the building of king Solomon's Temple (that house not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens). Old Fellows upon the friendship

existing between David and also the story of the good Samaritan. Knights of Pythias upon the friendship which existed between Damon and Pythias where one was willing to give his life for another to the tyrant Dionysius, etc., but this new order is and will be founded upon the teachings of that humble Nazarene, Jesus of Nazareth. A great, grander, purer, nobler basic foundation could not be conceived of for this mad commercial Western civilization (?) of ours.

We have now over forty members, many of them among the wealthiest people of Hudson. All of the secret or monitorial work seems to devolve upon me to frame, and I have only just finished the first degree, First Degree, or motto of first degree is "HUMILITY" Second degree "WISDOM" and third degree.....

I have a new born idea, and that is that we have you to give a lecture to this order in particular, the public in general, on the life and teachings of Jesus. I am confident that with such a theme to lecture on, we could secure a hall large enough to accommodate the numbers who will attend.

But I will write something about secular affairs. We are making quite an improvement upon our home, and for the last two months I have been labouring with carpenters, painters, paper hangers, fence builders, etc. You would scarcely recognize our little home now. We have about remodelled the entire building inside and out, and now enjoy the pleasure of sitting out on a large and spacious piazza extending nearly all around the building. My colour Scheme is green and white for the outside painting on the house.

I will write Dr. Clymer as per your request. Now Swami, you must write me again real soon, else I may feel slightly inclined to give you a good and well deserved scolding.

With love and best wishes from—

Fraternally yours,
J. Canidis Hall.

(6)

To Swami Vivekananda

(Retranslated from Bengali translation)

New York
102, 58th Street
8th October, 1901.

Revered Swamiji,

Thank you very much for your kind letter of the 16th May. I have just returned from California—the Vedanta Society of San Francisco has been steadily expanding, but another monk capable of delivering public lectures is necessary there. Dr. Logun has been quite kind to me. I was in great despair in finding out the location of the Ashrama. It is a very inaccessible place; it is very hot in summer and equally cold in winter. The inmates of the ashrama live on tinned vegetables and fruits. They cannot grow anything there and nothing is available in the neighbourhood. All their essential things come from San Jone which is at a distance of 40 miles. I think the Ashrama will not be effective at that site.

You will have to write to Mr. Leggett regarding *Jnana Yoga*. The manuscript is ready. Miss Waldo requested Mr. Leggett to advance money for printing the book—but to no effect. I do not know what arrangement you have made with Mr. Leggett. You know, you entrusted Mr. Leggett with the publication of all of your books. Like other booksellers we purchase your books at wholesale rate from Mr. Leggett and sell them. Mr. Leggett has to maintain accounts of your books. We have got no hand in this matter. You will have to write to Mr. Leggett about this. He will not listen to any one else.

I hope you are all right. Please accept my Sastanga (obeisance in a prostrate posture) and love.

Yours obediently
Kali

(7)

Vedanta Ashrama
West Cornwall, Conn
November 14th 1918.

To His Holiness Swami Brahmanandaji,

Revered Rakhal Maharaj,

I find from 'Prabuddha Bharat' and 'Udbodhan' that this time the Master has recalled Brother Baburam—I am overwhelmed with sorrow at this news. We are losing all brothers and sisters one by one. Only you now remain among my bosom friends. I pray to the Master that He may grant you a long life with unbroken health. It is long time that I have been left alone in this country; I have a strong desire to return to motherland and to see you. The Master alone know when that desire will be fulfilled. The European war has ended. The reign of peace will be established soon. Brother, do please pray for me so that I may return soon to motherland and spend the rest of my life in your noble company. I have done enough of preaching. I am now tired of this.

Prakashananda's work has been going on quite well. Last March I became his guest and gave lectures at his meetings. Prakash is a man of very good nature, noble character and heart full of devotion.

Brother, I have not heard from you for a long time. I look forward to get a loving letter from you. Please convey my love and endearing embrace to all brethren and accept the same for yourself also. Please convey my *Sastanga* (prostrated) obeisance in hundreds to the Holy Mother. Please let me know how Brother Hari is and give him my specially respectful greetings.

Where is Gangadhar now?

Yours obediently,
Kali

(8)

57. Ramkanta Basu Street
Baghbazar P.O.
Calcutta
16th January 1919

My dearest Brother Kali,

I was very glad to receive your loving letter the other day after a long time. That day I was present in the Math (Monastery) and I showed your letter to Mahapurush; he was particularly happy to know that you had expressed your desire to come back. I had written to you many times before requesting you so earnestly to come; but nothing could happen without the will of the Master. However, now that He has aroused in you the desire to return, our joy is too deep to be expressed in writing. I am praying to Him with all my heart that you may return soon after having finished all your work there. Words fail us to say how happy we shall be to see you in our midst again. All children of the Master are passing away one by one. Brother Baburam passed away the other day giving a grievous shock to our heart. We too are not keeping good health. Brother Hari has escaped from the clutches of death this time with great difficulty. He has not yet completely recovered, he is here. Gangadhar was seriously ill in his *Ashrama*. It is about a month that he has come here and as a result of treatment and diet he has nearly recovered now. Sarat also has been keeping indifferent health, he has been suffering from rheumatism. The Holy Mother was on the verge of death due to Malaria. Twice doctors, who went from here, saved her from almost imminent death. However, she has recovered to some extent after having come here. All are happy to know that you now want to come back. It is the earnest desire of all that you should return early after having disposed of all work in hand. Enough of preaching has been done as willed by the Master. Now come, let us spend the remaining days of our life with Him who is eternally ours. Let the youngsters do preaching work. Through the Master's grace they will be able to carry on all

work. To err is human. It is thus that people gain experience. Through the grace of the Master His work is now going on fairly well. His ideals are now spreading all over the country. You will, no doubt, be happy to observe this when you will come. Come as early as possible. We are eagerly awaiting your return. What more shall I write. I would like to tell you everything when we meet. I have been requested by all to convey love to you. Please accept my sincerest love and respectful greetings and do not fail to please us by appearing in person.

Ever yours in friendship
Rakhal

(9)

TO SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(The original letter was in English. This is a retranslation of the Bengali rendering which appeared in Udbodhan of Kartik 1360 B.S.)

New York
102 E 58th Street
24 Nov. 1901.

My dear Sashi,

Infinite thanks for your loving post card. Haribhai has been through quite a bad time. He had a serious attack of gallstone from which he is now gradually recovering. He is at present at San Francisco. I have recently written to him giving information about you. I am extremely sorry to learn that our dear friend Kiddie (Swami Vivekananda's disciple Prof. Singavellu Mudaliar) is no more.

Many thanks for the timely information about the date of the next birthday anniversary of the Master.

I am awfully busy now a days. I hope your classes have been going on quite well.

Please accept my love and *dandavat* (prostrated obeisance).

Yours obediently
Kali

P.S. Please excuse my writing in English which comes most readily.

(10)

(The original letter was in English. This is a retranslation of the Bengali rendering)

Bombay
9 November 1906

My dear Sashibhai,

Your loving letter of the 7th November has just come to my hand. Thanks. I am sorry to learn that construction of the monastery at Madras has not yet been completed. I hope the Master will set everything right very soon.

I shall start tomorrow in S.S. Marmora of P & O; Basanta will accompany me. I am writing to the Holy Mother praying for her blessings to Basanta and to me. I think it is the Master's and Swamiji's will that Basanta is accompanying me. For some time I shall keep him under my care and build him up properly for our mission in America. Please pray to the Master for his safety during the journey overseas and success in life; send him your blessings also.

We got very good reception all the way from Calcutta to Bombay. There is very great demand for a centre of our Ramakrishna Mission and for a resident monk here.....

I have delivered two lectures here. The lecture which I am to deliver this evening will be the third. The meeting held last evening was presided over by Mr. Wodehome, Principal, Elphinstone College. He is an Englishman with deep regard for our philosophy. The subject of my lecture was "the

responsibilities of Indian Youths". There was a large gathering of students and many representative people of Bombay at the meeting. Shri Gokuldas Paresh will preside over today's meeting. The subject is "Vedanta in practical life".

I am sorry to learn that Khagen is ill. Convey my love and sympathy to him. I hope you are all right. I bid farewell to you, Khagen and other friends. With love and regards.

Yours affectionately
Abhedananda

(11)

LETTER FROM THE HOLY MOTHER

Shri Shri Ramakrishna

8/1, Bagbazar Street,
Calcutta.
March, 1899.

Dear Son,

I was pleased to receive your letter yesterday with the happy news that you are well. I have got the parcel sent by you and I am very happy to learn that you are all right both physically and mentally and that your work is going on well. You, sons, have added glory to the name of the Lord. I always pray to the Lord and I bless you that you may be crowned with success. I have no doubt that He will help you in this great mission. Do not be so strict about food. In that country you should take good meat instead of purely vegetarian diet. There will be nothing wrong in that and, since I am giving you permission, you may take that food without the least hesitation. Always take care of your health. You should retire into solitude at times and also write to me occasionally about your health. My blessings to you.

Your Mother.

(12)

Belur Math,
1st February, 1906

My dear Kali,

I have not heard from you for some time. Please let me know in detail how you are. My digestion has been upset, through His grace I am so so. However, please drop a line to me occasionally.

What a hard time the Math is passing through. Income having almost completely dwindled nearly all activities of the mission and all preaching of the ideals of the Lord Shri Ramakrishna and Swamiji have had to be suspended. Yet both work and expenditure have been steadily increasing though there is no tangible achievement. The construction of embankment, bathing ghat, Swamiji's temple, boundary wall of the Math etc. cannot be taken up although these are very urgent. The Trustees of the Math therefore, met and came to the conclusion that if those of centres which publish the sayings of Shri Ramakrishna and lectures and other works of Swamiji would contribute 25 per cent of their profits to the *Math* then much of the work of the Math and Mission could very well be carried on with the fund so obtained. All the publishing centres in India and those who print these books with our permission have accordingly agreed to contribute 25 per cent of their profits to the Math.

Among foreigners Mr. Sturdy has all along been sending us share of his profits from time to time. Recently Mrs. Bull and Mr. Leggett sent us Rs. 2,000/- out of the sale proceeds of 'Rajayoga' and we were told that the balance would be sent later. Sarada* also wanted my sanction to publish Swamiji's works from his centre and I wrote to him that he would have to contribute 25 per cent of the profits to the Math. In reply he has written to say that if you are agreeable to make similar contribution from the New York Centre and other Indians do the same then he will also agree to do so. I sincerely believe that you will have no objection. When

* Swami Trigunatitananda.

Sarada is agreeable can there be any question about you? If, however, you refuse to contribute then Sarada also will refuse and in that case other centres here will grudge the contribution too and our mission will suffer. The success and fulfilment of our mission depend solely on your consent in default of which everything will flop. It is only a quarter of your profits, so, it should not be too great a liability for you. Please give particular thought to this proposal. As soon as I get your reply I shall inform Sarada about your decision and then he will have no reason to object. Please send your consent by the return of post. Our sincerest hopes rest on you. If you do not give this help who else will?

This year some work has been started on construction of the embankment. Please write in detail how your work there is proceeding? Others here are all right. My love to you.

Yours affectionately,
Brahmananda.

(13)

Belur Math.
Howrah,
7th August, 1902.

Dear brother Kali,

Our revered Swamiji passed away in Samadhi on the 4th July, night at 1-10 a.m. On the 6th we sent a message to you by cable but as there is no response from you up till now all of us are in great anxiety. On enquiry in the Telegraph Office we have been told that the cable must have reached you. Otherwise an intimation would have come. We sent the cable to this address "Avedananda, Vedanta Society, New York". You can imagine what our mental condition was so long for which we could not write to you, please excuse this delay.

Swamiji's death was most wonderful! About two months ago he had gone to Kashidham, he returned from there with very bad health. On return to the Math he took to Ayurvedic treatment. He recovered quite well. After one month of

treatment Oedema of hands and feet was cured and fluid collection in the abdomen also disappeared. He regained physical grace and considerable strength. He began to undertake journeys to Calcutta—he had no difficulty to walk a mile or two. He even went on an invitation to a friend's house in a village named Jagule, a few miles from Calcutta for a week and even that did not affect his health. He would look after all affairs of the Math, he also took charge of the education of the boys. Lately his spirit of renunciation had become very much intensified just as it used to be in his earlier days. At 4 a.m. in the morning he would take everybody to the Chapel to perform *Japa* and meditation and he would even say "My task is done, now it is for you to take over the work, look after everything and relieve me". Sometimes he would say "Death has come to my bedside, I have been through enough of work and play, let the world realize what contribution I have made, it will take quite a long time to understand that. Should I go on playing this game for ever? I have thrown away the play-things after the play".

On the 4th July in the morning he went to the Chapel and meditated there for 3 hours, a few days earlier he had told Rakhal "This time I must do one thing or the other, either I must recoup my health through meditation (*dhyana*) and *japa* and work with full vigour or else I shall give up this shattered body". On other days he would sit with others to perform *japa.* That day he sat alone in the bedroom of the Deity and meditated. Thereafter he tidied the bed of the Deity with his own hand and having come down stairs he sat with others and took rice with fry and curry of Hilsa fish with good appetite. After lunch he took rest for an hour and then taught Grammar and Yoga for 2 hours in a class. He gave his own interpretation of the word . . . (*Susumnah Suryavachasah*) occuring in Yajurvedah as these words had not been interpreted by commentators. Then he went with Baburam outside the Math and walked two miles, and while walking told him by way of conversation the whole history of the growth of civilization of different nations of the world. On return he went to the lavatory and said, "For a long time I have not felt so well as today. I have had very good evacuation".

After dusk he went to his room with his rosary and sat down for *japa* saying to his attendant "go and meditate in another room till I call you". After an hour he called the attendant and began to meditate in a lying posture. A Brahmacharin sat near him and fanned him. After he had remained motionless lying on his back for about an hour his right hand began to shake slightly and drops of perspiration appeared on his forehead. This continued for about 2 minutes after which he gasped out a deep breath through his mouth. Then having remained motionless for 2 minutes he again gasped out another deep breath and with that his head shook and his eyes remained fixed on the middle point between the eye-brows and an unusual glow and smile appeared on his face. When this was noticed all the inmates of the Math were called, it was found that his hands and feet had become cold and his pulse had stopped. The doctor was sent for. Dr. Majumdar came and declared that he had expired!

On the following day at 4 p.m. his body was cremated. Whoever saw that unusual expression on his face up to the last was charmed.

It is proposed to build a temple at the site of cremation of his body. If his friends give any help for this purpose please send it. His body was cremated within the precincts of the Math on the western bank of the Ganges. The body of Guru Maharaj had been cremated just opposite to the place on the other bank of the river.

He has departed after having played his part. Now it is for you, Rakhal and others to find out ways to continue the work started by him. Haribhai arrived here 15 days after the passing away of Swamiji. You can very well imagine his mental condition! He is completely broken-hearted. Myself and others of the Math convey to you our love and respects. Please reply early.

Yours in the service of the Lord
Sarat

(14)

"Our hopes at the holy feet of the Master"

Belur Math
August 20, 1902.

My dear brother Kali.

We are now in a state of living death, so to say. That energy, that inspired leadership, those liberal discourses are no more. He recovered quite well under Ayurvedic treatment. he was almost free from all troubles. He gave up his body just at his will.

For about two months he had been regularly teaching all the boys meditation and devotional songs in which he himself would join. For some time I had been observing that his spirit of renunciation had become very intense. Very often he would repeat the phrase.

He would ask "which are the two songs that the Master liked to hear during the last days?" So saying he would sing "Oh Mother, enchantress of the Creator, you have charmed the universe" and "When shall I dive into Samadhi at the feet of Shyama"? You know, he never lacked in urge for work. Only 10-15 days earlier he had sent Tarak Dada to Kashi for opening an Ashrama. For some time He had a strong desire to open a school of Vedic studies. Even on the last day 3 letters were sent to Poona and Bombay for some books on Vedas. That day I had a long discussion with him regarding the school of Vedic studies. I asked "What will be the good of studying the Vedas?" He said, "Superstitions will go".

Sarat and Rakhal were in Calcutta for a few days on some business. Among the old timers Gopal-Dada and myself were in the Math that day. He had no disease at all, you understand!

That day after rising in the morning he had plenty of fun, laughter and jokes with me as usual. He took hot milk and fruits as usual and expressed great earnestness to feed me. Thereafter, for the first time this year, a Hilsa fish, caught in the Ganges, was bought and he cut good deal of jokes with

him over the price of the fish. To a boy from East Bengal who was there he said "I am told you worship the first Hilsa fish of the year, worship this fish with due rites". Then while having a walk he said to me "why should you imitate me, the Master used to discourage imitation of others. Do not be spend-thrift like me". After much talk about the school of Vedic studies he referred to what was written in the Vedas about *Sushumna* and said, "the annotation is not correct, you should try to get the meaning from the text".

At about 8-30 a.m. he went up to the Chapel for meditation. I went to the Chapel at about 9-30 a.m. for performing worship of the Deity. On having seen me he said "put my seat in the bed room of the Deity and shut all doors". On other days even when I would perform worship he would sit in one corner and meditate. That day he did otherwise. After about 11 a.m. he rose and hummed the song "Is my Mother really dark? With Her dark complexion and disheavelled hair She illuminates the lotus of my heart". He took his lunch with great relish with that Hilsa fish in the forms of curry, pickle and fry. He said "My appetite has been very much sharpened by fast of *Ekadashi*, with difficulty I resisted the temptation to eat up the utensils". After lunch he talked of many things and took a little rest.

After 1 p.m. he awakened me and said "Let us go for study, sleeping in day time is bad for Sannyasins. I had no sleep today. A little meditation has caused me slight headache. It seems that my brain has become weak". Then for 3 hours he taught *Panini* in the library. After 4 p.m. he went with me about a mile outside the garden. Having seen a garden he began to give a description of the garden of Mr. Leggett. He described how in that country a small number of men keep large gardens clean by means of machine. He returned to the Math after 5-30 p.m., eased himself and then explained to me in detail the history of European civilization and also narrated the history of colonies. At dusk when I went to the Chapel Swamiji had a long talk with the father of Sashi, after which he again went to the lavatory. A boy from East Bengal named Brajendra was with him at that time. When he came out of the lavatory he said "Today I am feeling very light. I am allright today".

He sat in his own room and said to Brajendra "Give me my Rosary". He asked the latter to go to another room adding "Come when I call you". About an hour later he called Brajendra and asked him to fan him and to massage his legs. He fell asleep when his legs were being massaged. After he had been in the state of sleep for half an hour his hand shook slightly for a few seconds. He then gave out a deep gasp through his mouth. About a minute or two later he again gave out a deep gasp and went into Samadhi. Brajendra thereupon called Gopalda out of fear and said "Please come and see what has happened". One or two minutes after this I went and having found him in a state of Samadhi I called the father of Sashi (late Iswar Chandra Chakraborty) and began to repeat the name of the Master into his ears hoping that the state of Samadhi might pass off. Oh, how effulgent his face was! What divine glow brightened his wide open eyes! An unusual gracefulness was observed in his beautiful body clad in *Kaupin* only. Even on the following day many people were relieved of their sorrows and sufferings on having a glimpse of that face. It seemed as if Lord Shiva Himself was lying there! There was no disfiguration of any of the limbs. It looked as though he had given up his body at his own will. Dr. Majumder was called in that very night. Sarat, Rakhal and Sanyal came. The doctor could not say definitely what disease had caused death! The Master used to say "You will give up your body the day you will realize your Self". That has come to pass! We intend to build a Shiva temple with *Nat Mandir* (Hall of congregation) in front at the site of cremation, some steps are being taken to this end. People of Calcutta are arranging to hold a memorial meeting. Such a meeting has already been held at Madras and some fund has been raised too.

Brother Rakhal would have written to you but he has been suffering from Catarrah and fever for the last few days. Sarat has gone to Calcutta. Haribhai had an attack of fever immediately after he came here. He is allright now. Sarada will soon be going to America in place of Haribhai; Swamiji had already arranged this.

Each one of us shall try to carry on Swamiji's work to the best of our respective ability. This is our determination.

Please write to us how you are. Accept our love and respects.

The Holy Mother is doing well at Jayrambati.

I understand Su..... is going to America. He only criticizes us. You should be careful in your dealings with him.

Yours in the service of the Lord
Baburam

(15)

Our hopes lie at the Master's feet

Sashi Niketan
Puri
Dated, 15-8-1915

Dearest Kali,

We have not forgotten you, we only grew somewhat sentimental. I cannot remain so any longer and therefore I am once more in your presence. Come hold out your arms to me. I wonder how you, being a most dear and intelligent disciple of the Master, remain forgetful of us?

Brother, I am writing this because I look upon you as a kin. There is no bad or selfish motive behind it. I swear! If His infinite kindness towards us is forgotten do you think there will be any other place for us to take our stand?

Devotion and devotees are the glory of the Lord. Does anything else constitute that glory, tell me? The Lord's parlour is in the devotee's heart. The Sangha is the permanent abode where He lives. Yet you do not maintain any contact with these devotees of the Lord. I, therefore, wonder how inscrutable are the ways of the Lord! Have we become outcasts? Have you risen so high as to consider it beneath your dignity to keep in touch with us? But however great a savant you may have become, brother, we shall not allow you to leave us. To us you are that same Kalu Vir, Kalitapaswi (Kalu, the self controlled, Kali, the ascetic), our dearest kin! Do you remember, you and I were in Cossipore garden house when the Master said "You are two monkeys and I am the monkey-tamer

holding in my hand the ropes tied around your hips. The monkey-tamer pulls the rope if the monkeys become too troublesome". Please bear in your mind, brother, that we are monkeys in His hands. During the Lord's incarnation as Rama we had tails, this time we have lost tails. This is the difference. Do not think that we are any more learned or intelligent this time than we were during that incarnation. These are words of the Master!

The Lord who was knowledge personified to those who seek God through the path of discrimination and Love condensed into divine form to those who seek Him through the path of devotion came as a full incarnation of God for unworthy creatures like ourselves. Can this be forgotten? How are you living alone in that country away from us for such a long time? What are you busy about? Learned as you are can you, tell me, brother, why the Lord came this time in the guise of an ignorant person? What did he want to give? What void was there in this creation that the Lord Himself had to come to fill?

You see how the Divine Mother has been playing in Europe. Is man's happiness increasing through cultivation of science, how do you feel about it? Now, why did the Master leave you behind? Why did he teach you non-attachment, renunciation and discrimination? To what extent are we accepting in our life and imparting to other His ideals? Let us not go astray from His ideals—this, brother, is our constant prayer at His feet.

It is our desire that you should come to this country and live here for some time. Can glamour bring the same bliss as is derived from sweetness? Blissfulness increases as the trappings go. Do you remember how we used to dance naked in ecstasy in Baranagar Math chanting "Hara Hara Bom Bom". How much of music and philosophical discussion used to go on. You have lived in that country long enough, Why stay there any longer?

I was about to die, I had an attack of Cholera! I had to survive as these sufferings were yet in store for me. I am all right now. Maharaj is at Bhadrak, his health is not too bad. Tarakdada and Haribhai are in Almora. Haribhaya is suffering from urinary disorder, so he has gone to a cold climate. I

understand that poor Sarada was involved in an accident and that he passed away after much suffering. A *Sadhu* (monk) should not get entangled in too much work. Troubles can be avoided if authorities are consulted beforehand. We are not too bad here. We shall be glad to know all about your physical and mental condition. Please accept my sincere love and respect.

Yours in the Service of the Lord
Baburam

(16)

Ramakrishna Math
P.O. Belur Math,
Howrah.
27. 3. 1917.

Most beloved,

Brother Kalu, I am extremely sorry to receive your letter which reached me in time. You are a spiritual son of our Master. Brother, can you ever and in any cycle of life sever yourself from the Master or break away from us, can we or the Master leave you? What shall we sever! Our relation with the Master is eternal! Do you think that we have become strangers to you because you are in a foreign country for twenty years? Tell me, brother, can you ever, from your heart of hearts, think of us as strangers? It is to the dearest ones that men express their anguish. Moreover you are away in a foreign country. Let me write in clear, straight and simple words—no one here looks upon you as a stranger. You are regarded as one of our own just as before—believe this, believe this. Brother Rakhal, brother Hari, Tarakda, Sarat, Khoka, Ganga all love you as one of those who were in intimate touch with the Master. Brother, who else is there in this world whom we can call our own. Brother, however big a man you may be you are to us the same "Kali, the most intelligent among my boys" as the Master used to say of you. . We too are the same Baburam, Sarat, Hari etc. to you. Brother, are we not abnormal people? You see what the worldly people are doing for prestige, position, honour, women and gold. Do not our

education and ideals run counter to all this? Tell me what ideal we should follow in our life. Consider, what unusual and wonderful ideals were set before us by the Master! Intelligent as you are, moulded in the Master's own hands, please judge and say if you have seen such a disinterested, selfless spotless and pure soul on earth. Tell me brother, what we should be if we are to be worthy of His grace? The Master will spread the message of peace through us.

Is there anyone who can ever equal you in any age? Have they witnessed the spontaneous love, devotion and God consciousness of the Master? Have they seen or understood what Godconsciousness is? Is there any comparison between them and the Master's own people? Brother, does not even the position of the creator become insignificant when we remember the Master's grace? Come brother, come. Come and join your brethren at home. You are ours and we are yours just as before, we have not forgotten you. How long shall we live? Everything is gradually passing away. Come let us spend the rest of our days in contemplation of the immortal words of the Master. Come, let us now say that 'worldly people are grovelling insects'. Only men of lower levels busy themselves with mundane interests. Come, let us plunge into the real glory of the Master. Many good boys have now joined the Math. Hari Bhaya, Tarak-da and others are here. We are doing well. Accept our sincere love. Reply if you like. Let us know you will return. All else are well. The Master is being hailed all over India.

Yours affectionately
Baburam

(17)

The lotus like feet of Sri Sri Ramakrishna are our only hope.

57, Ramkanta Basu Street
Baghbazar, Calcutta.
7th Dec. 1910.

Brother Kali,

I have already written 5/6 letters to you but it is a matter of surprise that up till now you have not replied to any of

these. We are in great anxiety on account of your silence for such a long time. We are more so because you have to move about for preaching. Moreover you have to go to England at times. We are anxious to know how you are doing in the midst of so much strain and how assiduously you have been extending your activities.

I wish you good health. If you find time do please write to us in remembrance of the happy old days when we used to live together and love one another. It does not behove you to forget us altogether. Please accept my love and respect in the amplest measure. I wonder where Haripada and Basanta are working now. Would you please send to them the two letters written by me? All members of the Math here are well. Rakhal Maharaj has returned from Puri and is now staying in the Math. I understand that Turiyananda is coming here from Kashi. The Holy Mother has gone to Kothar from Baghbazar recently and she is now living there. Girish Babu is all right now at Kashi.

Yours affectionately
Latu

(18)

'Om' the Master's lotus like feet are my hope.

Brother Kali,

I am surprised and sorry to get your affectionate letter.

It must have been on account of very great embarassment that you have become so much upset at H—'s conduct. Fools suffers from many defects. It is these fools who while preaching religion have proclaimed the blackest irreligion as religion by keeping their mind steeped in the darkness of fanaticism and have brought violence, jealousy, cruelty and even unnecessary bloodshed. I could never dream that H— would be so impertinent to you. Freedom given to a man before he attains maturity leads to adverse consequences. The boy who does not know the use of a knife causes hurt to himself with that.

Liberty, freedom are very high things. If a man, bound in hands and feet, is allowed to move he will not be able to

move even a step, he may rather get into difficulty by falling down while trying to move about. That is why the Lord has said in the Sastra—"तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया" "You will have to attain knowledge by prostrating yourself in obeisance to the teacher, by serving him and by questioning him". Lord Krishna has enjoined service that destroys vanity because those who are blinded by vanity can never see the light of knowledge. Man cannot get rid of this blindness unless he serves his teacher and serves the Lord Hari. This blindness is accentuated by the smallest measure of name and fame and then it becomes a greater cause of all. It may not be an overstatement to say that the present day preaching of Vedanta is a kind of self advertisement. Men who are deluded by self attachment cannot understand this. By 'अहं ब्रह्मास्मि' they mean "I am Brahman" and think that the self attached to this body measuring three cubits and a half with bones, flesh and blood is the cosmic existence-knowledge-bliss and they preach so to others. The whole world is full of these fanatics. R—babu is a specimen of such people. I have observed that in trying to defend his own position he would even show disregard to his Master whom he would worship as his spiritual teacher and God in His very presence. When on having seen a portrait painted at the expense of Babu R—the Master said "it is not my portrait" R—babu paid no heed to that and thinking that he should worship that portrait he would place that on the altar in place of the true portrait and he would worship that. This is well known to you. I have heard that sometime before his death he realised his mistake and then he called the monks of the Math to his home and confessed his fault and expressed regret. May God bring H—to his senses in like manner.

What can you do, brother! The whole world is like this! You are intelligent, you live in the land of learned people and have the company of many savants. Here the number of low minded people I have to put up with can hardly be counted. What shall I do? I endure everything. "All this is your Will, O' Mother",, so my constant prayer to the Master is that H—'s mind may be pure. Instead of being upset on account of H—'s misbehaviour you should do your own work undeterred. Please take particular care to see that the Society there becomes an ideal institution. May innumerable men and women find

solace by coming there? There will be no progress of activities unless you continue the classes and public lectures for two or three years more. B— is a mere boy. If he is given the responsibility of holding classes and delivering public lectures his health will break down and these will not be as effective as your lectures. Please see that he is not guided by the counsel of women. Counsel of women is dangerous! Have you sent H—to Petersberg? There are some mischievous people who infect pure minds with their evil thoughts. Please take care to see that B—is saved from the clutches of such people.

You are intelligent. It is needless to write more eloborately to you. Please accept my loving embrace of Vijoya and countless *pranams*. In this world of Maya an intelligent man like you should not expect a perfect finale of anything— "सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः" ; "just as in the beginning fire is enveloped in smoke so is all beginning of work clouded with imperfection". Of course one should try to do his best. When really you have no hand in any matter and everything is directed by the Cosmic Energy, the best course would be to pray with all your heart to that Cosmic Energy, who is Mahamaya, to set everything right.

The Holy Mother came to Calcutta this time on the occasion of Durga Puja in Girish Babu's house. Perhaps she has gone to Jayrambati today. She sends you her love and blessings. Narendra's younger brother Bhupen and not Mahim has been gaoled. It is about two or three days that S—has come to Madras. People of Madras who are hungry for lectures are treating him with great cordiality and high regard. He is moving about with eight elderly ladies of that country in wonderful style. He is trying to form a sew sect. He is dead-against Vedanta philosophy. It is but natural that majority of Indian laity would become votaries of his religion of prayer and would view the Vedanta Philosophy which is built around a dry core of truth with awe. In this realm of Maya counterfeits are prized more than the genuine.

We shall shift to the new premises of the Math within a week. Construction of the Master's chapel will cost about Rs. 1,500/-. Please send whatever help you can.

Yours obedient
Sashi

(19)

LETTER OF SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

Triplicane
5. 2. 1903

My dear Kali,

I have received the two beautiful books "How to be a Yogi" and "Philosophy of Work" which you have sent. I am very glad to know that your work is going on well. How are you? How is Sarada? Naren has retired from all work. You are carrying his banner now. My work here is proceeding fairly well but I am awaiting retirement. I neither like nor can I bear the drudgery. Yet, I shall have to work so long as my *karma* (effects of action) remains unquited.

All is well in the Math. Recently the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda was celebrated with great eclat. About 4000 beggars and 500 gentlemen got *prasadam.* Here we fed about 800 poor people. The birth day anniversary of the Master comes off on 1st March and the public ceremony on 8th. Probably you will get this letter on the last day.

Your lectures are very lucid and readable. What a popular figure you are in India! An Industrial Exhibition was held in a place called Cocanada. A big portrait of yours was placed there as an attraction for visitors. You are regarded by all as the fittest spiritual brother of Sreemat Swami Vivekananda of revered memory. How can I tell you how happy I am to observe this. इतरे नामधारिणः "Others are merely nominal"—we are of that category. Sarada also is about to become a great man. Please accept and convey to him my love and thousand obeisances. Do you not intend to come back to this country? I want to see you. Just like the sinner's hope to see the kingdom of heaven, this longing of mine will go in vain. Five of us are here at present viz. Gupta, his nephew, Paramananda, a brahmacharin named Jogin and myself. Sarat, Baburam, Gopalda, Khoka, Tulsi Chatterjee, Kanai, Nanda and a number of Brahmacharins and Sannyasin novitiates are in the Holy Math at Belur.

Latu is working for the salvation of Kedar (the lame) and

many others. Sister Nivedita is very busy in opening a sales centre for tigers in Bagherhat (which literally means tiger mart). She has gone to grace the 'Bharat Mela' (Indian Fair) with a number of fiery, brave and energetic sons of India who are objects of amusement and awe. Who, except a fool like myself, can doubt that her purpose is praiseworthy and noble? Recently she enlightened South India with the brilliance of her genius. She is bent upon awakening this sleeping nation with the consciousness of nationality. It would be mad to question the fact that the purpose is as high as the sky itself. Please do not think that I am not serious or sober. I say this in all sobriety. Gangadhar is running an orphanage near Murshidabad. Hariprasanna and others have opened a religious club named Brahmavadin Club at Allahabad. Tarakda, along with some Monks of the Math has been trying to alleviate the sufferings of the poor who are afflicted with infirmity or disease. Matilal, Kalikrishna, Khagen, Swarupananda along with mother Mrs. Sevier are defending the fortress in the Himalayas known as Mayavati. The whole of sleeping India is about to wake up at the loud call of uncompromising nondualism which is called "Prabudhha Bharata" (Awakened India). There is nothing to be afraid of except that if the sleep breaks untimely then complications like headache may arise. It is not possible to be definite about this, the sleep may also have matured and in that case the awakening will certainly be as beneficial as nectar.

Sick Sadhus are being treated with due care at Kankhal and Hrishikesh. Kalyananda and Satyakam (brother of Sarada) are in charge of this work. In many parts of India Vivekananda Societies have been started or just formed or are in the offing. The remotest corners are resouding with the songs of this greatman's glory.

I have thus presented to you a picture of your motherland. I hope you will likewise send a picture of your field of activity—at least for the sake of courtesy. You have become a gentleman of the West. So, I am afraid, you may feel annoyed if a person so insignificant as myself is found lacking in manners. It is out of this fear that I am asking for a picture after having sent a picture before hand. This is the custom of the Western gentlemen, is it not? I am spending my days leisure-

ly and my earnest prayer is that, out of your greatness, you may bear with this belated reply of that 'I' (this is an American compound).

Your servant
Sashi

(20)

Triplicane
6. 3. 1907

Brother Kali,

I am glad to receive your letter after a long time. As you are engaged in a noble mission and you have little time it is not always possible to get letters from you. The Master incarnated Himself as an illiterate person—perhaps it was in order to demonstrate to the world the insignificance of present day education that he was so childlike and so immaculately pure. The greatest evil effect of Western education is that it removes from the heart all devotion to God and preceptor. It fills the mind with innumerable doubts and degrades men to the animal level. Having no faith in the existence of life beyond death they want to enjoy all kinds of pleasure in this life and taking women and gold to be the be all and end all of life they devote themselves to the worship of these things. Hungry for name and fame, engrossed with the physical body, selfish and cruel hearted they reduce the life of God-like man to the animal state. H— is not at fault, it is his education that is to be blamed. The fact that he can speak a little English and can deliver lectures has brought about ruin of this poor fellow. Do you not know that the Master used to dislike the boys who would give lectures? It is very difficult to be a teacher. Only those who have attained realisation can be teacher. I have informed Raja Maharaj. He has sent him a letter with instructions. My earnest prayer is that through the grace of Swamiji he may prosper. Some people think that to pay verbal tributes to Swamiji is to follow him. Those who are vocal in Swamiji's praise never follow him truely. Love and devotion belong to the heart. The wretch who goes about declaring that he is devoted to God is never a true devotee. Among the disciples of Swamiji some perhaps think that your devotion and regard

for Swamiji are not as high as theirs. These chaps do not understand that those who have been his constant companions in eating, sitting and lying with whom he identified himself and shared all the secrets cannot disregard him even if they try. It is only stupidity to think that they can. However, please forgive H— and see to his well being.

I am very glad to hear praises of Basanta from you. Please keep him under your loving care. The boy is pure by nature; so I take no credit for that. He is of tender age, let him not spoil his health by overwork. I understand that he takes four classes every week. I think it is not desirable to put so much pressure on him at the start. However, do as you consider proper. The Master used to say that you are very intelligent. It is presumptuous on my part to advise you. Please send one complete set of your bulletins starting from the first issue to the Raja and Dewan of Mysore gratis. Please send one copy to each of them every month as you send to the subscribers and please write to them two polite letters. If you do so our end will be achieved. After two or three months I shall go there, stay as a guest of the Dewan and deliver a few public lectures and try to obtain land and house quickly.

Concerted action leads to good results. Please write a polite letter to Sarat requesting him to come to the south for a few days for helping me. Write to Hari Babu (Swami Turiyananda) also. Nobody is inclined to work. What will happen if everyone becomes a recluse (Sadhu)? One who devotes himself to the service of Shri Ramakrishna disregarding all abuses that may be thrown at him while he is engaged in Mission work is a truly great man. How great were the hardships that Swamiji had to bear! All of us ought to follow him. I learn from Miss Glenn's letter that you are over exerting yourself. This is not desirable. You will have to keep your body fit. If Swamiji would have lived longer how much easier our work would have been. Whatever would prolong the life of the Master's children and of the disciples of Swamiji and would enable them to work for the service of humanity is worth doing.

The people of this country have many virtues but they have many faults too. Having been slaves for a long time they have become listless under the influence of "Tamas". They will continue to remain in this condition of sleep unless they

are aroused from time to time. So, it would be helpful if you would write from that country, letters of encouragement to the Raja of Mysore, Dewan, Narayan Ayyangar and Dr. Pallu. My letters will not carry so much weight, for I am a mere Indian like them. I bear no foreign stamp. However loudly we canvass indigenous things the regard that has been developed for foreign things will not easily disappear. Why are the Vedas good? Because Max Müller and Schopenhauer have said so, etc. People of this country have begun to admire Swamiji and his co-workers for this reason. This was well known to Swamiji. He also wrote so to me. If you are successful there you will have no difficulty to succeed here. Who cares to accept the words of really learned and pure Brahmin now-a-days? The educated people dismiss them as mad. If however some Mr. or Mrs. Westerner extols our religion then it must be good. Almost everybody suffers from this complex. So, why should we not avail of this opportunity? One polite word from you will be much more effective than a thousand words of flatery from me. So, please write ten or twenty line to them. You will see how that will help our work.

Yours obediently
Sashi

(21)

(Retranslated from the Bengali translation published in Udbodhan of Ashara, 1361).

New York
62 West 71st Street
28th January 1907.

My dear Sashi,

I am anxious for you because of your prolonged silence. Please relieve my anxiety by writing to me how you are. I hear from Basanta that you went to Rameswar with Baburam and his mother. I hope you have safely returned to Madras after the pilgrimage to Rameswar. Please let me know how your works are going on and how Khagen is doing.

Basanta has come here with me via England. He is all right. Yesterday he delivered his maiden speech. It came off very well. The subject was "Self control". Everybody appreciated what Basanta said. Last week I went to Pittsburg to establish a branch centre there. During my absence Basanta took charge of the classes here. I have left Haripada at Pittsburg.

Basanta is an excellent boy. Having seen him for eight months I like him very much. I shall do my best to foster the good qualities which he has in him. His future is really very bright. After all his character has been shaped in your hands. Can your power fail?. . . . Please have kind affection for me, brother. Please convey my love and best wishes to friends there and in other parts of the Madras Presidency. Have you written to the Dewan of Mysore and to Dr. Pallu? Please give both of them my love and good wishes. I am busy with many things. Our Society will have a permanent abode soon. I have been delivering a series of lectures on a new subject. You may see this from the enclosed paper.

Love and regards to you.

Yours obediently
Abhedananda

(22)

(Retranslated from the Bengali translation. The original letter was in English.)

New York
19th February 1907.

Brother Sashi,

I have just received your letter which is full of sympathy and affection. Many thanks. The letter is dated 24th January. You say that you wrote to me after I left India. That letter has not reached me.

Basanta is now fit to take charge of my classes. He has been addressing small meetings and he has turned out to be quite helpful for our work here. I am glad to know that a

monastery is going to be built at Maylapur soon. Please convey my sincere greetings to those friends of yours whom I met there.

Basanta has written an account of our journey. I have a mind to send it to you for correction after it is completed. It would be much better if you yourself would write about what you saw with your own eyes. Please do not worry about dates. Give a general description of the places, reception and the enthusiasm of the people. The welcome addresses with dates are here with us. Could you please send me clippings of my addresses at Trichinapalli, Tanjore, Kumbhakonam, Cuddalore, Bnyambadi and Dharmapuri as published in the newspapers? Please find out from our friends at Colombo if they can send the reports of my addresses at Jaffna, Kandi and other places Ceylon. Have they published any booklet?

. . . . I hope that you are in good health. My love and regards to you.

Yours obediently
Abhedananda

(23)

London
May 30th 1908

Brother Sashi,

I have duly received your loving letters and today I am very glad to get your book "The Universe of Man". I am particularly happy to read the chapter on "The Message of Ramakrishna". It is excellent. Your lectures are as simple as they are readable. All that I can say is that the book is beautiful in all respects.

I have been working here for about four months. The Vedanta Society of London has been opened. Its headquarters will be established soon and it has been decided that in June I shall deliver public lectures (Sunday lectures open to the public) in a big hall. Work in New York has been going on smoothly. Basanta is no longer a novice as before, he has become a good worker. Do not be anxious for him.

He is so energetic that instead of getting tired with the work of New York Society he has opened another centre at Mont Clair. He was so eager to take full charge of work that I had to come here leaving him there. If I would get a suitable man here then I would put him in charge of this centre and I would open a centre in Paris. Is there anyone in our Monastery who is fit to take charge of this centre? In that case please let me know early.

Please write to Basanta asking him to stay at New York. He is very faithful to you. . . . I am all right. I hope that you are enjoying good health. With love and regards.

Yours obediently
Abhedananda

(24)

(LETTERS PUBLISHED IN UDBODHAN—
SRAVAN, 1361, pp. 353-359)

(Addressed to Swami Ramakrishnananda)

Paris
July 28, 1908

Brother Sashi,

I am extremely glad to receive your loving letter of the 9th instant. The Master's power is being manifested through you. I find no words to write how glad I am to learn that a *Math* (Monastery) is going to be established at Bangalore. Please convey my love and good wishes in ample measure to His Highness Madhava Rao. Give my love and good wishes to Narayan Ayyanger, Doctor and others also. I am sorry to know that Miss Glenn is unwell. Why shall I be displeased with her? As she has taken refuge in the Master she has to live and move according to the Master's will—This is my belief and conviction. "It is nobody's fault O'Mother". May the Master lead her along the path of righteousness and keep her

in perfect peace—this is my prayer. Please convey my love and best wishes to her.

You may have heard that the "Tiger Mahatma" has been put under regorous imprisonment for four months. You will get all news from this clipping. Please have it published through all newspapers of Madras that we have no connection with him etc.

I have established Vedanta Society in London and I am trying to establish one here also. I shall return to New York in August. . . . I hope that you are in good health. Please accept my love and prostrated obeisance (*Sastanga*) and bless me.

Yours most obediently
Abhedananda

(25)

(*Addresed to Swami Ramakrishnananda*)

Hotel Ste Anne
10, Rue Ste Anne
(Avenue De l' Opera)
Paris
April 29th, 1909

Brother Sashi,

I have received two loving letters of yours which have been redirected here from New York. For the last three weeks I have been lecturing and conducting classes quite successfully. Some distinguished persons among the Americans and some English speaking Frenchmen are interested in the teachings of Vedanta. They have been attending my classes on Pranayam etc.

I was not keeping good health at London. So, I came here for a little rest. I am, however, so much wanted by people that I get no rest anywhere.

I hope to go to London next week to conclude my lectures and classes there. After that I shall return to New York where I shall stay for some time and deliver a few lectures. I wish

I could get two or three monks who would follow me faithfully and would act according to my way of thinking.

One of my pupils has been preaching the Master's message in Australia and New Zealand with remarkable ability. He has also been establishing centres in various places.

If you can send a monk who will permanently stay in London and follow my instructions then I shall gladly put him in charge of the London Vedanta Society because I cannot always be there. New York Vedanta Society wants me and has been requesting me to return as early as possible.

There is a student in my class here who has renounced all she had in the world and has been getting ready to go to India. The girl has dedicated herself to Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. She promises to become a good worker of Bangalore. She might be engaged as a well trained teacher of girls and other ladies.

I hope that you are hale and hearty. Please convey my love and regards to our Maharaja and accept the same yourself.

Yours most obediently
Abhedananda

(26)

May the Master helps us

Hrishikesh
7th Magh, Sunday
Jan. 19, 1890

To Balaram Babu, the sincerest devotee of the Master.

Sir,

I have received your letter. Through the Master's grace I have now recovered after having suffered from high fever for about twenty days. I am, however, still very weak. Sarat and others nursed me day and night to the best of their ability. It is dangerous to fall ill here as neither medicine nor diet is available in this jungle. You can well understand what happens

to the Bengalis, delicate as they are by nature in physical constitution, when they fall ill. Through the Master's grace Sarat, Hari and Tulsi are all right. As the breads of *Sarat* (Alms house) are almost unbaked Sanyal occasionally suffers from dysentry which is cured when he becomes a little careful. We are very sorry to know that you are unwell. Please do not despair. The body, by virtue of its very nature, is sometimes in good health and sometimes sick. What can you do? It cannot be expected that the body will remain healthy for ever, though the longer it remains so the better. The Master's mercy is particularly palpable during illness. Once He is remembered at that time all agony is forgotten and there is dawn of peace in the heart. Those who are in the world depending solely on Him can very well realise how merciful He is. He puts some into suffering in order to teach them many lessons while He saves some even from the slightest touch of pain. May His will be fulfilled. Our prayer is that our days and nights may be spent in His contemplation. If you would come to Brindaban then your health might improve due to change and some of us might also live there with you. We are very eager to know what Girish Babu's mental condition is after his wife's death. Of late Mahendra Babu's spiritual fervour was being intensified but the Lord has saved this young man from the sufferings of life all too suddenly. This is good in a way. His will prevails in all affairs.

Yours
Kali

(27)

(Received from His Holiness Sreemat Swami Sankarananda, the President of Ramakrishna Math and Mission).

To Chuni Babu

Sir,

I can well understand from your letter what your mental condition is. Please wait and pray instead of getting impatient. Nothing can happen till the proper time comes. Only

pray to the Master day and night with all your heart. He will relieve you of all sufferings. He is very merciful. He cannot stand the sight of anyone in distress. He gives whatever one asks Him for with absolute sincerity (with complete identity of words and thoughts). Sufferings of so many have been alleviated and will there be an exception in your case? We are all praying for you. He is all knowing, He is giving everyone what he needs keeping nobody's want unfulfilled. What will be the good of renouncing the world in a haste? Rather, dependence on and faith in the Lord get more and more intensified in the midst of the miseries of worldly life and it becomes possible to contemplate on Him at all times. The Master used to say "there is bleeding if the scum of a sore is removed while it is raw but when the scum dries up and drops out of itself no pain remains". Renouncing of the world also is like this. As long as worldly desires remain it is not proper to renounce the world. What more shall I write. You will get much solace if you remember the Master's teachings which you heard. Please accept our respectful greetings.

Yours
Kali

(This letter was sent in the same envelop with the first letter. Chuni Babu was a neighbour of Balaram Babu and he was of the lay disciples of Shri Ramakrishna. His name was Chunilal Basu.)

(28)

May the Master Help Us

Hrishikesh
2/3/1890.

To Shri Balaram Basu

Sir,

I received your letter yesterday. I am still having attacks of fever which has become chronic by now. I have suffered for three months due to want of medicine and diet. A change

is now indispensable. Sarat wrote to Narendra long ago to send money. In reply to that I received a telegram from Narendra yesterday in these words "Letter just receivd, telegraph if money required now" with eight annas prepaid for reply. Tulsi and Sanyal are therefore going to Hardwar today to send a telegram. Perhaps Narendra will send telegraphic money order soon though I do not know how much he will be able to send. I shall go down to the plains immediately on receipt of money. Please do not send money to this address as it takes about 15 days for a letter to reach here from Dehra (this is evident from the fact that Narendra's telegram dated 17th February written from Gazipur reached me yesterday the 1st March) and perhaps I shall not be here till then as I intend to leave as soon as I get money. In case I need money afterwards at my next destination I shall write to you and you may then send money to that address. Kindly show this letter to M— and to the *Math* (Monastery). I am very sorry to know that Suresh Babu is ill. I pray that he may come round soon. It is distressing to learn that Baburam has been suffering so long. On the occasion of the birthday of the Master a small ceremony was held at Hrishikesh. M— had sent Rs. 2/- by M.O. for *bhoga* on that day. We offered very modest *bhoga* out of that money. A detailed description of *bhoga* has been given in the leter to M—. Others are all right here. Please accept our regards (Namaskara).

Yours

M—"Master Mashai".

(29)

LETTERS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

(Received by courtesy of Sreemat Swami Sankaranandaji, President of Ramakrishna Math and Mission. The first two letters were addressed to Babu Pramadadas Mitra, Zamindar living in Kashi). (Vide Udbodhan Sravan 1360 B.S.)

"Om namo Bhagabate Ramakrishnaya"

Salutation to Ramakrishna who is Divinity personified

Baranagore
16th Vaishak
(April 28, 1890)

Sir,

Yesterday I arrived at Baranagore Math (Monastery) at about 10 A.M. As I started at night I did not have much difficulty. I boarded the train at Kashi at 9 P.M. and after good sleep during the whole night got down at Mokamah Station at about 7 A.M. in the morning. I took meals and rested there for the whole day and again boarded the train on the following day at about 10 A.M. I got down at Bally from where I came to Baranagore by boat. I am much better now. I am taking rice. Complications like cough etc. which I had are improving gradually. Perhaps I may regain some strength within a short time. Here Baburam has been suffering badly from fever though he is somewhat better now. Narendra is here, in quite good health now. Perhaps he will not go soon to Western India in this hot weather. I shall have to stay here for some time for rest. Everyone here is glad to read the hymn (Stava) composed by you and astonished at your devotion to Paramahansa Deva. Kindly let us know in case you get any letter of Gangadhar for, all of us are anxious to get news about him. Kindly accept our respectful greetings.

Yours
Abhedananda

(30)

SRI RAMAKRISHNA JAYATI

(*May the Lord Ramakrishna Prevail*)

Baranagore
25th Baishakh
May 7th, 1890

Sir,

I am very glad to receive your letter. I am extremely happy to learn that you go every day to the temple of Vashishtha Deva and experience unsurpassable joy in the contemplation of God in solitude. That place is exceedingly charming and when one sits there the mind automatically gets into a wonderful mood and divine thoughts arise naturally. The atmosphere of the place is surcharged with spirituality. I can never forget the place. I still wish I could sit there and spend time in spiritual discourses with you. It is quite likely that sitting there you feel as blissful as if you were at Harishikesh. The place is really like that. It is quite true that if one sits in such a place for some time all worldly thoughts vanish and spiritual thoughts arise in the mind. I am now living in this monastery. Day by day I have been gaining bodily strength. At the moment I have no physical ailment. The little weakness that still lingers will perhaps disappear soon. Premananda Babaji is now quite all right; he has no complaint now. Narendra Swami had slight fever recently; he is all right now. Today (Wednesday) we have received a letter and a parcel from Gandadhat Babaji (sent by him from Rawalpindi). In the parcel he has sent an image of "Sakyathuba" Buddhadeva (which he procured from Tibet) and also ashes and *bilwa* leaves of Amarnath. The image is very ancient and it seems as though it has all along been worshipped. Brother Gangadhar is in Rawalpindi now and he has written to say that he will soon go to *Kashidham* from that place. He may have come to your place by this time. The unbearable heat of Kashidham may be too irksome for him as he has lived for a long time in cold countries. However, kindly send him here as soon as he goes

to your place. The summer of this place may not be so uncongenial for him because temperature is much lower here than at *Kashidham* and this is his native place also. The climate of this place will not be harmful to his health. All members of the monastery are in favour of his coming here. Kindly write to us early if you have received any letter from him and send information to us as soon as he goes to your place. All Swamis of the Monastery are in good health. Please accept their respectful greetings and mine too. We are all in anxiety for Brother Gangadhar. Kindly let us know how not it is now at Kashidham and how you are doing. With regards,

Yours
Abhedananda

(31)

LETTER OF SWAMI AKHANDANANDA

Sri Ramakrishna Orphanage
Mapula P.O.
Dt. Murshidabad
Vijaya

Brother Kali,

I have not heard from you for a long time. Through this letter I convey to you today respects, embrace and love of all of us on the occasion of Vijoya.

During the Puja this year our hearts cried out off and on for brother Sashi. Perhaps our Puja has never been so full of sorrow. We are now in deep mourning for Sashi, who is no more with us. We could never imagine that he would give us the slip so soon. The Master's will has been fulfilled!

Brother, I am sad to say that entalgled as I am in work I could not even go to see him at the last moment. The Holy Mother is in her country home. Maharaj is at Puridham. Swamiji's mother and maternal grandmother have passed away within 5 or 7 days. You may have heard this by this time.

I was told that Paramananda had started from America to see brother Sashi.

Brother, however, long you may live in this country please remember us occasionally, do not forget us altogether. You have already lived in there for over a *Yuga* (twelve years). It now seems as if you are a citizen of that country. I shall be glad to hear from you about your well being.

Yours obediently
Akhandananda

(32)

LETTER OF GIRIS CHANDRA GHOSH, THE GREAT DRAMATIST

13, Bosepara Lane,
Baghbazar, Calcutta.
18th April, 1907.

Brother,

What about the Homeopathic medicine box and books that you were to send me? What about your proposal to take the theatre to that country? Have you put a crown on your head after going to Mathura? I was on the verge of death. Through the Master's grace I have recovered. I would have pestered you if I would not have fallen ill.

You must have heard all news about the Math. Everyone is all right inwardly. Rakhal is not keeping good health. Vivekananda's mausoleum temple is under construction. God knows when it will be completed. Brother Latu is as before, he often comes to me. A nationalist movement is going on. Hindus and Muslims are fighting with each other at Comilla—This is the beginning of national unity! According to the Press, the Magistrate and others are inciting one community against the other—you may have seen this news in the papers of that country also. Price of rice is so high that it is difficult for the common man to have two square meals a day. Everything is costly. We have to buy *neem* leaves to prepare *neem* soup. *Sajina* sells at three sticks per pice. The Raja of Darbhanga

and Jatindramohan Tagore called a meeting. That was much brief, no doubt, but what fruit it bears is yet to be seen. You have been working for America with your face flushed with blood—can you find out a way of salvation of your mother-land? The situation is deteriorating day by day. Bengalees have fallen out of the grace of *Sahibs* (British Rulers). They get no opportunity of employment. No zeal for work is noticeable except for holding frequent meetings. Again, among the speakers there are two parties vilifying each other—this is the position!

How are you? How is work going on? If you have time to reply please reply in Bengali as Brother Latu is keen on hearing and I shall be spared the troubles of translating if you write in Bengali. How are the boys who have gone there working? How is Moti? Please accept my respectful obeisance. Have mercy on me, I pray.

Yours G. C.

(33)

LETTER TO SRI SRI SARADA DEVI[1]

Vedanta Ashram,
18th April, 1919.

Her Holiness the Divine Mother,
Sri Sri Sarada Devi,

To Your Lotus Feet,

Divine Mother, ...

For a long time I received no news about you. I hope that you are keeping well. Sri Sri Gurudev is taking away all His beloved sons one by one. What loss can be more than this?

A great devotee of Sri Sri Gurudev has painted a portrait of Him and has sent it to me. The photograph of this portrait I am sending to you, and I shall be grateful to you if you kindly accept this humble presentation, and this is a prayer of this son. By your divine grace I am keeping well. Kindly

accept my obeisance through thousands of my postrations, and also bless me. I shall be glad to receive good news from your end.

Yours,
Servent,
Kali,
Abhedananda.

Her Holiness Sri Sri Matathakurani,
Sri Sri Sarada Devi.
For Sri Sri Sarada Devi,

C/O Swami Saradananda,
Udbodhan Office,
Bagbazar P.O.,
Calcutta,
India.

(34)

LETTER OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

To Shri Kalikrishna Giri

Sir,

I have received your letter dated the 19th instant together with the clippings and the booklet on the holy Yogeswari in time and I am very glad to read all these. It has been good of you to publish all the letters in the booklet. These will, undoubtedly, remove misconceptions of many people. The congent rejoinders of Krishna Chandra Babu and yourself cannot be easily refuted.

All that has been said about the Bhairabi Yogeswari by distinguished speakers in the memorial meeting held in Albert Hall has been appropriate. Shri Ramakrishna himself used to say that the Brahmin lady *Bhairavi* was a partial manifestation of 'Yogamaya' (the Divine Mother), when he, with yearning heart, was praying to the Mother of the Universe "Mother, I shall learn only if you will teach me" the Divine Mother was saying from within his heart "You want to practise *Sakti* cult? Very well. Immediately after this the *Bhairavi* appeared before

him with saffron coloured cloth in her wearing, *Trishul* in her hand and a bag over her shoulder". It was a mysterious and unusual affair. How will common people understand that? However, you have done a noble thing. Please accept my respects and the blessings of the Master.

With best wishes
Yours Abhedananda

(35)

R. K. V. Ashram
Darjeeling
17. 5. 29

My dear Kalikrishna,[1]

I have received your letter dated the 8th instant and have noted its contents. There is no difference between the name of the Master to which I have initiated you and *Tarakbrahmanama* (Hare Krishnanama) which you are fond of repeating. You will gradually realise this. For the present you may do *japa* of whatever words you like after you have finished *japa* of your *Istamantra.*

When your mind will become pure through selfless work it will attain a state of rest and then discrimination and detachment will come. You will be able to understand everything as your *buddhi* (intelligence) gets polished and clean. Keep the company of Sadhus, serve the Sadhus and live in the Ashrams of Sadhus and always pray for divine love and faith. My blessings to you.

With best wishes.
Yours Abhedananda

[1] Kalikrishna Giri (of Calcutta).

(36)

ADDRESSED TO SWAMI BRAHMANANDA

(From The Udbodhan, page 417, Bhadra, 1360)

Nov. 4th, 1897.
New York

My dear Raja Saheb,

I cannot express in writing how glad I am to receive your letter after a long time.

Work has started here. I have been delivering four lectures per week. The attendance was 76 and on the previous Wednesday it was 128. The hall was full. The subject was "Concentration". Perhaps the audience liked the lecture. I shall spare no pains to do my very best; the Master alone knows what the results will be.

I am at a loss to understand the cause of Mr. Sturdy's displeasure. He said nothing so long as I was in England. I am hearing many things now. Whom can I gag, tell me. I tried my best to work according to the wish of Mr. Sturdy. I am helpless if he is displeased even after this. I believe all this is due to the influence of Mrs. Sturdy. Mrs. Sturdy is dead against Vedanta and Narendra; she gets upset at very name of India. She has swallowed Mr. Sturdy and is always on her guard lest Sturdy becomes a Sannyasin and escapes.

However, everything will be all right in due course. I am extremely busy and I have no time for writing letters. Kindly excuse me. With love and respectful greetings to you.

Yours obediently
Kali

(37)

LETTER OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA WRITTEN TO SWAMI RAMAKRISHNANANDA

(Received from His Holiness Swami Sankarananda, President, Ramakrishna Math and Mission)

New York
19 W 38th St.
Jan. 25th, 1898

Brother Sashi,

Kindly excuse me for writing to you after such a long time. Sarat has started for motherland. He is due to arrive there before this letter reaches you. You wrote a letter to Sarat and myself. That was of course long ago. It is dated 13th October 1897. I received it in January 1898. I cannot express in writing how glad I am to read this letter. The desire to read it keeps on haunting me all the time. Brother, I would be very happy if occasionally you would write a few such lines to me about your joys and sorrows. I am so overburdened with work that I have little time to write letters. Oh, I am sick of this business of delivering lectures day in and day out. You managed to send me here and now I, poor fellow, am to die of drudgery. However, I console myself with this thought that all that happens is the will of the Divine Mother. I am very happy to read the reports about your activities and speeches. How I wish that you would come here and set yourself to work bringing solace to my heart. When Sarat was here I used to meet him occasionally. The Master would not allow me even that pleasure. The people of this place are prepared to accept the ideas of Vedanta. Liberal thoughts are very much appreciated here. A wave of liberal thinking has been raised and the main churches are having its impact. There is no doubt that the result will be good. Missionaries, the Church fathers, are up against this. Almost every paper invariably bears something about Naren ... Our work has been suffering to some extent on account of this. It would have been much better if portions of Naren's speeches were omitted from the book named "From Colombo to Almora". What has been done cannot be undone. Such mistakes should be

avoided in future. Please caution Alasinga and others. Alasinga used to write to me often. Perhaps he is angry with me now. Please convey my love to him and to other friends. Miss Waldo has sent you one set of Naren's London addresses. . . . When Gupta was in Madras I sent him a photograph. Do you know what has happened to that photograph? Where is Naren and how is he now? Goodwin has sent a post card to Miss Waldo in which he has written about aggravation of Naren's diabetes. Is that true? All the papers of America have published the news that "Swami Vivekananda is seriously ill etc." I would like to know how far such information, sent to Goodwin from time to time, is correct. Mrs. Ole Bull and Mrs. MacLeod have accompanied Sarat to see India. Now-a-days the attendence in my classes is not too bad. Neither maturity of age nor erudition of any consequence. I live in a rented room and have meals consisting of boiled potatoes or boiled carrots in a boarding house. I am a strict vegetarian. I do not touch fish or meat. It is because the climate of this place is very good that I am still alive. I would have died had I been in London. I have lost appetite. This year the winter is extremely mild. Snowfall is almost absent. It cannot of course be predicted what will happen in the month of February. I have not seen Abhayananda (an American lady disciple of Swami Vivekananda). I do not know who her followers are. Kripananda (an American disciple of Swami Vivekananda) is now up against Vedanta and Naren. Yogunanda is a sensation monger. He has been going about demonstrating crystal gazine, thought reading etc. He is an ignoramus. . . . He is simple hearted but he has very little of common sense. Some people here seem to be very sincere. Miss Waldo has been trying seriously to learn Sanskrit in old age. She has good deal of perseverence. . . . She praises your letters highly. . . . You will hear everything from Sarat, it is superfluous for me to write more. I shall go on telling truths and let others accept what they like. Many people accept Vedanta intellectually, but practice of Vedanta is difficult. All are in that plight:—

> (Men want to enjoy the fruits of piety without being pious while, although they do not like the fruits of sin, they go on committing sin wholeheartedly).

Likewise many people want the fruits of Vedanta but few want to practise it Has Narendra started any movement on female education? If so, please let me know details. What is Miss Muller doing? How is Girls' School of *Mataji* going on? Gandhi (Virchand Gandhi) has been trying to make money by lecturing against Vedanta. His gaudy costume is wonderful. Dharmapala (Anagariku Dharmapala) has fled after having scandalized Hindus as far as possible. The followers of Annie Basant do not take food without slandering Vivekananda. Have you seen the book *Vivekananda and His Guru* published by the Missionaries? They are sending the book to all here. It has been published by the "The Christian Literature Society of India, London and Madras". It would be good if you could get one copy of the book and review it in Brahmavadin. Most objectionable things have been written against the Master. I have thus given you all the news of this place. How are you now-a-days? Please let me know the present condition of those things as your body. Please accept my love and respectful greetings and convey my endless *Sastanga* (prostrated) obeiscence to the Holy Mother.

Yours
Kali

P.S. Perhaps you have by this time got Sarat's photograph from Sanyal. I am sending herewith my photograph which you wanted.

(38)

C/o Imperial Bank, SIMLA,
December 16,
1928.

Swami Abhedananda,
Calcutta.

Honoured Swami,

I was glad to receive from Prahmacharya your book, full of the precious teachings and uplifting ideas.

Verily in our house the Great Names of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are highly venerated. The precious teaching of Sri Ramakrishna first attracted our thought to India and everything concerning these Holy Men is near to us, as well as are you—Their great successor.

I am very sorry that during your stay in Darjeeling we could not meet personally. But physical distance is of least importance—and we can easily meet personally and mutually enjoy the High Ideas of the Great Teaching of Universal Truth.

Please accept our feelings and wishes.

Yours sincerely
N. Roerick.

P.S. For the adornment of your Ashram in Calcutta I will send you some coloured reproduction of my paintings as a sign of my sincere feelings, as soon as we arrive in Simla.

(39)

SRIMAT SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

To
Revered Swami,

We, the resident Hindus of Kandy, beg reverently to approach you and to express our joy and thankfulness at the opportunity that has been given us of receiving you in our midst, and of listening to your words of piety and wisdom.

We have watched with interest, the great work you have been doing, disseminating the sublime truths of our ancient faith among the nations of the west. Our minds have been instructed and elevated by your lucid and scholarly expositions and discourses. We have drawn inspiration from your life of sacrifice and devotion, and have experienced an awakening inspiring us to learn and understand more of our renowned religion.

Allow us to offer you our most heartfelt gratitude for the honour of this visit—a visit, we fervently hope, will be of incalculable benefit and spiritual advancement to us.

May God Almighty spare you long to continue your noble work. Kandy, June 21, 1906.

We beg to remain, SWAMI,
Yours obedient servants,
THE HINDU RESIDENTS OF KANDY.

Kandy, June 21, 1906.

(40)

A LETTER TO SWAMI ABHEDANANDA BY MASTER MAHASAYA ("M")

Cal. 1 Jhamapukur Lane,
25th November, 1903.

Dear Brother,

I send this day a book-packet, containing for *Gospel* (relating principaly to Swamiji), nine chapters, and a copy of SREE KATHAMRITA, 2nd edition, a present for your kind acceptance. You will see that I have made some additions especially an Upakramanika which you will no doubt like.

My best thanks for your gifts—*The Divine Heritage* and *The Sayings*. I am particularly struck by the lucid way in which you present the truths of our Sastras to the western world in the light of the ministry of our Lord.

Pray, excuse me for my inability to send the mss. typewritten as desired by you. I am on the look out for such an arrangement—Rakhal Maharaja who has just returned from Kankhal and Brindaban and whom I went to see at Balaram's has recommended a young man to me for this purpose.

Last week you may have received a mss. packet unregistered (18 pages). That packet was forwarded to the P.O. in haste. This mail will place in your hands more than 50 pages of manuscripts including the 18 pages sent last week—whic. latter you will of course put into the waste paper basket.

I intend to send only another packet (or two packets) containing mss. of the proceedings at the meeting between Keshab and our Lord. These I think will be quite enough for the first part, unless you should regard them as insufficient.

Kindly use the word Mahendra only, but no family or professional designation. If you can avoid that word and use M. only, it would be so much the better. I request only that in your preface you will kindly make room for Swamiji's letter to me (i.e. to 'M' mind you) on the subject of the *Gospel.*

As to the slips in idiom and other necessary matter I must have them entirely to you and your friends.

Remember that the *Gospel* is intended also for Madras, Bombay, N.W.P. etc., so that we cannot entirely dispense with Sanskrit expression and purely Hindu Ideas.

I am really sorry to have put you to so much trouble, but you see that it is the Lord's will that the English version of the *Gospel* should first see the light in the land of Liberty and equality—the land discovered by Columbus. It is further His will that it should pass through your hand. It was all but placed in the hands of Alasinga (Madras).

Balaram's son Ramakrishta came from Puri to Calcutta and appeared at the B.A. Examination. He has got fever—not serious—and Rakhal, Baburam, Sarat are also here. Rakhal speaks very highly of Turiyananda whom he visited at Brindaban and his *tapasya.*

Mother is at Jayrambati. Sarat will probably go there and induce her to come over to Calcutta, for you know she is made to work very hard there. Her health too is by no means good. For her part she does not like to come to Calcutta, especially after Swamiji's departure.

You will be glad to learn that Bengali public here is beginning to like Sree Kathamrita very much. I propose to bring out the 3rd part soon—which will reach you as soon as it is out.

Trusting this will find you in the enjoyment of health and in the midst of the Lord's work full of enthusiasm and with Pranam and love to you, and Tulsi Maharaj who must have reached by this time.

I remain yours affectionately
Mahendra Nath Gupta.

(41)

New-York, October 21, 1900.
Columbia University

My dear Mr. Abhedananda,

This note brings you kind greetings, and I wish to know whether you would say a few words about Max Mullar in relation to Hindu Philosophy at a memorial meeting to be held at Columbia University, November 7th at 4-30. Several of the philological and philosophical professors will speak. The address must be confined to three of four minutes. I thought it would be pleasant to hear from you as a Hindu. Max Müller's death is certainly to be regreted. Awaiting to hear from you, With best wishes,

A. Jackson.

(42)

LETTER WRITTEN TO MR. J. BRYAN (1907)

Dear Sir,

Last summer I was in India about the time when you were there and I wanted to meet you personally. Our mutual friend Dr. Girdner gave me a letter of introduction which I herewith enclose. I met many Hindu gentlemen who saw you and heard you speak in Bombay, Allahabad, Calcutta and other places. Our friend Sister Nivedita spoke to me about your visit to her girls' school in Calcutta. I was very pleased to know your opinion through your splendid article published in the New-York Sun of July 1st 1906. I have given similar expression in my lectures that were delivered before the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Sciences last winter under the title of "India and Her People".

Those lectures are now published in a book form I take the liberty of sending you a copy of it at the request of Dr. Girdner of New-York, hoping that you will read it and that you will kindly let me know your opinion regarding my views.

I remain
Very sincerely yours
Swami Abhedananda of India.

(43)

The National New Thought Alliance
Annual National Conference, Detroit.
318, Woodward Avenue, April 31st, 1913.

Mr. Swami Abhedananda.
West Cornwall, Conn.

Dear friend and Truth,

Acting under the advice of Mrs. Rose M. Ashby, of Atlanta Ga, I have the pleasure herewith to extend to you a cordial invitation to attend the next annual convention of the National New Thought Alliance, to be held in Detroit during the week beginning Sunday, June 15th, with the Detroit New Thought Alliance as our host.

This year's convention should achieve higher results for the aims and missions of the National New Thought Alliance than previous conventions, whatever they may have done and good as they have been. More attention will be given to the practical side of New Thought personal, organic and field activities; better financial arrangements for carrying out the purpose of the Alliance; the two international conventions, that proposed for London in 1914, and the one to be held in Sanfrancisco in 1915, and other matters of general importance to the spiritual, practical constructive interests of the New Thought, will give distinction to Detroit progress.

You will understand without specific statement here, that the New Thought people of Detroit will do all things possible in the way of entertainment and amusement for the convention visitors. Detroit is justly famous and beautiful city, and as this session of the convention is to be held at the ideal time when the beauty, fragrance and songs of June are glorifying the world a period of pleasant associations and joyful recreation is guaranteed.

An invitation like unto this is being sent to the following well-known New Thought leaders:

Dr. Cha, Brodie Patterson, Edward Markham, Ella Wheeler Wilcox, Dr. Orison Swett, Marden, Ralph Waldo Trine, Julia Seaton Sears, Ieander Edmund Whipple, Rexford Jeffries, Helen Van Anderson-Gordon, B. Fay Mille, Horace Fletcher,

Jas. A. Edgartton, Rev. Lucy. C. McGee, Mrs. Florence Willard Day, Walter Devoe, Villa Folkner Page, Mrs. Mary, R. T. Chapin, Eva Augusta Vasellius, Mrs. Sophia Ven Marter, Mrs. Sara. A Clemone, Bishop Oliver. D. Sabin, Rev. R. J. Floody, May Wright Swall, Rev. Mabel McCoy Irwin, Clara Bewick Colby, Rev. DeWitt Van Dorem, Rev. R. Heber Newton, Helen Rhodes-Wallace, William Towne, Elizabeth Towne, Kate Atkinson-Boehme, Lillian Whitting, Miss, Gertrude. Hall, R. C. Dauglass, Allice Herring Christopher, Leila Simon, Henry Frank, Rose, M. Asby, J. M. McGonigle, Dr. R. Swinbern Slymer, Swami Abhedananda, Prof. S. A. Weltmar, William Walker Atkinson, F. G. Northrop, Dr. E. H. Pratt, Grace M. Brown, Fanny. B. James, Mona Brooks, Charles Filmore, Annie Rix Milt, Dr. John Milton Scott, Chrustian D. Larson, Henry Harrison Brown, Dr. A. Lindsey, Ida Mansfield Wilson, T. Harry Gaze, Henry Victor Morgan, Rev. Albert C. Grier, Agnee Taylor and others.

If you know some one not included above to whom invitation should be sent, will you kindly advise me of the fact giving name and address?

Your presence and participation in the Detroit convention will therefore esteem it an honour to have so able and distinguished a worker as you yourself take part in its deliberations and pleasures.

Your notice of acceptence of this invitation, with the title of your subject for an address of average length, will be greatly appreciated. ...

In closing, allow me to urge the sending of your answer at as early a date as possible.

Yours very truly
Alfred Tomson

(44)

LETTER WRITTEN TO MR. A. P. BHARGAVE

Allahabad, India. January, 1907.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of November 28th has reached me and in reply I would say that the conditions represented in the Article in

the Awakened India or 'Prabuddha Bharata' do exist in this country, but not for foreign students. There are great numbers of American boys who work their way through their college course, but no Hindu as yet succeeded in doing it. Four students in Portland Oregon are trying to accomplish it, but they were obliged to suspend their studies and go as labourers in a saw-mill in order to earn money to continue their course next year. One or two have taken a degree in Agriculture through their own efforts, but this course is much shorter than in any other technical lines.

I believe that every student who comes to America should have some resources to call upon, otherwise he will be painfully hampered in accomplishing his object and waste much time and energy. The amount of work available in any college town is limited, and in giving employment, preference is naturally shown to American boys. Owing to the slavery which formerly existed in the southern states, a strong colour prejudice still exists in many places and the Hindus must often suffer because of it. I tell you all these drawbacks frankly in order that you may fully realize what hardships and difficulties you would have to face, if you come to America. There are many boys here now who are battling daily against bitter disapointment and discouragement, because they were led through letters and circulars to expect much more favourable conditions here, but the cost of living is proportionally high and one is in consequence able to save less than on the small earnings in India. For the nine months of the college year a student have at least 300 dollars or Rupees 900 and it will be extremely difficult for him to earn that amount and give proper attention to his studies at the same time, for the standard of the universities is very high. The educational advantage are undoubtedly finer than in any other country, but if any Indian student wishes to profit by them, he must either have a certain amount of money at his command or be prepared to meet great hardship and perhaps failure. Trusting that you will understand the spirit of perfect frankness in which I have written.

I remain
Very truly yours,
Swami Abhedananda

(45)

THE VEDANTA MOVEMENT IN AMERICA IN EPISTLES

Dear Swami Abhedananda,

I have read carefully all of your publications and some of them several times, and I do not remember that I come upon anything which I could not endorse intellectually or spiritually. But your two works, 'How to be a Yogi' and 'Divine Heritage of Man', have a special interest for me. The former being such a comprehensive exposition of the several branches of the science of Yoga, I have recommended it to several friends as the best introduction to the Vedanta philosophy for any one with no previous knowledge of it. The chapter on the science of breathing is more worth than the physiological 'Psychology,' so called, of our universities; it should be more properly called Somatology, or the science of the body; it is not even that, for the body is treated as an automatic machine and not as the organ of the soul, the intellectual and spiritual man being presposterously (in the literal sense, often) regarded by some socalled psychologists as a result of the physical organism.

The question 'Was Christ a Yogi' is most satisfactorily answered in the affirmative in the concluding chapter, which clears up so much in regard to Jesus. It is a conclusion to which Christian 'orthodoxy' must finally come, or it will cease to have any true vitality. Jesus was, of course, a religious genius, which, like every other form of genius, had to be developed.

This is a golden chapter and worthy of all acceptation, while volume on 'Divine Heritage of Man' is, throughout, a golden treasury of religious thought; the chapters on 'What is an Incarnation of God' and 'Son of God' are doubly refined gold; so, too, is the chapter on the 'Divine Principle in Man', which wines out completely the Calvinistic doctrine of total depravity.

The spread of the Vedanta philosophy will do much to bring about a return to essential Christianity as distinguished from Churchianity. Your lecture on "Why a Hindu accepts Christ and respects Churchinanity, 'I value very much. It is

an exposition, as are all your writings, of true Christianity, without its theological warts or tumours.

Believe me, Dear Sir,
Hiram Corson.

(46)

40, Beadon Street,
Calcutta.
8. 4. 1930

My dear Kalikrishna,[2]

I am very glad to receive your letter after a long time. May yours heart's wish be fulfilled. . . . know this to be my blessing to you. I am glad that your wife is fond of the 'Gopala' form of the Lord Krishna and the she worships Him in that form in her dream. ..... Tell her to meditate on the Lord Krishna in the form of 'Gopala' and to pray to Him. Through the grace of the Lord Krishna she will attain peace and blessedness. If you have occasion to come to Calcutta with her please see me.

You should meditate the Master, chant His name (japa), concentrate your mind in Him and pray to Him everyday in the morning and in the evening and you should ask your wife to do likewise. If other thoughts arise in your mind at that time you should dismiss them with discrimination. I bless you that your love and faith in God may grow from day to day and you may attain peace and blessedness. With best wishes,

Yours Abhedananda

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[1] A disciple of Swami Abhedananda.

(47)

Darjeeling
Dated the 4. 11. 1930

My dear Kalikrishna,

I have got your money order of Rs. 2/- and the adoring letter of your wife in due time. I did not go to Calcutta during the Durga Puja this time. I was here. *Puja* before the image of Kali and feeding of Narayana, embodied as the poor, have been duly performed. I propose to spend this winter here.

Whatever you will ask of the Master with a yearning heart you will surely get. Knowledge, discrimination, love, devotio.. cannot be attained for the mere saying. You should read *"Kathamrita"*. If you read *"Leela-Prasanga"* story of the Master's life—you will understand what amount of yearning and renunciation is necessary for acquiring this invaluable treasure. . . . whatever has birth is bound to die. Only the Atman is immortal. The Atman is not anybody's offspring except of God. Everything in the world is mortal. God is realised only after the mind has been purified. Performance of *japa,* meditation, worship and *Sadhyaya* (studies that uplift the mind) regularly everyday makes the mind pure.

I bless you so that divine love and faith may grow in both of you day by day and that you may attain peace and blessedness. We are well. With best wishes,

Yours
Abhedananda

(48)

Darjeeling
19. 12. 31

My dear Kalikrishna,

After a long time I have received your letter. I am glad to learn that you will come to Calcutta during the Christmas holidays and visit Dakshineswar, the venue of the Master's divine play.

Mani is very fortunate. As she has had a vision of the Master in her dream and has received His command she hardly needs formal *diksha* (initiation). Everything will be all right now if she

worships the Master, offers oblation to Him and chants His name. There is no chance of my going to Calcutta now as there is want of accommodation in the small house of the Samiti. The construction of the Samiti's own building will start soon. After that it will be convenient for me to stay in Calcutta. I am sorry that I shall not meet you this time. I am glad to learn that you are trying to observe continence (Brahmacharya). If you pray with a yearning heart to the Master you will get strength.

All is well here. The work of the Ashrama is going on smoothly. It is very cold here. I have been keeping good health. Accept my blessings and convey the same to your wife.

Convey my blessings to Himangshubimal and tell him that I am glad to get his regardful letter. With best wishes,

Yours
Abhedananda

(49)

Darjeeling

My dear Mani,[1]

I have received your letter and I am very glad to know the details of your dream. Attracted by your devotion the Master assumed a living form and accepted your oblations. On the day of your *diksha* (initiation) here the Master appeared in a living form before Indu Babu. He was at that time weeping in the temple hall of the Ashrama. Indu Babu has high regard for you. He perceived the presence of the Divine Mother in you.

If you think of yourself as a part of the Divive Mother and if in motherly attitude you look upon all men including even Kalikrishna himself as your children then your grosser urges will disappear. If the motherly attitude comes sexual relationship will no longer remain. Enshrine the ideal of the Holy Mother in your heart. This will give you peace and joy. Always pray to the Master. What more shall I write? Accept my blessings

With best wishes,

Yours
Abhedananda

[1] The wife of Kalikrishna Dhar.

(50)

Darjeeling,
Dated August 26th, 1932.

My dear Kalikrishna,

I am glad to receive your letter after a long time. I am glad to know that you sometimes see me in dreams. There are many like you who cannot easily steady their mind during meditation. The mind is steadied through practice. Practise japa and meditation regularly every morning and evening. If your mind does not come to rest during meditation you should begin japa with the help of your rosary (chain of beads). Name and its subject are identical. Meditation will automatically come through japa. You should pray for steadying your mind.

The Samiti at Calcutta has occupied its new building. Due to financial stringency the work has stopped after construction of three rooms. The Master alone knows when it will be possible for me to go to Calcutta. Two books have been published from the Samiti. In one of these Rabi (Sambuddha Chaitanya) has published my sayings. It has been named "যেমন শুনিয়াছি" and priced at twelve annas. The other is "Sri Ramakrishna-Chandrika" by Brahmachari Prajna Chaitanya priced at Rs. 2/-. You will get replies to many questions if you read these two books.

Chintaharan has not informed me when he will return. Convey my blessings to Deben Maharaj. You will get other informations in the letter of Bishuddha Chaitanya. Accept my blessings. With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda

(51)

C/o. H. H. Maharaja
Vijoy Mandir Palace
Aloar State, Rajputana
April 13th, '33.

My dear Mani and Kalikrishna,

I have received your adoring letter which has come here

redirected from Darjeeling. At the invitation of H. H. the Maharaja I have come here by the end of March. Nagen and Santa are with me. The Maharaja has kept us in special care. The Master alone knows how long I shall stay here and where I shall go afterwards. This place is much cooler now than Calcutta. Some time later when it will be unbearably hot I shall have to go elsewhere.

I am happy to know that you are finding joy in your initiated life. You can meet me when I return to Calcutta or Darjeeling. Pray to the Master. Accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda

(52)

Darjeeling,
Dated July 22nd, 1933.

My dear Kalikrishna,

I am very glad to receive the adoring letter from you and Mani after a long time and to know that you are well. I am glad to read your questions, because yearning has come to your heart and the desire for non-attachment and renunciation has arisen in you. Such a state of mind leads to spiritual progress and enables one to gain the Master's grace. The Master is *Kalpataru* ("*Wish-tree*"). He will grant you whatever you will pray for with a yearning heart. You should pray to the Master every day for the things which you have asked of me. He will certainly fulfil your desire. The attributes of the devotee which are mentioned in the twelfth chapter of the Geeta are gradually acquired by the devotee through practice (Sadhana) and good association. The more the mind will be manifested. Nothing can happen all on a sudden. Japa (chanting of the Lord's name), meditation, discrimination, non-attachment, prayer and yearning for realisation constitute Sadhana. Practise these every day as far as you can. In work-a-day life the mind remains busy with various affairs and duty is a great bondage. This bondage cannot be easily cut. The mind which is entangled in wordly affairs and is clouded by illusion, pas-

sion and ignorance wants to enjoy life and resorts to the pursuit of sense pleasure. Would such a mind like to go towards God? Renunciation does not come until the thirst for life has been quenched. If discrimination is used in the enjoyment of life then the realisation arises that the world is ephemeral and that the happiness available here is short lived. Then renunciation—that is to say aversion to worldly pleasure comes. After this the mind, no longer attached to worldly affairs, begins to search for God who is the eternal truth. Then rid of the bondage of the world, the seeker moves forward along the path to freedom and through the grace of a true master (Satguru) attains peace and blessedness.

I am glad to learn that you have been attending the Geeta and Upanishad classes in the Ashrama of Swami Nilananda. Remember that the mind is purified through the hearing of the words of Sadhus (holy monks).

All is well in this Ashram. I have been keeping good health at present. The work of the Ashrama head quarters has been proceeding well. It has been raining here incessantly day and night. Accept my blessings and affectionate greetings of all members of the Ashram and convey the same to Mani. Tell Mani that I am glad to get her adoring letter. I shall meet you again when the Master will so ordain.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda

(53)

Darjeeling,
Dated Sept. 2nd, 1933.

My dear Kalikrishna,

Your adoring letter of the 24th August has been handed over to me by Bisuddha Chaitanya in time and I am glad to read it. I am happy to know that all of you are doing well. When life is dominated by nescience it leads to sorrow. If after having gained knowledge one can live an enlightened life then peace and blessedness can be attained. Ramprasad said "This world is illusory like a magic carpet. out after attainment of

knowledge it can be a pleasant abode". The Master used of say "tie up realisation of the non-dual truth at the end of your skirt and then do whatever you like". While living a wordly life men taste sensuous pleasure to their heart's content but with that they suffer endless sorrow and pain and gather experience. Afterwards with the dawn of knowledge that the world is ephemeral non-attachment and renunciation come to their mind. Then all desires for enjoying life disappear and they attain peace and blessedness.

Before I went to the Master I had read in the *Sastras*—

उच्छिष्टं सर्वशास्त्राणि सर्वबिद्या मुखे मुखे ।
नोच्छिष्टं ब्रह्मणो ज्ञानं अव्यक्तं चेतनामयम् ॥

All books and all knowledge have been difiled as a result of having been uttered by human tongue but Brahman who is the quintessence of consciousness and knowledge is unutterable. Nobody has ever been able to express Him through words of the tongue and so He (Brahman) has never been defiled. Afterwards when I heard from the Master himself that "only Brahman has not been defiled". I could realise the meaning without asking anyone. Tell this to him who has put the question.

Now-a-days it has been raining here day and night. I am not keeping good health as the weather is very damp. I am having pain, apparently due to gout, in many parts of the body and I have been suffering from orchitis which I never had before. Others are all right. Bisuddha Chaitanya has been performing daily worship, bhoga and *aratrik* (Bhoga—offerings to the deity, Aratrik—concluding ceremony of worship by waving lights before the deity with great devotion). Every evening I hold classes with the Brahmacharins of the Ashrama. At present I have been expounding the doctrine of rebirth by explaining my book "Reincarnation". Bisuddha Chaitanya and others have been trying to follow attentively.

Accept my blessings and convey the same to Mani. Give my blessings to the devotees there.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda

(54)

Darjeeling
12. 7. 37

My dear Kalikrishna,

I am glad to receive the adoring letter of Mani and yourself. I have also received your money order of Rs. 4/-. I have given your letter to Bishuddha Chaitanya. I am all right now and all is well in the *Ashrama.* Accept the love and good wishes of all members of the Ashrama.

So long as you remain in the world you should think that every work of yours is devoted to the service of the Master to whom the world belongs. Every day you should offer the good and bad results of all actions to His lotus-like feet. Your worldly bondage has been cut. What fear do you have? Your wife Mani is spiritually inclined. It is a rare privilege to have such a wife. Like a Karmayogin you should remain in the world always maintaining in your heart the conviction that you are serving Him and you should pray to Him for devotion, faith and freedom. If you can renounce worldly desires with discrimination your desires will wear out and you will move onward along the path of freedom.

Heavy rainfall has now started here and occasionally the sun is visible.

Accept my blessings and convey the same to Mani. I am very glad to know that Mani has got cured after having taken *prasad* from my hand in her dream. Tell her that this is the Master's will.

My blessings to you and Mani.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Yours
Abhedananda

(55)

19B, Raja Rajkissen Street,
Calcutta.
Dated February 16th, 1934,

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I am glad to receive the loving letter from you and Taru

Devi which has reached me in time. Arrangement is being made for building a living apartment for me in the building of the samity. One devotee has supplied doors and windows (as may be) required. I am sending herewith a list of iron joists and other necessary materials. If you take charge of procuring these, then masons will be engaged soon. I cannot say what the price of these things would be. You can ascertain this by enquiry. The birthday of Sree Sree Thakur was duly celebrated yesterday in the building of the Samity. About 300 people (men and women) got Prasada. Puja; Homa, music, lecture, etc., were held all day long. I am all right now. Rabi has not yet recovered completely. My trip to Jamshedpur cannot come off in February. I shall try to go in the first week of March. Accept my blessings and convey the same to your children and other local devotees.

With best wishes[1],

Yours,
Abhedananda.

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[1] Surendra Kumar Guha of Jamshedpur.

(56)

Calcutta,
April 23rd, 1934.

My dear Suren,

Your brother came to see me with your eldest son. I was glad to talk to him. Through the grace of Sree Sree Thakur the construction of a living room for me was started yesterday. The wall would be completed in two weeks. Thereafter joists would be purchased and put there. I shall be in Calcutta till the end of Baisakh. Thereafter I shall go to Darjeeling. In the meantime I shall have the joists bought. Occasionally we are having, nor Westers here and for that reason we are getting comparatively cool here. Lakshman Maharaj, Sadasib and Nilmoni are attending on me. At present we are taking a small flat on Vivekananda Road on rent and living there. Rabi is going towards

Dwarka. I have got his letter from Shree Brindaban. Please convey my blessings to Gopal Babu (doctor) and Hazra and others. Please accept my blessings along with loving greetings of Nagen and others and convey the same to all members of your family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(57)

Darjeeling,
June 8th, 1934.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

Mango pickle sent by you reached here in good condition yesterday. The tin container has been slightly leaking due to deformation but there has been no loss. You will please give my blessings to your wife and tell her that the pickle is excellent.

I am glad to receive your loving letter today. I am happy to learn that you are all well. Four walls of the room in the Samity Bhavan at Calcutta have been built and joists are being placed. One ton of wooden planks has been purchased for framing. Concrete work of the roof has not yet started. All is well with the Samity.

My health is slightly better than before now. I find it difficult to negotiate with the ups and downs of the hill. We are having rain fall everyday here. It becomes quite warm when occasionally there is sun. I went to meet the Governor last Monday and I talked with him. Perhaps Ravi[1] is still with you. Please give him my blessings, and ask him to send one dozen of incense-stick for sale. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to all members of your family. Please accept the greetings of Nagen. If you meet the local devotees, please give them my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

[1] Ravi (Swami Sambuddhana).

(58)

Darjeeling,
July 11th, 1934.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I am glad to receive the loving letters from you and Tarubala. I am happy to learn that you are all well. The roof of my room in the Samity Bhavan at Calcutta was consolidated on 1st July. The room of the kitchen, bathroom and verandah still remain to be done. After the plankings have been taken up on the 20th July, the work of the roof, kitchen, etc., will be started. I am very glad to learn that you will be able to send Rs. 25 on account of joist and the price of one ton of cement. It would be better if you would send the remittances to the address of Swami Sadrupananda at the Samity at Calcutta. Please write in the coupon that you are sending Rs. 75 according to my desire, Rs. 25 on account of the bill of Ghatak & Co. and Rs. 50 on account of the price of one ton of cement.

It has been possible to do most of the work of the roof within such a short time due to your generous donation. I bless you that through the grace of Sree Sree Thakur[1] you may live in peace and happiness and you may have spiritual progress. At present my health is better than before and all is well in the Ashram. Please accept my blessings and the greetings of Nagen and others and give the same to all members of your family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

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[1]Sri Sri Ramakrishna.

(59)

Calcutta,
October 23rd, 1934.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I am glad to receive the loving letter from you and Taru-

lata with Bijoya pronam. Please accept my Bijaya blessings and convey the same to your children. I had a desire that after Kali Puja I would go to Jamshedpur but now I see that it is necessary for me to go to Darjeeling. The reason is that the annual function of Darjeeling Ashram takes place at that time. My presence in the festival is extremely necessary. It will take about a month and half to finish my rooms and so I have to vacate the rooms. In the circumstances, I have decided to go to Darjeeling soon. I shall return to Calcutta before X-mas. In the circumstances Sree Sree Thakur only knows how long it will be before I can go to Jamshedpur.

Ravi's father is ill and bed-ridden and so he is engaged in nursing him. He did not come to the Samity since the day of Nabami Puja and we have not met him. I bless you that your devotion and faith may increase from day to day and you may attain peace and bliss. You will please accept the Vijaya greetings and best wishes of Nagen and other inmates of the Samity. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to Tarulata and children.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(60)

Calcutta,
October 29th, 1934.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I hear that the Tata & Co. have raised the price of iron joists. So it is necessary to buy the joists without further delay within two or three days. If the tiles are put on the roof over T-iron with *khoa* ramped on the top, then it would be economical. For this reason order has to be placed for T-iron instead of round rods. This may be slightly more expensive and two long joists may be required in excess. I shall send a statement of excess cost to you. Doors and windows have all been placed and the wall has been built up to 6/7 ft. Three masons are working. I hope that after another week the beams and rafters will be placed.

It is very hot here. I have a desire to go to Darjeeling at the end of Baisakh. All is well with the Samity. I am keeping good health now. You will please accept my blessings and convey the same to your wife and children.

With best wishes.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(61)

Darjeeling,
October 30th, 1934.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

Sadasib and myself safely reached here yesterday. We had no difficulty on the way. We were not searched. The third class coupon ticket fare from Siliguri to Darjeeling is Rs. 1/8 and the second class fare is Rs. 5/8. We came here in a taxi with all luggage and reached here by 10 o'clock. The taxi fare was only Rs. 7 and there was no extra charge for luggage. Nobody can ever think that travelling can be so cheap. From 2nd November nobody will be required, as the Governor will go down to the planes.

In the circumstances you can come to Darjeeling with your wife and join the festival in the Ashram. Here the weather is fine—dry and cool now, the scenery grand. The snow-capped Mount Kanchenjangha is visible from Siliguri. There is no inter-class from Siliguri. Buses and taxis are available.

If the shed of the nickel-plated table lamp is slightly large, then the eyes will not be affected. I have therefore asked Rabi to change it. If a flexible variety is not available then some other variety can be taken.

The swelling on my feet was cured as soon as I came here. I still have slight pain in the waist. It is quite cold at night. Please bring winter clothings, quilt, blanket, and sweater. The third class fare from Sealdah to Siliguri is Rs. 6. All is well with the Ashram. The Ashram is now decorated with various kinds of seasonal flowers. The scenery is excellent. You will please accept my blessings and the best wishes of

all inmates of the Ashram. If any of the local devotees want to come here please bring them also. Invitation letters have been sent.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(62)

Calcutta,
December 18th, 1934.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I am glad to receive your loving letter just now. I have received Ravi's letter from Brindaban. They are all right and they are going to Jaipur. Construction of my room in the Samity Bhavan has not yet started. Supplies of bricks, cement and sand have not yet been obtained and so the iron joists have not been brought as yet. There is no space to store these. These will rust if kept outside. Work will be started as soon as possible. For the present I am postponing my journey to Darjeeling. I shall stay here for one or two months more to get the work started and then go to Darjeeling. Sometime ago it became very hot. During the last two days there has been strong thunderstorm due to which the temperature has come down. I am all right. Nagen Maharaj, Lakshman Maharaj and Nilmoni are looking after me. They are all well. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to your wife and children. If you meet the local devotees there, you will please give them my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

Postcript.

I am trying to get a flat on rent near the Samity after leaving the present flat on 1st Baisakh. It would be better to send letters to the address of the Samity.

(63)

Calcutta,
January 30th, 1935.

My dear Surendra and Tarulata,

I am very glad to receive your loving letter. I am happy to learn that you are well.

I am sorry to hear that you have started an electrical goods shop and have become worried over it. I hope that through the grace of Sree Sree Thakur it will run well. Please accept my blessings in this regard. I shall be glad to meet you when you will come to Calcutta on February 8th or 9th. Today I went round the big electrical goods shops in Ezra Street and bought a table lamp according to my choice. I am sending herewith the cash memo. I saw some cheap Japanese table lamps but did not choose them as they will go out of order in a short time. You will certainly like the lamp which I have bought.

Sree Sree Thakur only knows if my programme of going to Jamshedpur will materialise. I have a desire to lay the foundation stone of a chapel (Mandir) dedicted to Sree Sree Thakur in the Samity Bhavan at the time of the centenary celebration of Sree Sree Thakur. Everything depends on the will of the Lord. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to your children.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

Postcript.

My health has slightly improved now. All is well with the Samity. Rabi is feeding the Sadhus of the Samity today on the occasion of his father's Sradh ceremony to the great pleasure of all and the whole place is resounding with the cheers of the Sadhus.

(64)

Calcutta,
January 31st, 1935.

My dear Surendra,

I hear that recently you came to Calcutta and expressed

a desire to see me. Perhaps you could not find time due to other pre-occupations. I wanted to meet you. Ravi brought Patal.

There was a proposal that the table lamp which you had given me would be changed and another would be sent. I shall be glad to know quickly what you would like to do in the matter. I have changed my sitting room and so it is necessary to have a table lamp for I am having difficulties in reading and writing under a light suspended from the ceiling. All is well with the Samity. I am suffering from Nasal Catarrh. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to all members of your house. I hope this finds you hale and hearty.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(65)

Darjeeling,
June 19th, 1935.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I have received your remittance of Rs. 5 and I am glad to know that you are well. I have been bed-ridden for the last 18 days due to strain in my left knee. Medicine is being applied in the morning and evening and the place is bandaged. At present the pain has decreased but I am not yet able to walk on my feet. It will take sometime more to get completely cured. There is no cause for anxiety. All inmates of the Ashram and Sadasib are all right. It is raining here everyday and it is quite cold. You will please accept my blessings and the best wishes of all the inmates of the Ashram and convey the same to all members of your family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

Postscript.

Please give my blessings to all devotees there.

(66)

Calcutta,
April 16th, 1936.

My dear Tarulata,

I am glad to receive your money order of Rs. 5 and your letter with your *pranam*. Please accept my New Year's blessings and give the same to your children. I have made over your letter to Ravi. I bless you that your devotion to Sree Sree Thakur and your faith may increase day by day and that you may have peace and bliss in your heart. Here it becomes very hot from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. In the evening we get southern wind and it becomes cool at night. I am having a desire to go to Darjeeling. Sree Sree Thakur only knows when that will materialise. All is well with the Samity and I am keeping good health. I am glad to know that you are all right. Please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(67)

Calcutta,
April 16th, 1936.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I am glad to receive your letter with your *pranam*. Please accept my blessings for the New Year. May Sree Sree Thakur fulfil you heart's desire. This is my blessing and prayer. The construction of the chapel in the Samity Bhavan has not yet been completed. As the import of Italian marble has been suspended due to War, its price has risen three times. It may therefore be economical to wait for sometime before starting construction of the altar. I am glad to know that you will bear its expenditure. You please send your remittances in convenient instalments. Please send the first instalment soon if that suits your convenience. Construction of the *Nat-Mandir* was started yesterday. I would like to dedicate the chapel after it has been completed. The contract has been given to a devotee. It will cost about Rs. 5,000 to construct a hall with gallery

and a room above that. The construction will be on steel frame. All this will take three months. In the meantime, it depends on the will of Sree Sree Thakur. You will please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(68)

Darjeeling,
May 1st, 1936.

My dear Tarulata,

I got your letter in time at Calcutta. Ravi had already left for Rangoon last Sunday and so I could not give him your letter. I was very sick due to extreme heat in Calcutta. Last Wednesday Sadasib, Jagannath and myself reached here safely. At present I am feeling better. I am glad to receive your mango-*chatney* from Phani. It is very good. I have brought it here.

All is well in the Ashrama. Please accept my blessings and the greetings of Sadasib and others and give the same to all members of the family and all devotees there.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(69)

Darjeeling,
August 9th, 1936.

My dear Tarulata,

I am very glad to receive your loving letter. At present I am keeping good health. From last year I am having a desire to go to Jamshedpur for the pleasure of being in your midst but it has not materialised uptil now. Your cooking is most excellent. Only Sree Sree Thakur knows when I shall taste it again. All depends on His will.

I am glad to know that your children are all right. Give them my blessings. You will please accept my blessings and the greetings of Sadasib and others.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(70)

Darjeeling,
August 4th, 1936.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

After a long time I have heard from you and Tarulata and I am glad to know that you are well. I have been suffering from disorder of the bowels for about a month and a half. Anything that I eat causes wind. I have stopped taking milk, ghee, butter, dal, vegetables, tea, coffee, etc. I am taking Dadkhani rice and fish with *gandal* and *thankuni* leaves and I am also taking burnt *bell* or *murabba* of *bell* in empty stomach. At present wind in the stomach is not so severe and I am better. Nagen, Jagannath and others of the Ashram are all right.

It has been raining here incessantly and so many people there is very strong rain and storm.

Construction of floor and altar of the chapel in the Samity Bhavan at Calcutta has not yet started. The Nat-Mandir is under construction now. Gallery and roof have been built. Doors and windows are being placed. The floor and altar of the chapel will be made with white marble stone after construction of the Nat-Mandir has been completed. I am extremely glad to learn that you will bear its expenses. I am glad that you want to send Rs. 100 now. You will please send your remittances here. I shall keep it separately for the work.

I am sorry to know that progress of your shop is not satisfactory. It is difficult to run a shop without a good and faithful man. Your troubles will increase the more you will increase your work. I think one can get peace if he can reduce his work and remain contented with a modest income.

I would have gone to Calcutta but it is still very hot there.

I have a desire to go after it cools down. You will please accept my blessings and give the same to the devotees there. Please accept the best wishes and greetings of Nagen and others and give the same to all.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(71)

Darjeeling,
September 7th, 1936.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I have received Rs. 100 today along with your loving letter and I am glad to know that you are all right. This year my birthday Tithi Puja comes off on the 9th October. I shall be in Calcutta 56 days before that and I have a desire to remain in Calcutta during the Saradiya Puja.

I have been given standing invitation with passage money Thakur so wills, I would like to go to you after Kali Puja. All depends on His will. You may convey this news to Biren and others.

I am sorry to know that you are worried about your shop. You have put your feet on two boats (shop and service) and having a desire to run both properly. You are in a great dilemma. You should have thought beforehand and taken care. If you had found out a good, faithful and a suitable man before starting your shop, then you would not have been in so much difficulty and you might have been successful. Will you be happy now if you leave your service in the factory and devote wholetime to your shop? A worldly man should think about all this. The more you increase your work, the more your worries will increase. Nobody ever gets peace in the midst of work.

Why not train up your eldest son and put him in the shop? His studies will not progress any further. Train him up in practical line and put him in the shop and then you guide him. If you do this then he will have good prospects and your desire would also be fulfilled. I shall have further

talks with you on this point when I meet you. At present my health has improved and all is well in the Ashram. Please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda

Postscript.

Have you heard the record of my speech about Sree Sree Thakur in Megaphone? Please accept the best wishes and greetings of Sadasib and others and give my blessings to the devotees there.

(72)

My dear Surendra,

Darjeeling,
June 21st, 1937.

I was very anxious due to your long silence. I am glad to receive your money order of Rs. 10 today. Since you have not written anything in the coupon, I take it that you are all right through the grace of Sree Sree Thakur and that you are having peace in your heart.

At present my health is all right. Nagen and Jagannath are doing well and the Ashram has been running well. We are having rain here occasionally but monsoon has not yet started. Perhaps monsoon has started there. I hope through the grace of Sree Sree Thakur you are hale and hearty. accept my blessings and give the same to all members of the family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(73)

Darjeeling,
July 2nd, 1937.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I am glad to receive the loving letters from you and Taru-

bala, dated the 25th. I am glad that the construction of your house will be completed soon.

I am in good health now and all is well in the Ashram. Please accept the love and best wishes of Nagen, Jagannath and others. Please accept my blessings and give the same to all members of your family. We are having occasional sun and rain here. The work of the Ashram has been running properly.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(74)

Darjeeling,
July 21st, 1937.

My dear Surendra Kumar,

I have received your letter, dated the 19th, today which gives me all news about you. I am extremely glad to know that you will occupy your new house next Friday after performing *Bastu Puja.* I bless that through the grace of Sree Sree Thakur this noble desire of yours may be fulfilled. I am glad to know that Rabi is with you and that he performs *puja* of Sree Sree Thakur on the day of *Guru-Purnima.* You are lucky to have Rabi in your midst on this occasion. Remember that this is the will of Sree Sree Thakur. Rabi is a great devotee of Sree Sree Thakur.

My letter conveying my permission and blessings will be delayed. Even so I am sending my permission and blessings by wireless.

Today the sun was very strong and it became very hot. Thereafter there were showers. All is well in the Ashram and I have been keeping good health. Please give my blessings to Rabi and tell him that I have received his post card and that Nagen has replied to it.

Please accept my blessings and give the same to all members of your family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(75)

Darjeeling,
July 23rd, 1937.

My dear Tarulata,

I have received your letter of the 20th instant, along with the sample of wool. I have replied to your earlier letter. Perhaps you have got it. I am glad to know that you occupied your new house today during Guru-Purnima after having performed *Bastu Puja.*

The sample of wool is very much to my liking. It will make nice and soft sweater. If possible you will please knit a sweater with buttons and two pockets. If not I shall be satisfied with whatever you make.

At present for three or four days we are having strong sun and very hot weather here. There is no rainfall. This place has not had such drought and heat for a long time. However all is well in the Ashram and I am all right. Nagen is well. I have given him your letter. You will please accept his greetings and good wishes. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to Ravi and all members of your family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda

(76)

Darjeeling,
August 30th, 1937.

My dear Tarulata,

Your letter, dated the 26th gives me all news about you. I am glad to know that the construction of your new house is nearing completion.

It is no fault of yours that there has been delay in sending Ravi's letter. There is therefore no question of pardoning you. I have got Ravi's letter from Dwarakadham. He is enjoying his pilgrimage to Dwaraka and other Holy places. Pilgrimage unnecessarily disturbs mental tranquility. Holi-

ness of all holy places exists at the lotus feet of Sree Sree Thakur. One can get the fruit of all pilgrimages by meditating on His lotus feet at home rather than roaming about. One should have faith.

It has been raining here incessantly. Yesterday on the day of *Janmastami* we have dedicated the new altar in the Ashram here to Sree Sree Thakur and Sree Ma. On this occasion we had Puja and Homa throughout the day and night, at night we performed *puja* of Sree Krishna and Sankirtana and our joy knew no bounds. My health is better now and all is well in the Ashram.

A Bengali translation of my speech delivered last March in the Town Hall has been published. I am sending a copy to you by bookpost. Please read it and show it to Hajra and other devotees. Anyone who likes may get it from the Samiti by paying a price of three annas.

I am sending measurements of my sweater in a separate sheet of paper. Perhaps you could not imagine that measurements would be so large.

Please accept my blessing and convey the same to your husband, children, Hajra and others.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(77)

Calcutta,
October 6th, 1937.

My dear Surendra Kumar and Tarulata,

I have received your letter which gives me all information about you. I am glad to receive the offering of Rs. 10 by postal money order. I am happy to know that today you will occupy your newly built house. On this occasion I am sending you the blessings of Sree Sree Thakur.

My health has improved now. All is well with the *Samiti* and it is running well. On the day of the *Utsava* (Birthday Celebration) about 1000 persons took *prasada* in spite of heavy rain and storm. A big *Utsava* was held in Darjeeling. There was no rainfall there on that day.

If Sree Sree Thakur so wills it may be possible for us to live in your new house during the winter. All depends on His will. I have shown your letter to Nagen and others.

Please accept my blessings and the best wishes of Nagen and others, and convey the same to your children and the devotees there.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

P.S.—I gave the measurement of the collar of my sweater as 20 inches. Since it may shrink the measurement of the collar should be 22 inches.

I sent one copy of my speech in Bengali. Have you got it?

(78)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
July 12th, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your postcard which gives all information about you. I am still here as before. Suren Babu (Mondal) and others tell me that my presence here is absolutely necessary. All enthusiasm will be extinguished if I go to Calcutta. An application is being submitted to Government for land. No information has been received yet. I delivered a lecture in Bengali on "Religion of this Age" in the public hall. At the same time I answered the questions of the conservatives. Last Saturday the boys of the High School held a meeting in Suren Babu's house and gave me an address of welcome. Suren Babu presided. Thereafter I gave spiritual instruction to the boys. Today Dr. Cousins has invited me to say something in the Theosophical Society which he has started here. I have not received any letter from Mukunda Babu. He has not even acknowledged the book and type-written speech which you gave him. I wrote two letters to him but he has not replied to them. It has been raining here heavily in the morning and

night. Ram stops in the afternoon. We are well. You will please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

P.S.—The Brenjlians have given their first donations.[1]

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*We thankfully acknowledge the receipt of these letters No. 78-104 from Swami Someswaranandaji of Varanasi, U.P.

(79)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
July 20th, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I am glad to receive your letter. I am happy to know that you have been studying attentively after your return to Calcutta. You should continue your studies now with all attention, Thakur will draw you when the proper time will come.

Your father came yesterday. I had discussions with him on various topics for about an hour. During discussions I came to know that he is a disciple of Swami Vivekananda. I did not know this before, nor did you ever tell me this. However I was extremely glad to talk to him.

My desire is to set up an Ashram here with an attached orphanage. In the Ashram there will be a chapel of Thakur and residential accommodation for Sannyasins and Brahamacharis who will run the school for boys and girls, library and orphanage.

When I told your father about my desire he said he would speak to the Governor and get assistance for me. I have great hopes that through his help I shall be able to set up the Ashrama of Thakur here.

I have come to know that on return to Calcutta you met Nagen. Tell Nagen that he should send a copy of 'Chaitanya-Charitamrita' from Calcutta, for I could not get a copy of the book from anyone here.

Always try to keep your mind pure. Do *Japa* as I instructed you. Later when time will come I shall initiate you to *Brahmacharyya* (continence).

I am all right. Chintaharan is well. He has been serving me whole-heartedly. His devotion for *Guru* is wonderful. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(80)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
August 4th, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter. I understand that you have been learning Sanskrit. Everyone should learn Sanskrit for through Sanskrit literature we can get acquainted with ancient ideals, culture, knowledge, science, etc.

You may be astonished to know that at one time I could speak and write Sanskrit fluently.

I am answering below the four questions which you have sent:—

(1) Men get pleasure and pain according to the results of their action. None else is responsible for their happiness and sorrow.

(2) The knowledge attained by a man is not lost. In the next life he starts from the stage attained at the time of death. His knowledge is not destroyed with destruction of the body just as your knowledge of medical science remains the same whether you remain in Calcutta or go to Delhi or America after passing out as a doctor. In like manner the knowledge that you attain regarding God or *Atman* will remain ever after your death and will not be destroyed along with the body.

(3) Thakur would not whisper *Mantras* into the ears of any body. He would write it on the tongue with his finger. In special cases he would stimulate

Power *"Sakti"*. I have seen with my own eyes that some went into *Samadhi* after having received *Mantra.*

(4) Those who are taking refuge in Him after hearing His name are more faithful than those who took refuge in Him after having seen Him. For we saw Him, we heard His words, we mixed with Him and some of us even tested Him. But you are more faithful and lucky than ourselves for you have not seen Him with your mortal eyes, you only heard about Him from us and have run into His arms.

Yesterday I delivered a lecture in the public hall. The subject was "Eternal Religion and Sri Ramakrishna". The attendance was good. Today an invitation came from Sir J. C. Bose, I shall go to see him in the afternoon. I am all right though I have a little cattarrh. I hope you are all right. Accept my blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(81)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
August 16th, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. For the last few days it has been raining here heavily. I cannot go out for work. The Sun god has completely hidden his face. Yesterday I received Mukunda Babu's leter. From the letter I came to know that the Samity at Calcutta has been running well. You wanted to know whether I saw Keshab Sen. Yes, I saw him two or three times and heard his lectures. But I did not see him at Dakshineswar when he would visit Thakur. From other fellow brethren I have heard about the wonderful *Sankirtan* of Thakur and Keshab Babu. It would be of great benefit to the country and the people if someone would write the sweet story of the meeting of the two Great Men, Thakur

and Keshab Babu on the basis of their biographies, this is my earnest desire.

You want to know how you would meditate on your *Ishta.* Meditation of *Ishta* should be done in the heart or in the *Ajna-chakra.* I taught you how to do this. Before starting meditation on *Ishta* chant this song and gradually dive in Him. The song is this—

"Art Thou the refuge of my soul?
I worship Thee with the garland of the flowers of love;
Art Thou in the cave of my heart in this chapel of God?
Perhaps for that reason boundless joy surges up in my heart;
Perhaps Thou are at the root of my tongue,
That is why when I utter the name of *Hari* my mendicant soul is drenched in tears, blood swells up in my heart, my tongue loses all speech, all earthly bondage is broken as soon as I get Your touch.
I shall now shut my eyes
Sit in the posture of Yoga and meditate on Thee alone.
Thou are at play with me
I am immersed in Thee
I am Thee and Thou art me
Being united into one."

I am all right. I hope you are all well. Accept my blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(82)

(5)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
August 21st, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I received your letter yesterday. As a rule you should try to follow these instructions:—

(1) Do not take anything without offering to God. There is no harm if in the beginning you forget for one or two days. Try again and again. Any food which is not offered to God is comparable to a morsel from another man's plate or to beef;
(2) Try to take the name of your *Ishta*[1] with every breath regularly morning and evening everyday;
(3) Do not tell a lie even by mistake. Do not speak ill of others or discuss other people's fault. It is better to spend your time in sleep than to speak ill of others;
(4) Do not allow any evil thought to come to your mind;
(5) Practise meditation of *Ishta* in *Ajna-chakra*. Read good books; and
(6) Look upon every woman as mother; but take care to remain as far from them as possible. Even feminine pictures have attractive power. They disturb the mind.

I am all right. Accept my blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

[1] The choosen deity.

(83)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
August 21st, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I have duly received your letter full of devotion. I came to know from your letter that Jagadish has left the Samity after a quarrel. Let me know in details why he has left.

The whole weight of the Samity now rests on Lakshman. Why so? Is there none else in the Samity who can assist him in collection? Tell Nagen that he should make all arrangements after having examined the position personally.

You have written that you cannot bring your mind to rest. This happens to everybody. Initially we, too could

not do so. Later on it became all right by practice. The aim of all spiritual practice is to bring the mind to a state of rest. You have written that various kinds of thoughts arise in your mind when you sit for meditation. This happens to everybody. If dust is spread all over a room you will find after sweeping it with a broomstick that there is only a handful of dust. In the same manner earlier impressions *Samaskaras* arise in mind at the time of meditation. There is nothing to be up-set about it.

Do not allow any evil thought to enter your mind in any way. Whenever any evil thought will come you should pray to Thakur in your mind. Thakur is very merciful and He will have mercy on you.

I understand that your mother is ill. I pray to Thakur that through His grace your mother may recover. I always wish you well. I am all right. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(84)

Darjeeling,
Balen Villa,
6th September, 1923.

My dear Ganesh,

I received your letter in due time. Most probably I shall start for Calcutta from here on the 10th September.

I am very glad to know that you are doing *Japa* and *Pranayam* (breathing exercise) according to my instructions and that these are proving beneficial.

Practise meditation in the heart or in the *Ajna-chakra.* Of course it is more convenient to meditate in the *Ajna-Chakra* than in the heart. Before starting meditation hang a picture of Thakur on the wall in front of your *Asan.* Thereafter look at the picture steadfastly and occasionally shut your eyes and meditate in *Ajna-chakra.* Continue this practice as long as you live. After you have practised this for sometime you will find that you can see the form of Thakur in *Ajna-Chakra* constantly.

Whenever you find time after studies, engage yourself in reading good books or in good discussion. Never allow evil thoughts to come to your mind. Read Gita, Chandi, Upanishad, Vivek-chudamani and Kathamrita and try to understand them.

For the last few days Chintaharan is having slow fever but he has been attending on me in disregard of this. I am happy to know that your mother is better than before. I am all right. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(85)

Darjeeling,
Ruby Cottage,
May 15th, 1925.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter full of devotion which gives me all information about you. I am astonished to read the story of the dream which you have written. You should take it that what you have seen is not merely a dream but firm reality. You are very fortunate and Thakur has bestowed special grace on you, that is why he has shown you my true nature. None else has had a vision about me like this before. On seeing my eyes and eye-brows Thakur used to tell me "When I see your eyes and eye-brows I remember Shri Krishna. (A part of the Divinity of Sree Krishna is incarnated in you). Common people cannot recognise me. That is why I have taken a human form and come as a companion of Thakur in his Divine Play, I shall go back when his work will be over.

Give my blessings to all in the Samity. You also accept my blessings. I am all right.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(86)

Darjeeling,
Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
May 28th, 1925.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. I have handed over to Chandi the letter which you addressed to him. At present the Ashram has been running well. A library has been opened in the Ashrama where books on various subjects have been kept. Local people are taking great deal of interest in the work of the Ashrama. An application has been submitted to the Municipality in order that the Ashrama may be tax-free. I am holding classes on Gita and Rajayoga in the hall of Thakur's temple every Saturday. The hall is filled with men and women when classes are held.

It gives me great pleasure to receive your letter. Why should I be annoyed with you? I am not in the least annoyed at your questions on different topics. If I can be of the least help to a single being of this world I shall consider myself fortunate.

Try to take the name of your *Ishta* with every breath. Whenever you get time or you have desire to do *Japa* you should do *Nama-Sadhana* (spiritual practice) through repetition of his name. A *japa* is the best of all spiritual practices. If *Japa* is done with every breath then all previous *samskaras* (impressions) are effaced, the mind is purified and *Ishta* is realised.

There need not be any particular time or place for taking the name of God for meditating or for singing *kirtan*. These should be done whenever there is an opportunity.

I am happy to know that you have been practising to sing the songs of Ramaprosad. It gives pure joy and purifies the mind. Ramaprosad was the beloved child of the Divine Mother and he attained realisation through songs. The Mother of the universe appeared before him on hearing his songs and helped him to tie the mat-wall of his hut. The songs of Ramaprosad indicate the paths of realisation.

Never allow evil thoughts or evil ideas to come to your mind. Whenever any evil thought comes you should pray to

Thakur so that He may have mercy on you. You will see that He will hear your prayer.

Before doing *Nama Japa* or meditation you should worship your *Guru*. After having practised this for sometime you will find that the form of your *Guru* is being merged in *Ishta*.

I am all right. I always wish you well. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(87)

40, Beadon Street, Calcutta,
May 10th 1926

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. I am happy to know that you have safely reached Darjeeling with sister Bhawani. Chintaharan has been attending on the sister and you have been looking after her in all matters, I give both of you many many thanks for this. Tell sister on my behalf that she should avoid exposure as her health is still very weak.

Most probably I shall start for Darjeeling on 25th May with Kalidas. I am glad to know that your father is all right and that he has been working hard for improvement of the Ashrama. Give him my regards.

Does Prahlad Babu come to Ashrama everyday? Tell him that I have got his letter, I shall send the reply soon.

Continue to do *Japa* and meditation regularly, everything will be set right in due course. When Thakur gave us *Mantra* He said "I have given you *Mantra*, now it is for your own mind to take it." This is very true. Many people think after taking *Mantra* that their purpose has been achieved and that no further spiritual practice is necessary, this is foolish. After taking *Mantra* one should do hard spiritual practice, only then realisation of God is possible. It is a firm truth that nothing can be obtained without *Sadhana*. After taking *Mantra* people think that everything will be done by the *Guru* on their behalf and they need not do any *Sadhana*.

This is quite incorrect. The *Guru* only stimulates power in the disciple. The disciple has to cultivate that power. Moreover you should always remember that the Guru helps the disciple along the path of realisation when he finds that the disciple has been doing spiritual practice in accordance with his instructions. The disciple who does not follow the instructions of his Guru gains nothing. He is a villain! He only tries to cheat his *Guru.*

The *Guru* sows the seed, the disciple has to rear the seed into a tree by applying manure in the form of spiritual practice and water in the form of devotion.

Without caring to do spiritual practice people cite the example of Girish Babu who gave letter of attorney (*Bakalma*) to Thakur. People do not know how deep was the devotion and faith of Girish Babu. We have heard Thakur saying "Girish's faith is extra-ordinary." Can you tell me how many people have got such faith?

Girish Babu had to do meditation and *Japa* even after giving the letter of attorney to Thakur. We have seen in Kasipur Garden that when Girish Babu would go into meditation under a tree so many mosquitoes would sit on his body that from a distance it would seem as if he were wrapped in a blanket.

It is found in the life of all *Sadhakas* and Great Men that they had to do rigorous *Tapasya.* Thakur did not sleep for 12 years. What to speak of others!

Continue to do *Japa* and meditation regularly, Thakur will bestow His Grace on you. I hold classes here twice per week. The classes are well-attended.

At present I am keeping good health. A few days ago however I suffered a great deal from tooth ache. At last the tooth had to be extracted. Accept my love and blessings.

Abhedananda.
Yours,

(88)

40, Beadon Street, Calcutta,
May 20th, 1926.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. I am happy to know that sister Bhawani is doing well. I shall start for Darjeeling on 25th with Kalidas and Chandi. You should attend the station without fail.

Yesterday Dilip Roy, son of D. L. Roy came. He wants to learn Yoga from me. I told him that I shall very gladly teach him Yoga. But I shall do so after returning from Darjeeling, not now.

I am answering your questions. Later on I shall tell you whatever you want to know after going there—

(1) Realisation of God is not possible if the mind is not purified. Meditation and *Japa* have to be done for purification of the mind. The basic principle of purification of the mind is not to allow evil thoughts to come to the mind;

(2) Everything is in the mind. Bondage is in the mind, freedom also is in the mind. Brahma is beyond the reach of speech and mind. But He is within the reach of the purified mind;

(3) Some mood is to be imposed on the *Ishta* such as the mood of a friend, son, wife, mother, etc. The motherly mood is very pure. It purifies the mind without difficulty and thereafter the *Ishta* can be realised. The Mother can be importuned. Just as Ramaprosad and our Thakur used to do. Ramaprosad's idea was 'Mother, if you do not appear before me I shall snatch away the garland of human heads from your neck'. This kind of aggressive urge is required. That is why the Mother appeared before him.

Thakur had similar attitude. "Mother, appear before me." Am I outside your world? I have not done *Sadhan* and *Bhajan* but you are full of kindness. You appeared before Ramaprosad. Will you not

appear before me? If you do not come before me, I shall commit suicide with this sword. I shall not continue this meaningless life. The Mother apeared before Thakur. Such fervour is needed.

(4) There is no particular place or time for taking the name of God. He should be remembered at all times thought of at all times. In one place Ramaprosad has said—

When you lie on bed you think as if you are prostrating before the Mother.

When you sleep you meditate on the Mother.

When you eat you think as if you are offering oblations to the Mother Shyama.

(5) All questions are solved if one reads Gita, Bhagabat, Kathamrita and Vivek Churamoni and follows the instructions given there.

My health is all right. All inmates of Samity are well here. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(89)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
October 18th, 1927.

My dear Naresh,

I have received your letter. Accept my Vijaya blessings. Why are you so much grieved and upset? Think a little and read the Kathamrita of Sree Sree Thakur and Bhagabat Gita.

If realisation of God be the purpose of your life then you should observe Brahmacharjya (continence) and cultivate the company of Sadhus. Go to some Ashram and stay there for some time. When you will be unable to do Japa or to meditate, you should read the above books. The illusive attraction of the world has to be broken. There is no happiness or peace in the world. For that reason we have been compelled to renounce the world. Peace and happiness can be attained and God can be realised through *viveka* (discrimination) and

vairagya (renunciation). You should pray to Sree Sree Thakur for peace, devotion and faith. I bless you that you may have peace and bliss in your mind.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(90)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
May 11th, 1928.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter. Instead of expressing your grief at your father's death you have prayed calmly for the peace of his soul to Thakur. This is just like a *jnani* (enlightened person). Ordinarily people are overwhelmed with grief. They do not find the way to mental peace. I am always praying to Thakur for the good of your father's departed soul.

Grief is a terrible thing. Under its influence man loses reason. After having heard the Gita and having witnessed the universal form (Biswarupa) of God, Arjun was beside himself with grief at the death of his son Abhimanyu. We have heard from Thakur that he was so deeply moved at the news of Keshab Babu's death that he was confined to bed for three days and it seemed to him as if one part of His body had been paralysed. Oh ! how wonderful was Thakur's love for Keshab Babu! Your mother is greatly bereaved at the loss of her husband. You should read good books to her. That will bring solace to her mind.

We have seen that when a bereaved person would come to Thakur, tears of bereavement would drop from his eyes. Thakur would never tell him that Brahman was the reality and that the world was unreal or that this was the way of the human body. He would try to bring solace to his mind by discussing divine topics or singing divine songs. This behaviour of Thakur endeared Him to people as if He were one of their own and as a result peace would come to their mind.

When Thakur passed away in Cossipore Garden, we were deeply bereaved for His loss. Swamiji was moved to such an extent that he went to the Ganges to commit suicide. For a few days Sree Ma would cry aloud saying, "Mother, where have you gone, mother, where have you gone?" We tried to console her. Afterwards one day Thakur appeared before Sree Ma and said, "Why are you crying? Look, I am near you. Only I have gone from this room to the next".

What about your employment? Did you see the Maharaja of Nadia? Let me know in details. May you have peace in mind and may you be free from danger. This is my only prayer to Thakur. Try to send a letter to me according to your convenience for I am in anxiety about you. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(91)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
May 15th, 1928.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. For a few days I suffered much from eye troubles. For that reason reply to your letter has been delayed. My eye troubles have been completely cured now. You should not be in anxiety for that.

I understand from your letter that Santa has recovered from fever. Tell him to avoid exposure as he is weak and, if possible, he should take some *Panchan* (extract of ayurvedic herbs) or some medicine of fever. Tell him to be careful about his health.

I am answering your questions—

(1) Purity of mind depends on the purity and *Satwik* quality of food but if vegetarian food is prepared rich then it becomes *Rajashik* and it ruffles the mind. The food which is easily digested and which does not ruffle the mind is Satwik food. It is much better to take fish and meat than to take rich vegetarian food. Of course, in the initial

stages of *Sadhana* some rules should be observed. Thakur used to tell us the man who renounces woman and money after taking beef and worships God is better than one who is attached to woman and money and forgetful of God after taking grass and leaves. The main point is constant remembrance and thinking of God and realisation of God.

(2) We never saw Thakur wearing saffron-coloured clothes. He used to wear white cloth with red border but occasionally he would have the border of white cloth dyed with saffron colour. He would dress like the most common man.

(3) It is not desirable to eat anything without offering it to the *Ista.* Anything eaten without offering to the *Ista* is defiled like the food left in another man's plate.

(4) Thakur used to treat Swamiji with the tenderest affection and care among all of us. He would call Swamiji, Narayan. He knew that through Swamiji He would have to do His work in this age. He is also our Guru. Why for us alone He had love for all. How can I let you know in writing how wonderful His love was? On account of the attraction of His wonderful love we left our parents and house.

(5) You should read Gambira Leela in Chaitanya Charitamrita again and again and meditate on that. If one wants to know how mad one should be for God, what pure love is, then it is absolutely necessary to read and meditate on Gambhira Leela.

I am at present all right. I am always praying to the Thakur for you. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(92)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
May 26th, 1928.

My dear Ganesh,

I received your letter yesterday. I am very glad to know that you have got an appointment. When will the result of your B.Sc. examination be out? It is a special grace of Thakur that you have been able to secure an appointment so soon.

I understand that your mother is a little more calm now than before. I do not find words to console her in this bereavement. I am always praying to Thakur that peace may reign in her mind.

Always keep Thakur in view when you work. If you keep Him in view when you work, then you may not go astray and you will have no fear.

If we have the light in front while walking at night then the shadow falls behind and does not frighten us but if the light remains behind or on the side then our own shadow will fall in front or on our side and we may get frightened taking the shadow to be a ghost. We may be set with various kinds of danger. For that reason everyone should try to do his work keeping God in front. God is very merciful.

You have got into service but always try to remember that work is worship. Every work is His worship of course dishonest work is excluded. If we remember and think of God and of His boundless mercy then our life will be blissful.

I am praying to God for all members of your family.

I am all right. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(93)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
June 8th, 1926.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. I am happy to

know that you are well. I am answering your questions. I hope these answers will do you good—

(1) The wind of God's grace is always blowing. One whose mind has been purified by singing His name and glory, can easily perceive this, just as sound is transmitted through waves of ether and one who has a radio receiver can catch it.

(2) Ramprosad would never drink alcohol. We asked Thakur the very same question which you have asked. He gave us this answer. Ramprosad would never drink wine. The wine that he used to drink was not any kind of alcohol. When a devotee takes the name of God, there is a secretion in his brain. The secretion slowly percolates into his tongue. That fluid is called *Sudha* or *Amrita*....When it goes into the system the Sadhaka has intoxication like the intoxication produced by alcohol. In the language of the Sadhaka it is called *Sura.*

Ramprosad used to drink Sura that way and he used to have intoxication as if he had drunk wine. Ordinary people used to think that Ramprosad was a Vir Sadhaka and so he drank wine. We get in his song "I do not drink wine. I drink Sudha chanting Jai Kali". At the end of the song Ramprosad said, "Prosad says that one can achieve Chaturbarga by drinking such wine".

(3) You should get up by 4 or 5 in the morning and start practising Japa and meditation. The mind is easily concentrated if meditation is done at that time; meditation becomes very deep. If you cannot get up at that time or if you wake up late then you should give suggestion to your mind before going to bed so that your mind may waken you at that time. After giving suggestion like this to your mind, you will find that your mind has been acting like a friend. It will waken you exactly at that hour. When I was travelling through places in America giving lectures, I used to give such suggestion to my mind. There were places for which I had to catch the train at 3 a.m. No one else would be with me. What to do? I would give suggestion to my mind before going to bed that I should be awakened at 2.30 a.m. Strangely, the mind had to obey and my sleep would break just at 2.30 a.m. My mind used to act as a friend. You should practise this

for a few days. I am all right. I am always praying for your welfare to Thakur.

Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(94)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
13th June, 1928.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter which gives me all information about you. I came to know from your letter that you went to the Ashram at Calcutta and met Santa. A few days ago I received a letter from Santa in which he gave all information regarding the Ashrama.

I am answering the questions which you have put to me. It gives me great pleasure to see the questions you have asked in your letter. I assure you that I am not in the least annoyed.

(1) Only those who have some substance in them attain realisation if they keep the company of Saints. Others derive no benefit. One who has no brain does not get enlightenment even if he keeps the company of Saints. The Saints wear slippers or *kharam* but do these things ever attain realisation? So company of Sadhu or Great Men is as necessary as to have brain.

Of course it is good to keep good company or the company of Sadhus. Such company is beneficial. The prostitute Lakshahira who had gone to test Haridas Thakur attained realisation by virtue of good company. After coming in contact with Thakur we often heard Girish Babu telling this. After Noto, Girish and myself came in contact with Thakur I have been transformed from tinsel into gold.

(2) Whoever will invoke God will attain Him without distinction of any class. Sinners, afflicted people, Sadhus, comon people, householders Sannyasins, men and women whoever will worship God will attain Him. Thakur used to say that uncle Moon is everybody's uncle. So whoever will worship Thakur and follow His words will attain His Grace

and have His Darsan. Thakur is not anybody's personal property. He is Universal.

(3) Whoever has an iota of desire in his mind will have to take birth again and again and become subject to pleasure and pain. Thakur used to tell us—When desires of various kinds inevitably arise in mind it is better to have good desires than bad ones for in that case if the next birth comes it will be in a family of saintly heritage. Candy is of course sweet but it does not affect the health on the other hand it cures bile disorder. It is good for health.

I am quite well. Most probably by the end of this month I shall go to Calcutta. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(95)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
June 25th, 1928.

My dear Ganesh,

I have received your letter in due time. For the past few days I have been suffering from eye-trouble. I am feeling a little better by application of medicine in the eye. Reading and writing of letters have been almost totally suspended. I am answering the three questions put by you.

(1) Bad habit is cured by good habit. The more you come towards Darjeeling the farther behind you leave Calcutta. To worship God regularly and to read good books constitute good habit.

(2) Gods and Godesses do not appear in all forms. They appear in images with special features. The image is awakened into life through the devotion of the devotees or the *Sadhana* of the *Sadhakas*. Mother Kali of Dakshineswar became awakened through the rigorous austerities and doleful prayers of Thakur. Thakur used to tell us, "I have myself seen by holding cotton near the nostril of the Mother that it is moved by Her breath."

(3) Spiritual practice should be done properly. It will be of no benefit if you do too much of meditation and *Japa* one

day and after that for seven/eight days do not think of God at all. Suppose that a doctor prescribes two doses of medicine for you everyday so that you may be cured of a disease but if instead of following his advice you take 14/15 doses one day, what will be the result?

You should think of God everyday in moderate measure. If you keep one pice in your box everyday you will save 365 pice in a year.

Of course the measure of spiritual practice should be gradually increased. Accept my love and blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(96)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
November 26th, 1929.

My dear Naresh,

After a long time I have received your letter and come to know all about you. The reply has been delayed as I was unwell. Please do not mind. You have asked for my advice as you cannot concentrate your mind for doing Japa and meditation. At the time of Japa you should think of the image of Sree Sree Ramkrishna. The meaning of that name is the One who was Sree Ramachandra and the One who was Sree Krishna came in this epoch as Sree Ramkrishna. Pray to Him everyday. Your mind will be concentrated when you will get His grace. You should read His Kathamrita. Occasionally come and meet me at Calcutta.

Please inform the Manager of 'Viswavani', that you have not received 'Viswavani' and also ask him to send you the photograph of Sree Sree Thakur and of myself by V.P.P.

Accept my blessings of Bijoya.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(97)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
August 27th, 1931.

My dear Amulya,

I have received your letter and come to know all about you. I am glad to know that from your childhood you have a spirit of detachment from the world. I would like to know how far you have studied and what you are doing for your livelihood. You will have to suffer worries of various kinds if you remain in the world. You will get solace if you keep the company of Sadhus. If you go to some Ashram and do spiritual practices there, you will not be disturbed by women and wealth. God is our true Father and Mother. "First serve God then obey thy parents". Your parents will be served if you serve Him. At the initial stage you should do spiritual practices for sometime to bring your mind under control. Then you can live detached from the world. It is necessary to take initiation from an enlightened Guru. You should take initiation from one for whom you have devotion and in whom you have faith (one who has dispelled the illusion of Maya and has attained knowledge) and you should follow his instructions. All doubts will then disappear from your mind. If I were at Calcutta, I would have told you "come and meet me". But at present I am here so I cannot say that. I cannot tell now how long I shall stay here and when I shall go to Calcutta.

I bless you that your discrimination and renunciation may be gradually intensified and that you may attain peace and joy in your heart.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(98)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
November 26th, 1931.

My dear Amulya,

I have received your letter, dated the 6th Agrahayan. I also received your earlier letter in due time. I am returning herewith the stamp which you sent in that letter. Your early letter is before me. I could not reply to it because during the Pujas I could not go to Calcutta. For the present I shall have to stay here. I cannot say when I shall be able to go to Calcutta. You have written about your intention to come here during the X-Mas holidays but it will be very cold here at that time. You will not be able to bear that cold suddenly after coming from a warm climate. For that reason it is better for you not to come. You may come here during the next summer vacation. If in the meantime I can go to Calcutta, I shall let you know.

I am glad to learn that you have been serving your parents. There is no harm if you work as a school master for serving your parents and stay in the family like a Brahmachary without marrying. Take the name of Sree Sree Ramkrishnadeba and pray to Him. He will protect you. Meditate on his image. If it is convenient I shall initiate you when I meet you. Do not be anxious for that. Accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(99)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
July 6th, 1932.

My dear Amulya,

I have received your letter and come to know all about you. If you do not find time for Japa in the evening, you should do Japa and meditation as I have told you on your bed before going to sleep at night. In the morning you should do both

kinds of daily worship and meditation. The day you cannot perform puja, the purpose will be served if you do both kinds of Japa and meditation. Directions regarding puja have been given briefly in *"Stotra Ratnakar"*. Only there is some confusion regarding Karanyasha and Angamyasha. It will do if you perform one after the other. The rest is all right.

Everyday while washing your hands and feet, you should once cleanse the interior of your nose by drawing water slowly. The duration of inhalation and exhalation is not equal for anybody in the two nostrils. Gradually with practice it will be equalised.

The purpose of life is to attain self-knowledge. Divine communion, Nirbikalpa Samadhi, etc., are distant things. You should not exercise yourself now about it. All this is higher. I would have explained the matter to you if you had questioned me when you were here. It cannot be explained in a letter. For the present you should continue to do Japa and meditation. Later on you will gradually understand everything when time will come.

The Ashram has been running quite well. The *Utsab* was performed nicely. About 350 people got *prosadam*. The Raja Bahadur of Santosh presided over the meeting in the public hall. The attendance was large. Thereafter the Raja came to the Ashram and was very glad to see the work of the Ashram. Chintaharan is at Calcutta at present. Suddhya Chaitanya is here. Ram is well and others are all right. I am keeping good health. Accept my blessings and the loving greetings of others.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(100)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
October 30th, 1932.

My dear Naresh,

I am glad to receive your adoring letter after Bijaya and

I have come to know all about you. Accept my Bijaya blessings and loving greetings of all members of the Ashram. For about two years I have not gone to Calcutta. I have been here. The Samity at Calcutta has been established in its own premises. Only three rooms have been built. Further constructions have been suspended for want of funds. For this reason I have no place to stay there. Only Sree Sree Thakur knows when I shall be able to go to Calcutta. The address of the Samity is 19A, Raja Rajkissen Street. This time my birthday anniversary was held in the Samity in a simple way. There was no pomp and so you did not get individual letter. If you contact us occasionally, everyone will remember you.

I am glad to know the story of your dream about which you have written. In the present financial condition of our country the profession of a lawyer, a doctor, a businessman, etc., is not particularly lucrative. The main thing is peace of mind which cannot be purchased with money. It can be obtained only through the grace of God. For this one should constantly pray to God. The mind will be perturbed if you think of money and remain busy with court cases in the world. That is the reason why you cannot do Japa and meditation properly. Nonetheless, you should continue Japa and Dhyana (meditation) as far as possible every day and you should pray to God.

All is well in the Ashram. My health is all right and all work is running well. I bless you that you may attain peace and bliss and that your devotion and faith may be intensified day by day.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(101)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Society,
19B, Raja Rajkissen Street,
Calcutta,
March 13th, 1933.

My dear Amulya,

For the present you should continue Japa and meditation as far as you can. You should repeat your *Mantra* with your breath ten times twice everyday in the morning and evening. Not more than that. In your rosary you can do Japa of your *Ista-Mantra* for one thousand or more counts. Japa, meditation and prayer as I have asked you to do are called *Sandhya*. I have asked you to do this twice. For those who can do it thrice a day that is called *Trisandhya*. When you do not find time to do it twice, how can you do it three times?

Accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(102)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Society,
19B, Raja Rajkissen Street,
Calcutta,
April 5th, 1934.

My dear Narendra Kumar,

I have received your letter after a long time and have come to know all about you. I am sorry to learn that you are ill and that you have no peace of mind. You should know that among worldly people there are many who are in greater distress, agony and worry than yourself. If you compare your condition with theirs, you will have solace. *Prarabdha Karma* is not wiped out by suicide. It has to be suffered in the next birth. Sree Sree Thakur and his children passed through immense agony, distress and sufferings. Sree Sree Thakur

used to say that "even Brahman cries when caught in the net of five elements" This is called *Maya.* You should take your *Prarabdha Karma* calmly and keep on praying to Sree Sree Thakur fervently. He will fulfil your desires. I also bless you.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(103)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
July 3rd, 1934.

My dear Amulya,

I am glad to receive your letter after a long time and I have come to know all about you. I am happy to know that you have been continuing Japa and meditation regularly. You should have firm faith in your heart that Sree Sree Thakur is your saviour and always pray to Him. He is a tree of fulfilment (Kalpataru). Whatever you will ask of him ardently, He will give you. Only He can give you the power for doing *Sadhan-Bhajan* and for making spiritual progress. We are only instrumental. If you take light food by giving up rice then you will not feel so lethargic and you will have less sleep. If you can subsist on one meal then lethargy, sleep and *tamas* will disappear.

With best wishes.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(104)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
September 6th, 1934.

My dear Amulya,

I have received your letter after a long time and come to

Calcutta, and I am pleased to learn that in coming in contact with me, you have been attracted to me with love and devotion. I am also glad to learn that you wish to lead the life on the ideals of Sree Sree Thakur and Swamiji. At present you are a student, so study with care and concentration of your mind, and lead your life according to the instructions of your brother. Do *japa* daily in the morning and evening the name of Sri Ramakrishna, and while meditating on Him, you will pray to Him for your divine love and regard for Him. Sometimes you will read the *Kathamrita.*

With my blessings to you.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(106)

Darjeeling,
October 31st, 1934.

My dear Naresh,

You will have spiritual power if you fervently pray to Sree Sree Thakur and if you do Japa and meditation twice everyday regularly your passions will be subdued and you will achieve spiritual progress. You should know that "Heaven helps those who help themselves".

With Vijoya blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(107)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Society,
Calcutta,
February 21st, 1935.

My dear Sashi,

I have received your letter after a long time.

* * * *

The doubt which you have in your mind regarding *Saguna*

and *Nirguna* Brahman cannot be dispelled through a letter. If you come here and meet me, I can try.

When your existence is in the physical world, you should approach the ultimate truth in a practical way. The way of denial (neti, neti—not this, not this) is the way of discrimination. That is not the path of *bhakti.* The travellers of that path are the *Sannyasins* and *jnanins,* who have renounced all. The path of bhakti is better for you. So long as your mind is not purified you should do Japa, puja and meditation of God with form (Sakara). Thereafter you will be eligible for *Jnana.* Do not do 'neti, neti' at present. You should pray to Sree Sree Thakur for devotion and faith.

With best wishes.

Abhedananda.

(108)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashram,
Darjeeling,
August 1st, 1935.

My dear Sashi,

If you practise everyday, your mind will be concentrated gradually. It is not easy to concentrate the mind. A good deal of *tapashya* is necessary for this. Indicating the way to concentrate the mind, Sree Krishna said in Gita, "O, Kounteya, this can be achieved through practice and renunciation".

With blessings.

..... Yours,
Abhedananda.

EPISTLES

PART II

LETTERS OF THE HOLY MOTHER

(109)

Sri Sri Ramakrishna

8/1, Bagbazar Street,
March, 1899.

My beloved son,

I am glad to receive your letter yesterday. I have got the parcel sent by you. I am very glad to learn that you are keeping well, physically and mentally. I am also glad that your work there is going on very well. You are enlightening the mission of Thakur. I pray to Sri Sri Thakur, and am also blessing, for the success of your work there. There is no doubt about it that he (Thakur) will help you in your work. Do not be so strict about your diet. Without being a strict vegetarian, you must take there good fish, etc., and for that there will be no harm. I am giving you permission to take fish and meat, and you will take them at ease. Always keep watch on your health. Live sometimes in lonely place. I shall be glad to receive your letter from time to time. Let me bless you.

Yours,
Mother.

(110)

LETTER OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

770, Oak Srteet,
San Fran., Cal.,
C/o Dr. Logan, M.D.

My dear Abhedananda,

I am very glad to learn about the new home of the Vedânta Society. As things stand I will have to come to New York

direct from here without stoppage—but it will be two or thre weeks yet I am afraid. Things are coming up so fast that cannot but change my plans and stop a few more days. am trying my best to get one of you for a flying visit to thi coast. It is a great country for Vedântins. Get all my book and clothes in your house. I am coming soon. My reverenc to Mrs. Crane. Is she still living on loaf-steaks and hot water Miss Waldo and Miss Coulston write about the publicatio of the new edition of Karma Yoga. I have written to Mis Waldo all about it. The money in hand from the sale of boo ought to be spent of course.

Do you see my books and clothes all safe there. They were with Miss Bull in Boston.

With all love,
Vivekananda

(111)

LETTER OF SWAMI TURIYANANDA

Râmakrishna Mission
Shevâshrama, Kankhal
31st July, 1912

Dear brother Swâmi Abhedânanda,

I am in receipt of the book-packet you have so kindly sen to me. Kindly accept my sincere thanks for the same. It i so good of you thus to remember me.

I of course could not write to you directly so long, but never lost an opportunity of being acquainted with your well being, and be sure I take still as much interest in your worl in America as ever before. It has pleased me so very muc to know from Mrs. Agues, Thomas' letter that you are doin well and are well-pleased with your work in the Vedânt Ashrama at Conn in West Cornwall. It would be nice if yo could resume and revive the work in New York and not le go the Society there to ruin for which you worked so hard an for such long years. But in case you don't care to continu so busy life anymore then to my mind it would be best if yo could come back to India and live with your brothers her

who love to have you amongst them. Will you kindly give an earnest and serious consideration to this? I am doing a little better now. Râkhâl Mahâraj, Shivânanda Swami and others are doing nicely too. They all send you their best love and Namaskâras.

With my best wishes, love and Namaskâras and hoping to hear from you in reply.

Yours affectionately,
Turiyânanda.

P.S.—Kindly hand the accompanying letter-cover to Mrs. Agues Thomas.

(112)

LETTER OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

Benâres,
19th February, 1902.

My dear Kali,

I am directed by Swâmiji to reply to your letter dated the 15th January 1902, which he has just received. He is very sorry to learn the demise of Mrs. Guerensey. Convey his condolence to Miss and Dr. Guerensey. Swâmiji is exceedingly glad to hear the recovery of Swâmi T. He hopes he will be himself again shortly.

Regarding the publication of Jnâna Yoga he has no suggestion to make if you do not think it necessary to put the lecture on 'Real and Apparent Man' in the volume—don't do it then. It depends on you.

Swâmi is awfully glad that you are working so satisfactorily well. He has come here for a change with a Japanese gentleman and living in Tagore's Castle at Benâres Cantonment. The house belongs to Babu Kâlikrishna Tagore. The Japanese gentleman has come to take Swâmiji to their country, but Swâmiji is not yet equal to long journey and work. He has not regained his eye-sight yet. But you will be glad to know that he is feeling better here at Benâres and if he goes on this way for a month by the grace of Guru Mahârâj he is sure to be fit for work and voyage to Japan. Swâmiji sends his

best wishes and love to you and I my Namaskâras and love.

Ever one in the Lord,
Yours,
Sivânanda.

(113)

LETTER OF SWAMI PREMANANDA

Ode to the Lotus feet of Guru

The Ramakrishna Math,
Belur, P.O. Howrah.
... Dated the 4th April, 1916.

Most beloved,

Brother Kaluveer, perhaps you have now received the reply of your previous letter. In these days of chaos it is difficult for a man to reach the destination, what of a letter! What a devastating war is going on. This has surpassed our Purana, Tantra, etc. Now if there prevail only enmity and jealously instead of wisdom, renunciation, faith in God, love and sympathy for all beings, then competition among nations will go on.

I find this world as heaven and also as hell. Ah, restraint, truthfulness, desirelessness and simplicity are the qualities of the age of truth (Satya Yuga), and selfishness and pride are hell. Our all-compassionate Thakur has shown us a new path of peace and consolation by setting an example by His own life. You also show this path of peace to everyone. You all have come to carry on this message of peace and immortality. Men will believe in God and will get peace and happiness in their lives through your bright example. Come and let us proceed through the path shown by our Master. Fights and quarrels seem to us like poison. So we desire to go far off leaving aside all these quarrels and disharmonies.

I wrote a letter to Sri Sri Mother, conveying your prostrate obeisence. Now she is staying at Jayrambati. She is very glad to learn that, after a long time you have written letter to us and Mother conveys to you Her blessings. A three-storied house has been built for Her at Baghbazar, Calcutta, but She does not like it and still is living in an old

thatched house, and is labouring hard for the welfare of Her devotees. She is setting a wonderful ideal in the world, but how many men are following that ideal and how many are striving for enlightening their life? As Thakur has shown a divine ideal to the world, so is doing Sri Sri Mother. Dear brother, I am unable to realize the divine activities of Thakur and Mother. So how can I appreciate the boundles Isvara, Bhagavan, and Paramatman. Now His divine grace is our only hope and shelter.

I am glad to learn that you are erecting a temple (of Thakur) there in America. But I think it would have been better if you could erect a temple at Kamarpukur. Because Kamarpukur is the actual place. But no one is interested for that place. It is surprising to note that there is nothing in His real birth-place, which is curious. At present, some persons wish to do something at Kamarpukur. If you like, just keep it in your mind. In future that place (Kamarpukur) will undoubtedly be recognised as a great shrine. So he who will do something by way of a memorial there, will be remembered by all for all times. The holy ideas of the Lord are spreading in many places of Bengal, India, and Burma. The Lord has blessed you with intellect and wisdom, so I wish that you yourself be absorbed with that idea and ideal of Thakur, and then inspire others. Be in tune with the great ideal of Thakur and observing that the world may take a new life. Proclaim always the news of peace and happiness. Be fortunate, and may your Mother be pleased.

Thakur used to say that a Bhakta has no caste or creed. So my brother, let us try to build a divine nation throughout the world. Now let the sportive play of love and devotion proceed on. The European nations wish to rule the world with the help of their arms, but come, and let us unite the universe through Shastra, love, sympathy and peace. Break off the chain of selfishness and *maya,* and accept our love, and convey it to all the devotees there.

Yours,
Servent,
Baburam.

(114)

TO HIS DISCIPLES

Darjeeling,
17th September.

ır Devotees,

I am very glad to know that on this auspicious occasion of birthday you have gathered together and you have been ring flowers in token of devotion to Sree Sree Thakur and ne as a dear child of Sree Sree Ramakrishnadeva. I am emely sorry that I could not attend this happy ceremony year. The will of the Lord will be fulfilled. When this ight comes to me, I resign myself entirely to His will and heart is filled with peace. You should, however, know it certain that though I am not physically in your midst, I with you in my subtle body. All of you will please accept blessings. I bless you that your devotion and faith may strengthened from day to day and that you may have peace joy in heart.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(115)

dear N—,

I am glad to receive your letter. The rare thing which you k, cannot be attained suddenly in a day. It is described in Puranas and other scriptures how the thinkers and savants old had to strive through austerities to realize these things. you want to attain to firm devotion and faith in God, then ı too will have to practise *tapasya* (austerities). Practising *asya* (austerities) does not mean roaming about aimlessly. *pasya* means doing *japa* and meditation with sincerity and ıtrolling the senses.

The body should be kept free from disease by regulating d, etc. Proper food cannot be had if one lives on begging places of pilgrimage and so disease becomes inevitable.

That is why we have established Samitis and Ashramas. There the mind can be cleansed and purified by keeping the company of monks and by serving them. The restlessness of the mind will not go so long as the mind is not purified. If the mind is restless there will be interest for *japa* and meditation. Then the mind should be applied to *puja* (worship), serving *Sadhus* (monks) and reading *Geeta* and other religious books and one should earnestly pray to God. If you read the biography of our Thakur you will know how much he prayed and cried and after how much of earnestness the Mother of the universe appeared to him in visual form.

God vouchsafes devotion and faith if prayer is made to Him with earnestness. You should always pray thus: "Vouchsafe me enduring devotion and unmoving faith. May my mind and my heart be fixed unflinchingly on the lotus feet, etc." God is the indweller in everything. He will certainly hear your prayer and grant His grace. Sit every morning and evening in the chapel and repeat the *Ishta mantra* two or three thousand times and pray. When your mind will be steadied through *japa* you should meditate on the image of Sree Sree Thakur. After that you should attend to the duties allotted to you by the Manager of the Samiti and you should not assert your own views. Always do your work with love. This is called *tapasya.* If you can do such *tapasya* for three years with sincerity, your mind will be steadied and your heart will be purified. Thereafter you will be fit for a vision of Him for whom your heart is longing, on seeing whom nothing else remains to be seen and on seeing whom sensual desires and anger disappear.

In the morning and in the evening you should repeat *Ishta mantra* ten times as I told you at the time of initiation and you should repeat 'Haribol' with clapping of hands one hundred times. All sinful thoughts will go away if you do so; you will then have peace and joy. You should practise all this regularly for one month and then let me know how you feel. So far now. You will please accept my blessings and love. All inmates of the Ashrama are in good health.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(116)

11, Eden Hospital Road,
Calcutta,
6th June, 1925.

My dear—,

After a long time I have received your letter which gives me all information. I am glad that you are well. You have written that day by day you have been getting entangled in worldly affairs and that you do not find time for *japa*, etc. You should work with your hands and you should think of God in your mind. You should know that this world belongs to God and not to you. His will will be fulfilled. When you minister to your children you should do so with the thought that you are ministering to Narayana. When you go to bed at night you should surrender all results of the day's activities to the lotus feet of God and relieve yourself of all anxieties and you should always pray to Him for devotion and faith. If you live in the world like this you will have peace and joy. Otherwise the world is full of pain, suffering and sorrow!

The pleasure that one gets in the world is very transient. Man gets what he seeks. You have got what you sought. When you will seek God with real sincerity He will turn everything of the world topsy turvy and appear before you. But so long as *maya* (world delusion) and *mamata* (sense of 'mine') are strong, will you be able to seek God with all your heart? God is the tree of fulfilment of desires, he gives whatever one asks for. You wanted a child, you have got a child. You should now remain satisfied with that.

My blessings to all of you.

With blessings.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(117)

Darjeeling,
1st July.

My dear—,

I have got all informations from your letter which I have received after a long time. You will please accept my blessings for the new year and convey the same to all members of the family. After a child is born it becomes susceptible to various diseases if it is not properly tended. It is expensive to bring up children. Common people get into family life without thinking of these things and flounder in disease, sorrow and various kinds of sufferings. You should know that this is *maya's* play. Everything in the world is transient, God alone is everlasting and true. If you take refuge in Him then you will get peace and joy.

All worldly beings fulfil selfish ends. They look out for faults of others without doing their own duty. Their love and affection are based on self-interest. As you have got your duties, so they too have duties towards you. If, however, they cause suffering to you by being selfish, no good can accrue to them. It is superfluous to write more on this subject.

At present my health is better than before. The Ashrama has been running well and all members are in good health. All of you should accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(118)

Darjeeling,
7th November, 1930.

My dear P.—,

I have received your loving letter today. Since I could not reply to your previous letter in time you thought that I was perhaps angry with you; but why should I be angry? What you wrote in your eariler letter about Kanakhal,

Hrishieksh is true. Hrishikesh was formerly a place for *tapasya* (austerities). At that time I myself cut grass and built a shack just for one man to stretch and there I would practise austerities taking one meal a day with unbaked bread and dal obtained by begging. I was then having lessons in Vedanta from Dhanaraj Giri, the founder of Kailash Ashrama. Hrishikesh has now grown into a town, having been connected by railway. True Sannyasins are rarely found there now-a-days.

The mind will be purified by serving Sri Sri Thakur. That is why work is to be done without selfish motive. In *Kaliyuga* no other form of austerity is necessary. Sri Sri Thakur used to say that in *Kaliyuga* vitality is food based. A malaria patient cannot stand austerities. Bengalis cannot digest *dal* and *roti* (wheat bread), so he prescribed soup and rice for them. For seekers in the path of Yoga austerities were necessary in order to overcome the strong senses, lust, anger and greed. In the path of devotion such austerities are unnecessary. You are all in the path of devotion. You are not in the path of discrimination, that is to say you are not adherents of the doctrine of *So'ham* (I am me—identity of God and man). So, it is better for you to follow wholeheartedly such teachings of Geeta as "Give up all forms of religion and take refuge in me alone", etc. and to surrender higher form of austerity than this. Keep on crying "Ma", "Ma" (Mother, Mother) like kitten and learn to be satisfied and happy in whatever condition and wherever He puts you. To all of you this is my instruction for all time. What is wanted is 'Complete resignation to the Will of the Divine Mother'. It is necessary to be steadfast, and single-hearted or single-minded in devotion. 'First serve God, then everything will be added unto you'.

You should hold on to Sri Sri Thakur even if you have no regard or reverence or faith in me. If you do so you will be blessed. I am His child. 'He who hath seen the son hath seen the Father'. Pray to Him for such faith. 'My father is in me and I am in Him. I and my Father are One'.

Whatever is to be done for the Samiti is serve of Sri Sri Thakur—have this conviction when you work. This is your selfless Karma Yoga. This is your austerity and spiritual

practice through which your mind will be purified and your egotism will be dispelled.

As willed by Sri Sri Thakur I shall have to pass the winter here. I shall have to undergo this kind of hardship so long as the Samiti's own house is not built. All this is Sri Sri Thakurs will. We are all right. Please accept the love of all of us and my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(119)

Sree Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
29th March, 1931.

My dear S,

Ch— has arrived here safely today. I hear from him that Ch—, P—, N— and others have gone to Kamarpukur. I know that you have fallen into particularly acute hardship and I am sorry for that. You should remember that Sri Sri Thakur has been taking you through these difficulties in order to get austerities done by you. Yon need not do any other form of austerity, meditation, *japa* or reading of religious books. You should know that what you have been doing is better than meditation and *japa.*

In Baranagore Math we used to get rice by begging and we would cook and take that with boiled leaves of *Telakucha.* The house rent was Rs. 11/- per month. Even that we had to procure by begging as we had no means to pay. The Samiti is the work of Sri Sri Thakur, look to Him. The future is in the hands of Sri Sri Thakur. What, after all, would you gain by disturbing your mind over these things? You will be blessed if you can remain satisfied with whatever you get and lay down your life in the work of Sri Sri Thakur. 'To work hast thou the right and not to the fruit thereof'. All that a Sadhu (recluse) is to do is to forget the self. You have devoted yourselves to a great task and I am away from you

here depending entirely on you. Please accept my blessings and love of all and convey the same to others.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(120)

Sree Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
5th October, 1931.

My dear S—,

I have received your letter in time and from this I have come to know all information. The portion of Kathamrita of which you have sent extract has been erroneously recorded by Sri M. We never heard such things from Sri Sri Thakur. Your impression is that whatever is there is correct. Such contradictions are found in many places of Kathamrita.

The significance of what Swamiji told Sister Nivedita is that the Hindus have personal freedom in religious matter but not in social affairs. In Europe there is no personal freedom in religion but in society one can behave as one likes. I cannot explain this elaborately for want of time. My blessings to you.

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(121)

October, 1931.

My dear—,

I have received your letter in time with all the information in it. You have been blessed with special grace of Sri Sri Thakur, that is why he has been appearing before you at the time of *japa* and in dream, and he will favour you many more visions. What solution can there be of the riddle? You should believe that whatever visions are being vouchsafed are true. If you question or doubt the visions will cease. You should fix your mind on *japa* without taking notice of whatever unnatural visions you have. The *Sadhaka* (spiritual seeker) gets various kinds of visions when he concentrates

his mind. These should not be disclosed to anyone. If you have any thing to ask you should pray to Sri Sri Thakur.

You need not know where your husband is and how. You should only pray that his soul may rest in peace. Then he will have peace. You should give up such ideas as "my husband", "my children", "my family" and do your duty thinking that "all are children of God" and that it is God's household. You need not worry if your son will be able to earn. Everyone will get the fruits of his karma (work). No one has any hand in this. You should meditate on the idea that the Lord of the universe is your husband. Man, being deluded by *maya*, contracts such relationship as husband, wife, etc. and gets pleasure and pain. Such relationship is ephemeral, not everlasting. You are under the great delusion of *maya* and so you cannot forget to bemoan your human husband.

What more to write ? I am all right now and the Ashrama is running well. My blessings to you. Convey the same to your children.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(122)

Darjeeling,
12th March, 1932.

My dear Sisir, ...

I am glad to receive your reverent letter. I am happy to know that with Shyamadas Kaviraj's treatment you are feeling better. The coincidence between the receipt of my previous letter with your meeting Shyamadas Kaviraj in Deoghur was really a very strange event. What occurred during your stay in the Medical College Hospital was no less strange! You would have no chance of survival had you been operated on them. However, everything depends on the Will of Sri Sri Thakur.

You have enquired who Sri Sarada Devi is, and why I have given you the *mantra* dedicating you to Her, etc. If

you pray to the Holy Mother, then She will explain the answer to you in meditation. Ramprasad sang, "Who knows how Kali is ?The six systems of philosophy cannot envisage Her". Shiva went mad in trying to understand Her nature.

"Thou art with form to the seekers
Who contemplate on Thee as with form
Thou art formless to the seekers
Who contemplate on Thee as without form.
Some say that Brahman is luminous,
Thou are that too, Oh Tara, existing through the three Kälas (creation, preservation and destruction).
The limit up to which one's idea goes
is called Para-Brahman.
Beyond that is the ineffable Turiya
Thou are that too, Oh Tara, pervading the three *Lokas* (cosmic, terrestrial and subterranean space."

If you understand this then you will know who Sri Saradadevi is. You cannot apprehend this merely with intellect. Just as fire and its burning power are inseparable, so Brahman and Maya are inseparable, Sri Sri Thakur and Sri Saradadevi are inseparable. Maya is that Divine Energy manifested in us as knowledge and ignorance that is as pure and impure mind. Ignorance (Avidya) has two powers (viz., to cover and to delude).

"Thou art the one Nature (Prakriti)
Who veils Brahman,
And who as Mahamaya (The Great Deluding Power) enchants the three worlds." etc.

Without the grace of Sri Saradadevi, worldly delusion and attachment do not go, discrimination and dispassion do not arise and the discerning eye of knowledge does not open. For all this it is necessary to propitiate her. Through Her grace She will unveil Sri Sri Thakur. It is necessary therefore to pray for Her grace.

You say that the Philosophy of R—has been written, but the Philosophy of Sri Sri Thakur has not been writen so far. Regarding this, I may tell you that I have not read the Philosophy of—nor have I any inclination to read that. There is nothing new in that. Compared to that the Philosophy of Ramakrishna will be a fathomless ocean of infinite spiritual

light. Vivekananda said that Sri Ramakrishna was so great that to attempt to describe Him is to bring Him within limitations, etc. I am enclosing herewith Sri Aurobindo's observations, regarding Sri Ramakrishna which I have marked out. Please return this after having read it. I am also sending herewith a copy of my Hymn to Ramakrishna, you should keep it. It was published in the March number of Prabuddha Bharata and Hymn to the Mother was published in the January number, have you seen? In the last December number, my article on the 'Scientific View of Death' was published. You will please read that and give me your opinion. To understand Sri Sri Thakur it is necessary to know all scriptures, Vedas, Upanishad, Puranas and Tantras, Eastern and Western Philosophy. Although I possess that knowledge yet I dare not write His Philosophy, I have, therefore, said in my hymn—

"Oh Lord Ramakrishna, I do not know what thou
art in essence,
I am prostrating to whatever may be Thy essence,
again and agin."

I am very glad to know that you have a desire to read Philosophy. Read copiously. If, however, you do not have realisation then you will get confused in studying Eastern and Western Philosophy. How will you ascertain which of the various doctrines is true? In the beginning I had such doubt and I became an atheist. I then stopped reading all Philosophy and started seeking the standard of truth through realisation. Afterwards through the grace of Sri Sri Thakur I found a yardstick which provided a way to put every philosophy in its proper place and then all my doubts and questions were solved. The Upanishad says:

"After realisation of the ultimate Truth, the strings of doubt in the heart are torn and all questions cease and all fruits of action wither away."

I am glad that you are translating 'Reincarnation'.

All is well here. In this Ashrama a High School and a Free Primary School for boys and Sârada Girls' School with an American Sister Sannyasini Sadhanananda as the Mother Superior are running. It is a big affair which you will be astounded to see. If it is convenient you should come once

to see these. This time I could not go to Calcutta. My health has improved. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to all members of the family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(123)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
24th April, 1932.

My dear S—,

I have received your letter, dated the 18th instant. You went to Kamarpukur. What pains me is that even after having visited a place so immensely holy you cannot apply yourself to the work of Sri Sri Thakur with peace of mind. When you are a Sannyasin, an embodiment of the spirit which is identical with Brahman, what is the necessity of your doing *japa* and meditation and reading scriptures, grammar, etc. Why should you consider it necessary to observe the results of the work dedicated to Sri Sri Thakur? Who are you to judge if the Samiti is of any benefit to the country and to the people ? You have the right to work only, you should not take any notice of the good or bad results. After having travelled all over the world I have come to realise that if you do not have peace and contentment in your own mind, then wherever you will go you will have some kind of worry and distress. Wall up your mind by discrimination. Do not allow the troubles of the environment to enter into that enclosure. You should remember that this is *sadhana* (spiritual practice). If you like to wander about why not come here on foot from Calcutta ? This is the place of your *Guru* which is holier than all holy places. I went to 'Kashi' on foot from Jayrambati. Tell me, which ideal of mine you will follow and emulate for building your own life.

In the whole world you will not get a place which will suit your mind. You should learn to convert adverse circumstances into your favour. Mind is the main thing. If you withdraw your mind from the ear you will not hear the

rumbling of carriages. It is for you that I am establishing Samiti, Ashrama, etc. After the Samiti building has been built it should be made into a *Math* (monastery) and a *Brahmacharya Vidyapith* should be started.

In the previous letter I wrote that you are my limbs. If you do not help me then with whose help should I work? I am glad to know about the progress of work in the Samiti's land. Do not get disheartened at this critical time. Hold on to the helm of affairs and pray to Sri Sri Thakur. He is our only help and source of strength. You should remember that the work of the Samiti is His work and you should risk your life for it. It will not do to get disheartened or to slacken.

My New Years blessings to all of you and my love to all inmates of the Ashrama.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

P.S.—All is well here and I am in good health.

(124)

My dear P—, ...

I am also pained to receive your card for it pains me to see you in distress. I love you as my own life. If you leave the Samiti and go elsewhere then who will do all that work. You are an emotional race and so at the slightest trouble you lose heart and you try to escape.—Is that good? How often squalls blow over trees! You should practise *titikasha* (patient endurance of adversity) like trees and increase your patience. Sri Sri Thakur used to say that there are three Bengali alphabets for the sound 'Sh' which in Bengali means 'have patience'. Have patience, do not allow the mind to be disturbed. Practise the teachings "be equally silent when you are pained or condemned", "He by whom anxiety is not caused to others and to whom anxiety cannot be caused by others", etc. Please accept my blessings and love of all who are here.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(125)

Sree Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
10th October, 1932.

My dear S—,

I have received your letter. Mother Durga does not want pomp. She wants pure devotion. She will be pleased with whatever you will do with devotion. Now-a-days people have forgotten *Sattwik Puja* (worship done with pure devotion) being engrossed with pomp of the *Rajashik* type. We do not want such *Rajashik Puja* (Puja performed with pompous display of the self). Please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(126)

Sree Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
23rd October, 1932.

My dear S—,

I have got all information from your letter. You should remember that if instead of being sentimental you surrender all points of work—good and bad—to the lotus feet of Sri Sri Thakur then no worry will come to your mind. You need not become restive for *japa* and meditation, and escape. Sri Sri Thakur used to say 'you should do meditation at the corner of your room, or in the forest and in your mind'. Living in a city you can easily do *japa* and meditation at night sitting inside the mosquito curtain. There will be no noise then and no one will disturb you. When I was living in our house at Calcutta, I used to do meditation sitting on my bed at night according to the instruction of Thakur—and at that time I had vision of all Gods and Goddesses and of *Vaikuntha* (abode of the God of preservation). Wherever you go with a nervous mind your mind will be with you. Why are you afraid of working? Realisation cannot be attained unless the mind is purified through work. You should

try to run the school, which I have entrusted to your management, properly even in the midst of a thousand obstacles. Your mind will be surely purified by this. Please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(127)

My dear S—,

I have got all information from your letter. I am happy that you were pleased to get lemons as *prasada* (offering made to God). I am glad to know that you have been doing *japa* and meditation to your utmost ability. You perhaps remember that while I was in Hrishikesh I prayed for disease and that I was bed-ridden for 3/4 months with fever, bronchitis and blood Dysentery. At that time I used to think constantly that "'the Atman is not subject to disease" and I would cut jokes smilingly. Gupta Maharaj who was my attendant was astonished to see this. This occurred in the house of Bansi Dutta at Benaras. Thereafter on having heard that Swamiji was suffering from influenza, I went in convalescent state to Pramada Mitra's house and attended on Swamiji. After his recovery I suffered from influenza again for three months in critical condition. Even then I did not forget that "the Atman is not subject to disease". That thought gave me strength and I came round.

I hope you will return from Puri in good health. I would like to know where you propose to stay at Puri. All is well here. Please accept my blessings and love of all and convey the same to all members of the Samiti.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(128)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
7th May 1934.

My dear R—,

I have got all information from your letter which I received in time. I could not reply promptly as I was at that time busy with various work at Calcutta and I was in indifferent health. Please do not mind for that.

You have been doing daily *puja* of Sri Sri Thakur by installing His altar. Know it for certain that you have been granted His special grace for this. As you have resolved not to take initiation from anyone else I am writing your *Mantra*. You should utter this *Mantra* thrice with devotion and repeat it ten times thinking of the image of Sri Sri Thakur. You should offer daily *puja*, fruits and flowers, etc. to Sri Sri Thakur with this *Mantra*. At the end of *puja* you should repeat this *Mantra* ten times. At dusk you should repeat the *Mantra* ten times and meditate in His luminous image in the altar of your heart. Then you should pray. In the *puja* which is offered through devotion there is no need for *koshakushi* or external pomp.

You should remember that hereby you are initiated and given a *Mantra* in a simplified way. Later on when you will meet me at Calcutta I shall get the other rituals of the initiation ceremony done in detail in the convenient way. At present you should go on doing *puja*, chanting of hymns, etc. according to the above direction. I bless you that your devotion and faith may increase and that you may be spiritually uplifted.

All is well with the Ashrama and my health is better than before.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(129)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
11th June, 1934.

My dear R—,

I am replying to your queries regarding *puja*. You should begin *puja* with purity of heart in the morning after a bath and other daily routine work. Take your meal after *puja*. It is better not to take any food before *puja*.

Do *japa* and meditation before evening meal within one or two hours of dusk if you cannot do it exactly at dusk. Think of Sri Sri Thakur before going to sleep and pray to Him after having mentally surrendered to Him all results of the day's work that is to say the results of whatever you may have done during the day. Always try to bear in mind that you are ministering to Sri Sri Thakur by all those actions. In the morning after you wake up think of Sri Sri Thakur.

I am happy to know that you have got peace and joy of mind and that physically all right. At present I am slightly better than before. Please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(130)

Darjeeling,
12th August, 1934.

My dear P—,

I have received your letter. Here is the reply to your query: The supreme spirit (Paramatman) is Brahman as undifferentiated and attributeless Being is one and non-dual. God, Devas and Devi (good spirits), the individual being, the disembodied spirits are all with attributes and different *upadhis* (superposed identity). When they are shorn of attributes and *upadhis* only one pervasive Brahman remains. In Him there is no such differentiation as patient, physician, medicine, etc. In the realm of *maya* patient, physician,

medicine remains as separate entities. A good spirit helper that is to say a spirit with Divine attributes (who is called Deva or Devi) can indicate a medicine for the good of *jiva* (individual being). The difference consists in the degree of power only. He is quite separate from the spirit of the patient (Jivatman) and also from the medicine.

Unity in variety should be understood first. Although Brahman is One, He is manifested in diverse forms through *Maya.* As electric energy is manifested in the form of heat, light, motion of form or tramway and illuminates different places through innumerable bulbs so One Brahman is manifested as individual beings, world, animals, birds, insects, fleas, devas, devis, good spirit, evil spirit through the power of *Maya.* The meaning of 'Soham' is not that 'God and I are one'.

I am sorry to know that you have a boil on your shoulder and that your wife is not keeping good health. I hope you will come round soon. Here you are an individual being (Jivatman) and not God. Please accept my blessings and convey the same to all members of your family.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(131)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
22nd August, 1934.

My dear R—,

I have received the parcel of camphor sent by you.

Restlessness is in the very nature of the mind. Arjuna enquired of Sri Krishna in *Geeta,* how the mind could be steadied. Sri Krishna said in reply—it is very difficult to steady the mind. Only through practice and dispassion it can be steadied. When extraneous thoughts will come to the mind during *japa* and meditation you should at once remove those thoughts and contemplate on Sri Sri Thakur. Thus by daily practice you will have concentration of mind. Always

pray for that. What more to write. Please accept my blessings.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(132)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,

My dear—,

I am glad to receive your letter which has come in time. I am happy that you had a vision of Sri Sri Ma in dream. Pray to Her. If Her grace is vouchsafed to you, She will let you have vision of everything. When you will have vision of the image of Sri Sri Thakur in meditation, you should pray to Him for pure devotion and faith. I am glad to know that you have been doing *japa* regularly with the rosary.

At present I am well and all is well with this Ashrama. Sri Sri Thakur alone knows how long I shall be here.

Please accept my blessings and convey the same to your mother-in-law.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(133)

Sri Ramakrishna Vedanta Samiti,
40, Beadon Street, Calcutta,
12th May, 1935.

My dear P—,

I have received your letter. The answer to the second part of your letter is that the Guru takes responsibility for the welfare of the disciple. If however, the disciple does not maintain unshakable devotion and firm faith towards his Guru and behaves as he likes then the Guru cannot do anything. The disciple cannot achieve spiritual progress if he does not

do spiritual practice and worship according to the direction of the Guru.

It is true that Sri Sri Thakur is in the highest plane, but the seeker will have to rise to that plane. Relentless effort will have to be made for that. Prayer is done if by combining the mind with the mouth one says 'grant me unshakable devotion and firm faith by a vision of my *Ishta* (the object of spiritual practice'.) You should first meditate on Guru and then on *Ishta.* In this way you should do meditation, *japa, puja* and chanting, etc., every day in the morning and in the evening.

Please accept my blessings and convey the same to all.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(134)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
21st May, 1935.

...

My dear—,

I have received your postcard of the 17th instant in due time. I know that all of you have got the capacity to make a speech and to read out written articles. I think what is lacking is self-confidence. You should say what you know without any regard for the opinion of the audience. Public opinion does not matter if you say what is true. I hope you will not refrain from carrying on preaching work with boldness and wholehearted zeal. My blessings to all of you.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

(135)

Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama,
Darjeeling,
27th May, 1935.

...

My dear R—,

I have received your letter after a long time along with incense sticks.

Evil thoughts do not arise if the mind is controlled. Always entertain your thoughts. If evil thoughts arise expel them with the help of discrimination. Evil thoughts come as a result of habit. If opposite habits are cultivated then the habit of evil thoughts will go. Always pray that evil thoughts may not come to the mind. Read good books like the Gita, Kathamrita, etc. My new book "Atmajnan" (Bengali rendering of 'Self-knowledge') has been published from the Samiti. You will be able to understand many things if you read this book.

Evil thoughts gather strength in evil company. For that reason you should give up evil company and cultivate good company. You should take Sattwik (light and nutritious) food. Please accept my blessings and the best wishes of all inmates of the Ashrama.

With best wishes,

Yours,
Abhedananda.

THE HINDU PREACHER*

Many are of opinion that the Hindu religion neither was nor can ever be a propagandistic religion and that every attempt to spread it is antagonistic to its fundamental principles. To these men of such peculiar views we say that religion without preaching is like life without animation. Without the institution of preaching no religion can withstand the immoral influences of degeneration or retard the progress of corruption. From immemorial antiquity down to this nineteenth century of the Christian era the vital powers of the Hindu faith have been preserved by the *Avatarus* or incarnatins of God and by holy sages, whose mission of life was to promulgate from time to time the highest doctrines of purity, spiritual development and the attainment of divine perfection and also to popularise the solutions of intricate religious and philosophical problems found in our sacred scriptures. Strictly speaking, these inspired sages and their chosen disciples were the real preachers of *Sanatana Dharma,* the Eternal Faith. To this kind of propagation and popularisation of its immortal doctrines, the Hindu religion owes its existence ; and it will live through eternity if only its true spirit gets widely diffused. In short, it will, as the best embodiment of truth, become the predominant religion of the world, if Hindu preachers offer the light of their religion to the seeker after Truth among the nations of the world.

The method of preaching, adopted by the Hindus of olden days, was altogether different from what is now adopted by the followers of other faiths. The ancient Hindu preachers always tried to satisfy the religious cravings of the people by teaching them such truths, as could be comprehended by them in those times. As time rolled on, the capacity of man for religious and moral culture became improved, and new changes and reformations were introduced into the method

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* This article was published in the *Brahmavadin* (Madras), on 23rd November, 1895.

of preaching religion so as to supply the new requirements of the people at large.

In very ancient times, religion was preached and propagated in India by *Rishis* and holy sages, who by the example of their pure and highly moral lives, taught the people how to make spiritual progress and attain divine perfection. After the days of the Rishis the caste of the Brahmins became as a whole responsible for the preservation and propagation of the organised *Aryan* faith. The advent of the *Jnana-marga*—the path of knowledge—as an improvement upon the old Karma Yoga—the path of rituals—brought the ascetic *Sannyasins* forward as an order devoted entirely to the work of propagation of the divine Truth of religion. The ancient *Sannyasins* of India are the oldest preachers of religion known to human history, and even today we have their successors in our midst. When all other religions in the world were narrow and exclusive, India had more than one body of ascetic preachers of the sublime Truth and universal religion of Vedanta. Both Buddhist and Jain literature of pre-Christian origin bear witness to the fact.

During the Buddhistic period, Buddhist monks preached charity, morality, purity, and peace throughout the length and breadth of India and Central and Western Asia; and the result was that thousands upon thousands accepted the teaching of Buddha and became converts to this new branch of the old Hindu faith. But after something like a thousand years' away in India Buddhism was driven out of the land of its birth by mainly of the work of the Hindu savants like Kumarila Bhatta and his followers.

Kumarila proclaimed the Truth of the sublime doctrines of the Vedas from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and after fighting hard with the Buddhists he at last succeeded in reviving the authority of Brahminism and in reconverting the Buddhists into the old Hindu faith. Then after Buddhism was driven out of India by the efforts of Kumārila Bhatta and others there arose in the south the mighty genius Sankara, who gave a new stimulus to the spiritual revival of the Hindus. He explained the spirit of the Vedas in the new light of the Vedanta, gave a firm foundation of the Hindu Faith and propounded the doctrine of Advaitism as that which

is taught by the *Upanishads*. The fallacies of the Buddhistic Philosophy were clearly exposed by Sankara, in his Vedantic Vedanta and conquered the then leaders of the various sects that had arisen with the downfall of Buddhism by means of powerful polemical weapons and extraordinary spritual powers.

Sankara seems naturally to have thought that it was necessary to have preachers of Hinduism and that these preachers should be monks or *Sannyasins* who by leading pure, moral and spiritual lives, would be in a position to teach the masses the true spirit of Vedanta, themselves constantly moving from place to place for the purpose. The disciples of Sankara followed their Master, preached the Vedanta and established *Maths* or monasteries in different parts of the land. These monasteries became in time the headquarters of the *Sannyasin* preachers. Even from before the time of Sankara the *Sanyasins* have been the real pillars of the Hindu faith in all its sectarian aspects.

After Sankaracharya, Ramanuja, Madhva, Chaitanya and Nanaka (all inspired preachers and founders of different religious sects in India) arose in various parts of the land, and preached the different aspects of the all-sided Hindu religion. They propagated the *bhakti marga* or the path of love and devotion, and profoundly impressed upon the minds of men the higher doctrine of Divine love, faith and devotion. All of them sympathising even with the lowest classes of the Hindu community roused their religious feelings which lay dorment for centuries and converted them to become *Bhaktas* of the one Supreme God of the Vedanta in one way or other Chaitanya and Nanaka went a little further than others. They allowed even *Yavanas* and Mohammedans to enter into their religious community and become their disciples.

Thus we see that before the birth of Buddhism, Christianity and Mohammedanism, Hinduism was a propagandist religion, the diffusive influence of its universal principles working amongst the Hindus of the different parts of India. After Buddhism arose, Hinduism stretched fort its might into the Hindu fold. When Mahomedans came to arms among the Buddhists and collected them once again

India, no doubt some of the Hindus embraced the faith of Islam. And when time came, the Hindu Vedanta influenced even Mohammedanism and its old converts accepted again the teachings of Hindu preachers. Islam softened and beautified by the Vedanta is the religion of the Sufis.

After such conversions and reconversions Hinduism has been silently working among its followers and gathering for them strength and light. A new religious wave has now come from foreign lands, which is, in all probability, simply a reflected wave recoiling upon the original shore whose 'prophet winds' gave rise to it at the first instance. This new wave is called Christianity and its historic relation to the Vedantism of India is sure to be made out sooner or later. Faint voices are already heard pointing to the Indian origin of Christianity and the true Hindu can have nothing but sympathy for all sorts and conditions of the converts. All religion is in the conversion of the obdurate heart of man and in inclining him to virtue and to devotion to God. But do all converters know this?

Mercenary preachers of any religion can nowhere do any real good. For their mission in life is anyhow to increase the number of converts; with such preachers the religion becomes a commercial article. They are ever in search of new markets for its sale and often much of what is not good for home consumption is sold abroad and very naturally the figures in the account books swell. Is this religious progress? We are living in a curiously mercantile age which has, in a remarkably wonderful way, made not only religion and philosophy but also philanthropy itself a paying profession. Indulging in habits of luxury and endeavouring to satisfy their worldly desires for pleasure and for fame these mercenary diffusers of religion do not care so much for the spiritual development of man as for making numerous converts from other religions. They will not allow religions and religious men to live at peace with one another. If they did so their own occupation would be gone.

Hinduism has in recent years suffered much owing to the want of proper preachers. Though the *Sannyasins* were formerly the real preachers of religion in India, most of them now have become illiterate and luxury-loving in their habits,

and do not feel the practice of renunciation and the teaching and preaching of religion to be their daily duty. Hence it is now necessary that well-educated *Sannyasins,* animated by the sincerest piety and the most austere spirit of humility and self-denial, should rise from the Hindu community to make themselves all in all to the people to set before them examples of perfect righteousness and to devote their lives with zeal to popular instruction and the office of preaching religion. Men of real sanctity and high-minded freedom and gifted with high intellectual powers should now enter upon this path of religious zeal and remove the abuses and the moral corruption that are daily working mischief in our society and in our homes. Spiritual strength comes to all as usual by the door of renunciation, and resignation can alone be the undisturbed home of the serene life of religious bliss. Heroic Hindus ! take up the begging bowl and go from door to door spreading the love of righteousness and peace among mankind.

Moreover, it is now high time for us to send Hindu missionaries like Swami Vivekananda to distant lands for diffusing widely the highest doctrines of the Hindu religion and for bringing man of all creeds under its benign influence.

In Europe and America, there must be earnest and sincere souls waiting to hear the sublime teachings of the Vedanta and accept the doctrines of *karma,* of reincarnation and of immortality of the soul.

A great want of this age is a religious order of the Hindus, which well-equiped with modern learning in science and in philosophy, possessing a knowledge of the world, and acquainted with the spirit of the times will undertake the propagation of the Hindu religion in all countries, and bring into existence the reign of peace and harmony in the midst of warrings sects and religions. The fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of men are both surely independent of the religious garb we men wear from time to time.[2]

A Swami,
(*Swami Abhedananda.*)

[1] Regarding this article, the Swami has written: "My first article I ever wrote long before I had any idea of coming to the West.—Swami, A."

GODDESS DURGA
THE DIVINE ENERGY

It was originally written by Swami Abhedananda in Bengali and was published as an 'Introduction' to the book, "Sri Durga" by Swami Prajnanananda. It is translated into English by Sri Kunja Bihari Kundu, Lecturer in Economics (Com.), Calcutta University.

GODDESS DURGA
THE DIVINE ENERGY

In India, the worship which surpasses all others in excellence, is of Goddess Durga among the Hindus. Looked upon with profound regard by them, it may be called their national festival. In different parts of India, Goddess Durga, the Mother of the universe is adored in different names, such as, Amba and Ambika in Kashmere and Deccan, Hingala and Rudrani in Gujrat, Kalyani in Kanyakubja Uma in Mithila, and Kanyakumari in Kumarika. Thus the autumnal Durga-worship or the divine ritual, called the *Navaratra* (the Nine Nights' Worship) is held everywhere in India, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin and from Dwaraka and Hinglaj of Beluchistan to Puri, the holy land of Sri Jagannath. Also the Buddhists of Nepal, Bhutan, Sikkim, and Tibet have their nine nights' ritual. And what is more, the Goddess is being venerated and worshipped in places outside India, such as, China, Japan, Kambuja, Champa, and Java, where Hinduism and Buddhism had been preached.

Forty years after Buddhism had spread to Japan, the reign of Queen Sinko (493-628) witnessed the worship of the icon of a Goddess in the form of Avalokitesvara Kuam-yin (which means Listen-Voice, and is a Chinese translation of Avalokitesvara) belonging to the Mahayana Buddhism of China. In Japanese jargon, the deity is called Chanasthi, resembling the Sanskrit term, Chandi. Her another name is 'Kotisree' or 'Goddess Chanasthi, Mother of seven crores of Buddhists'. She is no other than Goddess Durga of the Hindus.

The city of Canton in China has a Buddhist temple in which is to be found an image of the goddess with one hundred hands. She is, too, another manifestation of Goddess Durga.

There is, in the Buddhist scripture of Mahayana, a reference to Goddess Vajratara,—still another form of Goddess Durga, who is, even today, worshipped in countries like Tibet, China, and Japan. It is true that the Rig Veda does not contain any reference to Goddess Durga, but it contains the hymn called *Devi-Sukta,* which is recited at the time of Durga-worship. The Mother of the universe, the primordial

Energy (*Adya-sakti*), described in the *Devi-sukta,* is given the form of appearance of fire. The vedic age was marked by the wide prevalence of sacrificial performances called *yajnas,* to the holy fire for which, all gods and goddesses would be invoked; and the sacrificial fire would be called by the name of the deity to whom oblations were offered. Even now no worship is complete, if it is not accompanied by the sacrificial, performance, called *homa.* So it can be said that the Vedic age is conspicious by the absence of any image of Goddess Durga, the Divine Energy. It was then the flame of the all-consuming fire that reflected her form. Later when images came into being, it was the colour of fire which became the yellow complexion of the goddess, and some are of the opinion that in the section called the *Khila* of the Rig Veda, Durga has been described as the 'Goddess of Night' (Ratridevi). Again she is mentioned as the Havya-bahini Agni, (or the Fire-god who carries the worshipper's professed oblations of melted butter to the particular deity in the section called the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* of the Yajur Veda. A description of her seven tongues is met with in the *Mundaka Upanishad* belonging to the Atharva Veda (I. 24 thus

काली कराली मनोजबा च सुलोहिता याच सुधुम्रवर्णा ।
स्फुलिङ्गिनी विश्वरुची च देबी लेलायमाना इति सप्तजिह्वाः ॥

This means Kali (Lit., black, Karali (terrific), Manojava (swift as thought), Sulohita (very red), Sudhumravarma (of the colour of bright smoke), Sphulingini (scintillating), and the luminous Visvaruchi (all-gleaming, all-formed)—these seven, flickering about, form the seven tongues of the fire, with which the gods accept the oblation of butter offered into it. This verse of the Upanishad make it clear that the Vedic period the tongues of the fire (*agni-shikha*) were called by the names Kali, Karali, etc.

It is stated in the scriptures that Daksha-Prajapati performed many sacrifices Of these, one sacrifice called Parvati Daksha, has been referred to in the section *Satapatha Brahmana* belonging to the Yajur Veda. The altar for that sacrifice was accordingly named 'Daksha-tanaya', which, in Rig Veda, is mentioned as 'Daksha-tana'. Thus,

धिया चक्रे बरेण्यो भूतानां गर्भमादधे ।
दक्षस्य पितरं तना ।१

This means the sacrificial altar called Dakshatanaya enshrines that fire which, excellent and pre-eminent, resides in all beings and extends fatherly protection to all.

The *Satapatha Brahmana,* again, mentions eight winds of fire, as Rudra, Sharva, Pashupati, Ugra, Asani, Bhava, Mahadeva, and Ishana. It may be inferred that in course of time the idea of engraving the image of *Siva-linga* (the phallus of Siva) on the circlet of stone called *Gouripatta* (symbolising the female creative organ), has been derived from the luminous fire called Mahadeva on the sacrificial altar, Daksha-tanaya.

In the *Puranas,* this Vedic sacrificial altar, 'Daksha-tanaya'. is delineated as Sati, the consort of the fire-like Mahadeva. Four other deities had places around this Vedas, Sarasvati, Goddess of learning, on the other side stayed Goddess Lakshmi, the giver of wealth and riches; still another side was hallowed by the presence of god Kartikeya, the protector of sacrifices, and opposite to him was the four-armed Ganapti, the lord of all-human beings. The first hand of Ganapati represents the *Hota,* the second, the *Rtvik,* the third, the *Purohit,* and the fourth, the *Yajamana.*

In the Rig Veda the fire-like Goddess Durga is called the destroyer of enemies, and killer of demons or *Asuras.* Thus,

बिपजसा पृथना शोशुचानो बाधस्व द्विषो राक्षसो अमी बाः ।
सुशर्मनो बृहतः शर्मानि स्यामग्नरहं सुहबस्य प्रणीतौ ॥२

The names of Durga,[3] Mahadeva, Kartikeya, Ganesh, and Nandi are met within the *Taittariya Aranyaka* of the Yajur Veda, in which Durga is also addressed as Uma and Ambika, Mahadeva or Rudra is also called these Umapati (the lord

[1] Rig Veda 3/9.
[2] Rig Veda 3/15/1.
[3]

तामग्निबर्णां तपसा ज्वलन्तीं बैराचनीं कर्मफलेषु जुष्वाम् ।
दुर्गां देवीं शरणमहं प्रपद्ये सुतरसि तरसे नमः ॥

of Uma) and Ambikapati (the lord of Ambika). In the *Talavakara Upanishad,* belonging to the Sama Veda, is found the name of Uma Haimavati:

"स (इन्द्रः) तस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रियमाजगाम बहुशोफमनां ऊमां
हैमवतीं तां होवाच किमेतद् यक्षमिति ।"[४]

This means: Then in that very region of the sky he (Indra) beheld a woman, wonderously fair. She was Uma, the daughter of the Himalayas. He approached Her and said: "Who is this adorable Spirit?"

According to the scripture, called the *Brihaddevata,* Durga Aditi, Vak, Sarasvati and others are but the different names of the same Goddess, Vak, the goddess of speech, assumed the form of a lion at the request of the gods; it is this reason, perhaps, why the lion has been the carrier of Goddess Durga.

Some *Rishi* (a seer of Truth to whom the wisdom of the Vedas was revealed) of the Rig Veda once beheld Haimavati Uma on the sky-kissing, in front of her resplendently fair form, aglow like molten gold, he heard these utterances of Durga, the Goddess of Speech incarnate,

अहं रुद्रेभिर्बसुभिश्चरामाहमादित्यै रुत बिश्वदेबैः ।
अहं मित्र बरुणोणोभा बिभर्माहमिन्द्राग्नी अहमश्बिनोभा ॥

I wander in the forms of the Rudras, the Vasus, the Adityas and the Lord of the Universe. I bear Mitra, Varuna, Indra, Agni and the two Aswinis:

अहं सोम माहनसँ बिभर्मह्यं त्बष्टारसुत पूषणँ भगम् ।
अहं दधामि द्रबिणँ हबिष्मते सुप्राव्ये यजमानाय सुन्बते ॥

I hold the Soma, the Yaga, the Tvasta, the Pusha, and the Bhogs, and also hold them who performed the Soma-sacrifice, for conferring upon them the fruits or results of the Yagas:

अहं राष्ट्री सँगमनी बसूनां चिकितूषी प्रथम यज्ञियानाम् ।
तां मा देव्या ब्यदधुः पुरुत्रा भूरि स्थात्रां भूर्यावेशयन्तीम् ॥

I am the queen of the entire universe and giver of wealth. I am the knowledge of Brahman incarnate and the foremost

[2] Rig Veda 3/15/1.

among the deities worthy of being invoked to sacrifice. I exist in different forms and abide in the soul of all being. I am adored by the *Yajmans* (worshippers) of many lands:

मया सो अनुमत्ति यो बिपश्यतिः यः प्राणिति य ईं शृणोत्युक्तम् ।
जमन्तबो मं त उप-क्षियन्ति श्रुधि श्रुत श्रद्विबं ते बदामि ॥

My power it is that enables all animals to perform the functions of their sense-organs—taking food and drink, seeing, hearing and breathing. I am thus immanent in all beings. Those who do not know me and my pervasive presence within everything become low and feeble. O friend, listen with attention, I offer you the essence of the Brahman which can be attained with faith and care.

अहमेब स्वयमिदं बदामि जुष्टं देबेभिरुत मानुषेभिः ।
यं कम्मये तं तमुग्रं कृणोमि तं ब्रम्भ्राणम् तमृषिं तं सुमेधाम् ॥

I am myself the quintessence of the Brahman, and I am served by the gods like Indra and others and by the human beings. I make him the greatest of all, whom I wish to protect, and I make him supreme like Brahma, saintly and wise:

अहं रुद्राय धणुरातनोमि ब्रह्माविषे शरबे हन्व बा उ ।
अहं जनाय समदं कृणोम्यहं द्यावापृथिबी आबिबेश ।

It was I who, in the battle for the conquest of Tripura, bent the bow for Rudra and annihilated the *Asuras* of Tripura, the evil-doing haters of the Brahman. For man's welfare I fight against enemies. It is I who pervade heaven and earth:

अहं सुबे पितरमस्य मूर्धन मम योनिरप्_स्वन्तः ससुद्रे ।
ततो बि तिष्ठे भुबशानु बिश्वोतामुन्द्यां बर्ष्मणोप स्पृशामि ॥

I have given birth to the great heaven placed father-like above the world-system. Since I emanate from the ocean of the Paramatman. I am immanent in all created beings of the universe. It is the power of my cosmic illusion which has brought forth and pervaded all things of the heaven and the three worlds.

Like the wind that blows of its own accord, I bring this world-system into being at my own sweet will, and then stay unconcerned beyond the space (*akasha*). I am never

at anybody's back and call, Manifest on the entire world is my greatness.

From the Vedic age onwards, Hinduism alone has sought to popularise the worship of this Mother of the universe. In no other religious scripture of the world is to be found any evidence of discovering the mother in God. This Goddess Mahamaya, the Creator of the universe, is adored even today in the household of every Hindu devotee and in all holy sites of India and other countries. Though essentially one, yet in different connections, and varied forms, such as Durga, Kali, Jagadhatri, Lakshmi, Sarasvati, etc., she is fulfilling the desires of all devotees.

The Vedic era was marred by the prevalence of Sakti-worship among the Aryan *Rishis* of India. The 125th hymn belonging to the tenth *mandala* of the Rig Veda constitutes *Devi-sukta*. But in eight of its verses is not to be found any name of the goddess while the 127th verse is well-known by the name, *Ratri-sukta*, since it deals with the worship of the Goddess of Night. In the *Brihaddevata*, which expatiates upon the Vedic deities, the Goddess of Night has been called by the names of Vak, Sarasvati, Aditi and Durga. Later this Goddess of Night has become famous by the name of Kali who is no other than Bhadrakali of the *Sankhyana Grihyasutra*. She is also Goddess Bhavani and sacrificial offerings are prescribed for her by the *Hiranyakashi Grihya-sutra*. One finds the name of Goddess Ambika in the *Vajra-neyi Samhita* of the Sukla (White) Yajur Veda; but there she is treated as the sister of Rudra. The same Goddess Ambika, again, is regarded as the spouse of Rudra in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* of the Krishna (Black) Yajur Veda. There the names of Durga, Vairochini (daughter of the Sun God), and Katya-yani are also met with. Thus,

तामग्निवर्णां तपसा ज्वलन्तीं वैरोचनीं कर्मफलेषु जुष्वाम् ।
दुर्गां देवीं शरणमहं प्रपद्ये सुतरसि तरसे नमः ॥५

In the *Yajnika Upanishad* belonging to that *Taittariya Aranyaka* there is a sacred hymn in praise of Durga, which says: कात्यायनाय विद्महे, कन्याकुमारी धीमही, तन्नो दुर्गिः प्राचोदयात्[6]।

[6] *Taittiriya Aranyaka.*

Thus the hymn makes us acquainted with two other names of Durga—*'katyayani'* and *'kanyakumari'*.

In the *Ramayana*, one does not find any reference to Goddess Durga. But, in different places of the *Mahabharata*, the name of Durga and hymns and eulogies in her honour are to be met with. There is, in the sixth chapter of the *Virata-parva*, a hymn composed by Arjuna in praise of Durga. In the *bhisma-parva*, again, we find Sri Krishna advising Arjuna to make an obeisence to Durga before the commencement of the battle and pray for success. The Durga of the *Mahabharata* was a four-armed and four-faced virgin of dark complexion. Referred to as the slayer of the *Asuras* (demons), she was a goddess dwelling in the Vindhya mountains delighting in wine, flesh and animal sacrifices. In the same *virata-parva*, again, a hymn in praise of Durga describes her as a virgin of the family of Nanda-Gopa, not yet the wife of Siva.

Durga was then the goddess of the non-Aryan Sabaras (who put on the leaves of turmeric plants). Perhaps for that reason Durga is given the name of Parna-shabari implying that she remained the goddess of the Sabaras and wore the leaves used by these people. Durga was also the family deity of the *Gopas* (or Ahiras or milkman) of the Vindhya mountains.

The Epic *Harivamsha* states: शबरैः बर्बरैश्चैव पुलिन्दैश्च सुपुजिता। That is, Durga was worshipped by such aboriginal tribes as Sabaras, Varvaras, and Pulindas. She is also spoken of as a goddess, delighting in wine and flesh. Perhaps for that reason the autumnal chandi worship is called the Sabarotsava—a festival of the Sabaras. In the *Kalikapurana*, the Sabarotsava is spoken of as a ceremony to be held compulsorily at the time of the immersion of the goddess. It was then the custom to invest the ceremony with obscene dances and tribal songs. The same custom even now prevails among the dhulis (persons playing on drums) at the time of consigning the image into the river.

Durga and Chandi were also the deities of the tribe called the Kiratas. Hence Chandi is named 'Karati' or 'Kiratini'. In the *Padma-purana* as well as in the *Skanda-purana* it is described that at the request of Brahma the Goddess of

Night entered the womb of Menaka, the queen of Himalaya, the shrouding complexion of Uma made her dark in colour. This proves clearly that it is the Vedic Goddess of Night who is being worshipped as the Parvati of the *Puranas*. Uma was born on the bright fourth day of the lunar fortnight of the month of Jaistha; hence the Vrata called *Uma-chaturthi* is observed on that day.

Some *Puranas* state that Uma was at first dark in colour. After her marriage with Siva, she was once repeatedly called 'Kali' (black) by her husband in front of the beautiful Apsaras the nymphs of Heaven (like Urvasi and others. Uma felt insulted at this; with a view to getting rid of her black complexion through the grace of Brahma, sloughed her dark form and became fair in complexion. This is why Uma's one name is Aushi.[8] The Vedic Goddess of Night is able-bodied; it is she who, in the name of Kali is worshiped at night even today.

The *Puranas* describe why Durga has got another name, 'katyayani'. A great Rishi, Katyayana by name, practised severe penance, on the Himalayas. One day to this hermitage came Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswara. There, in a watchful mood, with a view to slaying Mahishasura, they drew forth from their beings energies which coalesced to form the deities. Since she was first worshipped by the great a goddess, who was no other than Durga, the essence of all Rishi, Katyayana, she came to be called 'Katyayani' (or the goddess adored and worshipped by Katyayana). This Goddess Durga came into being on the fourteenth of the dark fortnight in Asvina; she was worshipped by Katyayana on the seventh, eighth and nineth days of the bright fortnight in the same month, and on the tenth she killed Mahishasura. Since Durga sprang from the energies of Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara, she personified all their brilliance and power. Another name of Durga is 'Narayani' meaning thereby that she is Mahamaya Adyasakti (the great cosmic illusion, the source of the primordial Energy) in the form of a Yogic trance, and hence a part of Narayana sleeping on the huge,

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[7] The *Padma-purana*, sristhikhanda, chapter 43.

[8] The *Kalika-purana*, chapters 44-45.

many-headed snake, the Seshanaga, on the primeval waters (*karana-shalila*). In the seventh chapter of the Ganesh Khanda belonging to the *Brahma-kaivarta-purana*, Narayana Himself says:

सृष्टिकर्त्री च प्रकृतिः सर्वेषां जननी परा ।
मम तुल्या च मन्मया तेन नारायणी स्मृता ॥

As the primordial Energy personified, Goddess Durga created all worldly things. The very power of Hers which has created animals, has also grown and sustained vegetables and plants. Hence her name has been 'Sakambhari' (the 'herb-bearing' or the 'herb-nourishing').

On the first day of Durga worship it is the custom to pay regard to an image of a goddess made of the leaves of nine plants and supposed to represent Durga. The said image is called *Nava-patrika* (commonly called *Kala-bau*), or the Goddess Durga in her nine forms. This *Nava-patrika* consists of varied types of fruits, roots, corns and flowers. These are:

रम्भा कच्ची हरिद्रा च जयन्ती बिल्व-दाड़िमौ ।
अशोक-मानकश्चैव धान्यञ्च नवपत्रिका ॥

That is, the plants such as the plantain, the tuber, the turmeric, the nutmeg, the branches of *Bel* tree and *Ashoka* tree, the arun and the paddy plants and a white *Aparajita* creeper—all these, when bound together, give rise to the image of *Nava-patrika* (रम्भा, कचु, हरिद्रा, जवन्ती, बिल्व, दाड़िम, अशोक मातकचु ओ धान्य-वृक्ष) which there, may be called a symbol of agricultural wealth. On the bright fifth waxing in Magha, Goddess Sarasvati is invoked by every Hindu. This practice is in vogue for a long time, though exactly when it first started has not yet been ascertained. Some *Puranas* hold that it was Sri Krishna who introduced this ceremony and prescribed this day for beginning one's learning thus: माघस्य शुक्ला पञ्चम्यां बिध्यारम्भ दिनेपि' etc. This sacred bright fifth day is called *Sri-Panchami*,—the day of Sri or Goddess Lakshmi. An enquiry as to why the day has been so called informs us that Lakshmi was married to Skanda on that date. Later in course of time the day became fixed for Goddess Sarasvati, instead of Goddess Lakshmi.

Who this Goddess Sarasvati is, and how old she is can be ascertained from the Vedas which tell us that she is a Vedic deity. In the Rig Veda, female deities are quite few in number. Usa was the foremost among these Vedic female deties; next to her was Goddess Sarasvati. The early meaning of the word 'Saras' was 'brightness', so that 'Sarasvati' implied 'Abounding in brightness'. This wondrously lustrous deity, incorporeal and personifying learning and wisdom, had at first, neither a female nor a male appearance. The Vedas give Sarasvati various names such as Goddess Vak, Bharati, etc., and call her Sarasvati (सरस्वत्) implying that she is the daughter and also wife of Surya, the Sun-god. Again, on the same ground, the *Puranas* describe her as the daughter of Brahma and give her the names Gayatri, Savitri, and Satarupa. The *Matsya-purana* says that she was the only daughter of the ten children begotten of the mould of Brahma in the beginning of creation. But she was so faultlessly beautiful that her exquisite charm and loveliness intoxicated Brahma who grew heads on his four sides and above so as to gaze at her and repeatedly exclaimed, 'Ah ! The beauty' Ah. the beauty.' He then made her his own wife and thus could not save himself from the sin of having sexual relation with his own daughter. The carrier of Brahma was the swan which, therefore, became the carrier of his wife, Sarasvati, too. In the *Markandeya-purana* the consort of Brahma is described as being borne by a swan, Thus: 'हंसयुक्त-बिमानाग्र साक्षसूत्र-कमण्डलुः' * *। But in the Deccan they picture Sarasvati riding on the peacock, and not on the swan.

Regarding the origin of Sarasvati, the *Brahmavaivarta-purana* says that she sprang from the mouth of Sri Krishna who was Paramatman personified, and that, at his command, she became the spouse of Vishnu. But Vishnu had two other wives, Lakshmi and Ganga; the latter, moved by a fit of rage, cursed Sarasvati that she would be turned into a river. Afterwards at the behest of Vishnu one part of Sarasvati became Brahma's wife and her other part became the River Sarasvati.

In many *Suktas* of the Rig Veda, there are hymns in honour of Sarasvati and Sarasvat. The word *Sarasvati* stands for 'a river with abundant current of water'. White in colour, this river is the giver of food, the goddess personified. It is stated

in the Rig Veda, उभे यत्रे महिना शुभ्रे अन्धसी अधिक्षियंति पुरबः स नो बोधाबित्री"।९ This means: 'Oh White-complexioned Goddess Sarasvati ! It is through your divine grace that human beings get different kinds of food. So give us food, protection and knowledge.' In the Vedic era Sarasvati was not simply a river carrying water, but was also the river of food and the bestower of wealth, resulting from sacrificial rites. Regarding this, the Rig Veda says: 'सरस्वती बाजोभिःराजनीबती धिवाबसुः'१० ;"चोदयित्री सुनृतानां चेतंती सुमतीनाम्"११ i.e. she (Goddess Sarasvati) is the producer of truthful statements and the preceptress of the intelligent people. In addition, the Vedas also say 'धियो बिश्बा बिराजति' १५ Sarasvati was the inspirer of all kinds of knowledge. Undoubtedly therefore, she was the goddess of learning even though she was a river.

In the Vedic time, Sarasvati was a big river on whose banks were performed all the holiest sacrifices by the Aryan Rishis. There chanting the sacred verses of the Vedas they would invoke and worship various deities. While the Aryans lived on the banks of this river, there occurred the gradual efflorecence of their religion, knowledge, ethics, and arts. It was through the grace of this river that their agriculture and commerce expanded and their social life got organised. In the Vedic age, therefore, Sarasvati, though a river, was regarded as the presiding goddess of all branches to knolwedge, such as fine arts, mechanics and the art of music and dancing. Later when the image of Goddess Sarasvati was conceived, the symbols of the river, the water, the lotus, and the swan—were retained, while, at the same time, in her hands were placed a book, a pen, and a *Veena*, and the complexion of her body was made gleaming white, suggestive of pure illuminating knowledge of wisdom. Being thus identified with the Goddess of Speech personifying the *Sabda-brahman* (the

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[9] Rig Veda 7/96/2.
[10] Rig Veda 1/3/10.
[11] Rig Veda 1/3/11.
[12] Rig Veda 1/3/12.

Logos, or the Word of God-incarnate), she began to be adored by men. Two things emanate from the *Sabda-brahman*—one, suggestive of sound, the other suggestive of letter. That is why, in the hands of Sarasvati are placed a *Veena*, symbolising the first, and a book symbolising the second (*shabda* and *matrika-varna*).

In the Greek mythology, Minerva (identified with Pallas Athene), the daughter of Zeus, the Creator of the universe, is the deity presiding over all fields of knowledge and arts. She is associated with the *Veena Vamshi*, and other musical instruments, and with songs, poems and different branches of fine arts. In the same manner Goddess Sarasvati adored by the Aryans of the Vedic age, is being worshipped by the Hindus as the queen of all these musical accomplishments and arts. The Vedic time witnessed no image of Sarasvati. In the Buddhist time, that is, nearly five hundred years before Christ, various sorts of images of the Hindu gods and goddesses were conceived and moulded along with the different Mounds or *Stupas* and statues of Buddha. It is said that the Buddhists, after making the images of such Hindu gods Indra, Brahma and the like, would place these under the feet of Buddha so as to prove the superiority of Gautama Buddha, to these gods. In the scheme of Mahayana Buddhism, Indra in the name of 'Vajrapani', Vishnu in the name of 'Avalokitesvara,' and Brahma in the name of 'Bodhisatva Manjusree' or 'Manju-ghosha) continued to be venerated and worshipped. But the consort of the said Manjusree remained as before the Hindu deity, Sarasvati playing on a *Veena*, and personifying knowledge or wisdom. In some places the Buddhistic image of Sarasvati, the goddess of learning, is found holding a *Veena* and riding on a lion. In certain other places she is pictured as sitting on a lotus with her right foot on another full-blown lotus, and with a lion lying below her.

The present-day Hindus commonly believe that Sarasvati and Lakshmi are the daughters of Siva. This belief is approved of by the *Kurma, Naradiya* and *Dharma Puranas.* In the *Devi-purana,* Sarasvati is again described as the daughter of Siva and Durga. The same idea has been subscribed to by the *Kularnava-tantra,* the *Brihannila-tantra* and the *Sarada-tilaka-tantra.* Further, in the *Markandeya-purana,* Sarasvati

has been called 'Vishnu-jihva' (the tongue of Vishnu). It is on the idea of the *Devi-purana* and Tantras that Sarasvati, as the daughter of Siva and Durga, together with the image of the latter, is being worshipped in Bengal. In Tantra, Sarasvati or the Goddess of Speech has been given a new lunar phase on her forehead, and has been depicted as being white in colour and sitting on a white lotus. In some places she has been referred to as having three eyes and a smiling countenance, while in some other places she is described as being with four arms which hold a book, a rosary, *vakhya-mudra,* and a jar full of nectar. In some places again the goddess is given in her hands a string of beads, a book, a *Veena* and a lotus, and is bobrne by a swan. In some of the Tantras, Sarasvati is regarded as *matrika* composed of in fifty different letters (*svara* and *vyanjana varnas,* etc.). In some places, again, she has been called 'Parijata Sarasvati'. Thus, according to the Hindu scriptures, Goddess Sarasvati, from the Rig-vedic period onwards, is being worshipped in different forms and manner in India.

Goddess Sarasvati is decorated by all things white and colourless, the whiteness symbolising the light of knowledge, pure and serene. All oblations offered to her are also suggestive of the gleaming white. These are white flowers, white sandal paste, white ornaments, curd thickened milk, butter, parched corn, white paddy, white molasses, white cakes and the like. Even today the Hindus offer all these as oblations to Goddess Sarasvati. The hymn in honour of the goddess runs like this:

श्वेतपद्मासना देवी श्वेतपुष्पोपशोभिता ।
श्वेताम्बरधरा श्वेतगन्धानुलेपना ॥
श्वेताक्षी शुभ्रहस्ता च श्वेतचन्दनचर्चिता ।
श्वेतवीणाधरा शुभ्रा श्वेतालङ्कारभूषिता ॥

The seat of Goddess Sarasvati is a white lotus and her carrier a white swan. She is dressed in white and adorned with white ornaments. Her glowing white body is smeared with white sandal paste. Following is the hymn one recites while, with the hands joined together, one offers flowers to the lotus-like feet of Goddess Sarasvati, personifying the divine

knowledge of the Brahman. Now, everything white suggests the idea of nescienceless transcendental knowledge which know no categories or adjuncts of time, space, and causation. But yet Sarasvati has been described as Goddess of Learning and eternal wisdom. Besides she has been called as Bhadrakali, the Tantric Goddess;

ओं बेदा शास्त्राणि सर्बाणि नृत्यगीतादिकञ्च यत्।
न बिहीनं तृया देबि तथा मे सस्तु सिद्धयः॥
सरस्वत्यै नमो नित्यं भद्रकाल्यै नमो नमः।
बेद-बेदाङ्ग-बेदान्त विद्यानेभ्य एब च॥

The god Kartikeya is invoked on the last day of the month of Kartik in Bengal. In the Deccan too, the worship of Kartikeya is specially popular. In the province of Madras, there are many devotees of such gods as Siva, Vishnu, and others, those who worship Kartikeya are also large in number. This is why one finds in Madras so many temples of Kartikeya together with those of Vishnu and Siva. The South Indians invoke Kartikeya everyday in the names of 'Kumar-Swami' and 'Subrahmanyadeva'; and with great eclat they bring out procession with the image of the deity on the date of Kartikeya worship every year. In Madras, Kartikeya is specially recognised in the names of Subrahmanya which, according to the people of Madras, is just another name of the deity. But the fact is that Kartikeya and Subrahmanya are not the deity, since the hymns with which they are invoked give different description of their forms and complexion. While Kartikeya is depicted as being radiant like molten gold, Subrahmanya is pictured as being bright, red like vermilion. The form of Kartikeya riding on a peacock was conceived of in ancient times at the sight of the rising sun at dawn. With the sunrise, darkness is dispelled. That darkness represents the Tarakasura of the *Puranas*. The colour of the early sun resembles molten gold. The colour of Kartikeya has therefore been golden. The rays of the early sun are dispersed everywhere. The expanded tail-feathers of the peacock carrying Kartikeya is suggestive of those scattered rays of the sun.

In the *Puranas*, different names of Kartikeya are termed. One famous name of his is 'Kumara,' who is the unmarried

war-god of the Hindus. It is commonly believed that, after being expelled from the kingdom of heaven, Indra and other gods prayed to Siva for destroying their enemy, Tarakasura, that Siva then married Uma (or Gauri), and that Kartikeya was next born as the son of Siva and Uma. The great poet Kalidasa in his epic *Kumara-sambhava,* has given a vivid description of the burning of Madana (the god of love) and the marriage of Siva. It is round this mythological idea that Kalidasa, has woven the attractive story of the birth of Kumara-Kartikeya. But no such Vedic god as 'Kumara-Kartikeya' existed.

In the Rig Veda, one does not encounter the name of 'Kumara' or 'Kartikeya' among the gods like Indra, Varuna and others. The *Satapatha-Brahmana* ascribes to Agni, the fire-god, many names, of which Kumara is one. Thus the different names of Agni are Siva, Sarva, Kumara, etc. At first the names, Agni, Siva, and Kumara referred to the same god. In course of time, however, Agni came to be recognised as Kumara, the son of Siva.

Another name of Kumara Kartikeya was 'Skanda', who, though not a Vedic god, yet is being worshipped from very early times. The Buddhist book, *Lalitavistara* says that Buddha immediately after his birth, was shown the image of the god Skanda in the room where he was born. In Ratanjali's work dealing with the *'sutras'* of Panini, it has been said that at that time (the second century before Christ) the images of the god Skanda used to be made and sold.

An episode on the birth of Skanda is to be found in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata.* In the *vana-parva* of the *Mahabharata* we learn that Svaha, with a view to invoking Agni, assumed the forms of the seven wives, excepting Arundhati, of the seven stars identified with the seven ancient saints. This made Agni emit his energy of lustre out of which, Skanda emerged. This is why Skanda is regarded as the son of Agni or the son of Rudra. Since the seven stars are also referred to as Kartikeya, Skanda's other name has become Kartikeya. The wives of those seven stars reared up Skanda very privately. This is why his other name is 'Guha'.

Another epithet of Kumara Kartikeya or Skanda is Shadanana or six-faced god. The reason is that he had six heads,

one of which was the head of a goat. In the *Taittariya-aranya,* a theme is a hymn in hour of these six faces:

'तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महासेनाय धीमही। तन्नोषन्मुखः प्रचोदयात्' ।१३

In the story of Skanda as given in the *vana-parva* of the *Mahabharata,* it has been said that Skanda was at first a god of the masses ,'causing troubles'. In the *Skanda-purana* again, Kumarnath has been described as the 'god of thieves and robbers'. Also in many epic poems such as *Dasakumar-charita, Mrichhakatika,* etc., Skanda has been called the 'god of thieves'.

At first the carrier of Kartikeya was a cock; later the peacock became his carrier. The *Mahabharata* says: 'कुक्कुटा-श्चाग्निना दत्तस्तस्य केतुरलङ्कृत ।'१४ [14]. It has been stated by the *Matsya-Purana* that Visvakarma made the present of a cock to Kumara: 'ददौ-क्रीड़नकं त्वष्टा कुक्कुटं कामरूपिनम्'। In other places, the word *Kukkutam-Kamarupian* are significant. Elsewhere we find the description of the peacock as the carrier of Kumara. In Chapter 71, of the *Nagarkhanda,* belonging to the *Skanda-purana* it has been said that Siva presented Kartikeya with a peacock which then became his carrier.

In some epics, Kartikeya has been referred to as an eternal celibrate, since he never married. The *Markandeya-purana* states that Kartikeya and Ganesha expressed their desire for marriage to Siva. At this Siva said that of the two, he who would early return after visiting all holy places would be allowed to marry first. Hearing this Kartikeya, riding on his peacock, went out to see all holy places, while Ganesha, riding on a mouse, his carrier moved round his parents seven times and said, 'since the parents are all holy sites personified, I have finished visiting them all. So allow me to marry.' Thus in the context of marriage Kartikeya was defeated by Ganesh who, therefore, married. The *Skanda-purana* says that since Kartikeya attained the essence of knowledge, so he did not get married. In the Mahabharata, on the other hand Devasena, the daughter of Prajapati, has been described as the spouse of Kartikeya. Elsewhere the Goddess Shasthi also

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[13] The *Taittariya Aranyka,* 10/1/6.

[14] The *Mahabharata* vanaparva Ch. 228.

is regarded as his wife. Now, from different references we are confounded about Kartikeya's marriage. Generally it is said that he was unmarried all through his life, and also he is known as Kumara.

It is said that on the sixth day after Kartikeya was born, he killed Tarakasura. For this he came to be called *Deva-senapati,* or the commander-in-chief of the gods. According to late Nagendra Nath Basu, the great oriental scholar, the worship of Skanda or Kartikeya was the oldest religious ceremony in Bengal. After the fourth century A.D., the Gupta Emperors such as Skandagupta, Kumaragupta and others used to worship Kartikeya. In the seventh century A.D., the Chalukya Kings of the Deccan introduced Skanda-worship with avid interest. But, in Bengal, Durga-worship was introduced for the first time in 1580, during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar; since then the image of Kartikeya also is being worshipped with great regard by the people of Bengal.

During the reign of the Mughal Emperor Akbar, Udaya-narayana, who was the father of Kallukbhatta, the commentator on the *Manusamhita,* desired to perform a great sacrifice, and for this he sought the counsel of the great scholar, Ramesh Sastri, the Royal priest of Tahirpur in the district of Rajshahi. According to Ramesh Sastri, the Hindu scriptures mentions four great sacrificial rituals which are Visvajit, Rajsuya, Asvamedh, and Gomedh. But since in the Kaliyuga (implying the era of sin and degeneration), it is impossible to make necessary arrangements for these sacrifices, Ramesh Shastri advised Udayanarayana to perform Durga-worship after Kallukbhatta's son. King Kansanarayana performed the festival of Durga-worship by spending nearly nine lacs of rupees. The procedural rules of Durga-worship were also laid down by Ramesh Sastri. In the sixteenth century, A.D., Raghunandan who was well-versed in traditional law, wrote on the subject of Durga-worship in his book, *Hithitatva* in which he prescribed the rites and customs of Devi-worship When the leader of the Vargees, Raghuji Bhonsle of Maharastra (King of Berar) came to Bengal to collect *Chauth,* he performed in Katwa, near Navadvipa, Durga-worship according to the customs obtaining in Bengal.

Now, in addition to what has been said about Kartikeya,

various other anecdotes associating his name are met with in the different *Puranas,* but in view of their multiplicity these are not being referred to in the present context. Like Kartikeya, Ganesha, is also associated with many anecdotes found in the *Puranas.* But he hardly finds mention in the Rig Veda, though the word 'Ganapati' occurs in the first hymn of the 3rd *sukta* in the second *mandala* of that book. Thus: 'गणानां त्वा गणपतिं हवामहे कविं कवीनामुपश्रवन्तम्।' We find here Ganapati (the lord of the masses) implies another name of Brihaspati, the wisest of the wise, is rightly so called, since he remained surrounded by the singing masses. Again in the ninth verse of the 110th *Sukta* in the 10th *mandala* of the Rig Veda, the god Indra has been given the name, 'Ganapati'. In the description of these *gana-devas,* we find that some deity had a bull's head, someone else has the head of another animal, while some others were headless. Later, it appears, the deity with the head of an elephant has been called 'Ganapati' or 'Ganesha'. He first finds mention in the *Ganesh-Gayatri* of the *Taittariya Arayana.* Thus 'तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे वक्रतुण्डाय धीमहि, तन्नोदन्ति, प्रचोदयात्'। In the *Atharvasir Upanishad,* Rudra has been identified with many ghostly apparitions, Vinayaka being one of them. The words, 'Vinayaka' and 'Ganesh' imply the same thing. Perhaps for that reason Rudra has been given these two epithets. In course of time the son of Rudra or Mahadeva came to be recognised as Ganapati or Vinayaka. Ganesha was at first deity causing troubles; hence he is referred to as the 'giver of troubles'. The Hindus invoke him first of all with the belief that thereby all difficulties can be tided over. A wild elephant or the mice living in fields are great enemies of farmers, since they do much harm to corns; it is because of this, perhaps, that Ganesha is associated with them.

NOTES ON SYMBOLS

SYMBOLS

Everything we see, feel, know, or do, is an expression or symbol of the Divinity. Whenever we look upon the form of either man or woman or child, the form itself becomes a symbol of that which is most divine. When we open our eyes to the light, that very light is the expression or symbol of intelligence that makes all things light. The air we breathe becomes a symbol of immortality, and every object, animate or inanimate, is a symbol of God, the all-pervading Spirit.

Hanumana was very devoted to Sri Ramachandra. Once he said:

"O God, when I think of my body I am Thy servant and Thou art my Master;
When I look at my soul, I am Thy part and Thou art the one stupendous Whole;
But when I realize my true nature, I am Divine and one with Thee—
The Absolute Spirit, such is my conception of my relation to Thee."

Vedanta Symbols

The Swan represents the fabled bird Hamsa, supposed to have the marvelous characteristic of separating milk from water,—the end and aim of all religious life being to reach that state of perfection wherein we become the Supreme Hamsas of Nature and rise above good and evil. The Serpent with his tail in his mouth is the symbol of Wisdom and Eeternity, the scales of the reptile forming the figure of facets, or diamonds, typifying the diversity of the aspects of Wisdom and Truth. The Sun represents Wisdom and divine Intelligence; the Waves, the activities of our lives, the Lotus, Love and Devotion—the Swan, the Serene Soul above all activity. The inscription or *mantra* within the circle reads: "May the Serene Soul lead us to the Highest Goal".

The Star

"Six points are set in the Star, but its seventh in the centre cannot be seen by the natural eye. From the invisible centre

a great spiritual Sun radiates, forming a circle whose surface is without limit, and beyond all human comprehension. The triangles thus combined form in the space a six-sided plane figure. This is the manifested world and 666 is the great mystery which is related to the symbol. These triangles represent the "manifested universe" and is one of the oldest and most beautiful symbols of antiquity.

The Christian Conception

"The Christian symbol of the Holy Trinity is symbolized by two equilateral triangles in a circle, and the several angles are connected by a line along which are the words 'non est', that is, the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father; and then a line runs from the name of each of the three persons to the word Jehovah in the centre with the word est (is) running to it, e.g., the Father is Jehovah: the Son is Jehovah; the Spirit is Jehovah."

Vedanta Conception

In the Vedanta symbol of the triangle, the Sanskrit word in centre of Star is "So'ham"; He I am, or, I am He. It is the "I Am" of the Jehovah of the Jews, representing the Holy Spirit dwelling within each one of us, bringing the Supreme and Holy Spirit so near to us that He becomes the Soul of our coul, and the Heart of our hearts. The triangle also denotes masculine and feminine nature (Fatherhood and Motherhood of God). Each should have qualities of the other for perfection. Man is the representative of human reason, woman that of faith or conscience; the serpent represents the lower nature. The Tree of Knowledge is the Kingdom of the mundane, and the Tree of Life is the knowledge of Spirit and of God." "The creative element is an active one, the receptive a passive one, but both are reproductive. One is positive and other negative, but are dual in nature. The convergence and concurrence of both give birth to every excellent and noble thing. This is the united centre with the Absolute. This is the Christ within. The second coming of Christ to the earth is not the coming of a literal historical personage, but is a state of spiritual wisdom of growth among men,—the highest personification of spirituality possible to mankind, which is yet to be developed in humanity at large.

The Cross

Among the Christian symbols the Cross stands pre-eminent, being the oldest and most universal of all symbols. Although the Cross assumes many forms, they are all based upon two principal types, that of the Latin and Greek. The severe, plain Cross symbolizes the sorrows and sufferings of Christ, while the more ornate and decorative types represent the glory and splendour of the Christian Church. In its mystical significance, the Cross expresses the truth that man must crucify his lower nature so that the real man, or Christ principle, may rise into a glorious resurrection and become one with the Wisdom and Bliss of the Logos.

The Swastika

The Swastika is a unique form of cross. Its original name was fly-lot, or four-footed. The word "Swastika", meaning "good luck", can be traced to the 4th century B.C., and is Sanskrit in derivation. This form of cross can be found in all countries and in all ages. Professor Max Müller says it represents and is the emblem of the sun in motion. Originally a Pagan symbol, found on Greek coins and pottery and in India as decoration on the statues of Buddha. Today in Mexican art designs it depicts the games of the people, and the Alaskan Indians use it in their basket weaving.

TWO RELIGIOUS POETS

Saint Francis of Assisi

He will not be a philosopher whom I cannot silence, but with a solitary voice he rises in the world to preach the right, the humility, the charity, the true human brotherhood, and we should not surpass in silence the figure of the Saint, who, to us, becomes yet more interesting by demonstrating the diversity of the tendency, since he also left that church which was the mother of learned and sophisticated monks: I intend to speak of Saint Francis of Assisi.

It was true fortune for us that Saint Francis did not allow himself to become entangled in the subtle net of the scholastic: he would have been a summit of strong activity vainly squandered. I would not know how to imagine our Saint involved in the philosophic contests of the time, but it seems to me that instead of power, with great truth, he approached the animous nature of the fifteenth and sixteenth century to a Campanella, to Giordano Bruno. As he lived in such an epoch he would have also imbibed the same principles of the new natural philosophy, which well founded themselves in accordance with the very mystical Franciscan, so very mystical that to show us a divine spiritual nature, and, yet more, perhaps, to bring nearer a yet more primitive pantheism.

Pantheism is a philosophical system which considers God as the soul of the world, or as the universal force which moves and lives in everybody. In more simple words the Pantheist sees a nature not only a manifestation of God, but God Himself, from whence results all nature endowed the Divine character.

A story which seems a legend warmly affectionate, tells us the life of the Saint of Assisi. His birth was very humble, and nearly a prelude of the humble life which he would afterwards conduct. The legend tells us that an angel commanded the wife of Pier Bernardone, a rich shopkeeper of Assisi to give light to this child between the straw of a stable (1182).

He was called John, and was conducted to France by his father and after having become acquainted with this new language, he received the second name of Francis. He grew with a clear mind and feeling for poetry, until 25 years of age, then he felt himself called by the Lord, went and sold all his earthly possessions at Holigno, took the money which he had received from the sale to a priest, and as the priests refused to accept, he threw it out of the window. His father, at this act, believed him crazy, and interdicted him before the chief priest. Radiant with joy, Francis divested himself of his clothes, and his naked body was covered by the chief priest with his own cloak. As he renounced himself also to his own family, he adopted himself to a beggar, raggedly dressed himself, and with inspirated sermons, he resorts people to be charitable, and dreams of conquesting the spiritual world. In the Evangelist he finds his own motto in these words: "If you will be perfect, you should sell whatever you have, and give to the poor, take never gold and silver neither scrip, sandals, or staff." In a world drunk with pleasure, he goes forth to preach poverty and love, whilst around him there is wrath, pride and war. He encircles himself with eleven disciples, and with them practised the most regular penitences. "Blessed is the servant who does not feel himself better in an exalted man's company, than in the company of wild men, because a man is only what he is before God, and nothing more". His love is not enough to embrace all men: he extends himself to every creature and our Saint comes to the woods, inviting the birds, which he calls his brothers, because they unite themselves to him to celebrate the Creator, he prays the swallows, his sisters, to cease their twittering whilst he sings, his sisters are the flies and his sisters the ashes. He brings honey to the Bees in winter, he saves the Hares and Pigeons before they are caught, and sells his mantle to take the lamb from the Butcher's hands.

The "flowers of St. Francis" one of the most ingeneous books of the last of our 3 centuries, breathes a breath of enthusiasm, of life of charity, for which we vainly seek in all the scholastic works.

The depth of his affection, Francis expanded in poetry

original as himself, where we do not find any renuniscent of antiquity but a lively effluxion of heart, impetuous with infinite love. In a short time the disciples of the humble monk became known and Francis thought of giving to them an order and to dictate a rule to guide them. The Pope, Innocence III, in the fourth Lateral Council, gave his approbation, then the Franciscan monks passed Spain, the Britain, Egypt, and they converted people, in their war-cry during their crusades they said, "Peace be with you".

All the Franciscans retained themselves members of a republic which was the whole world, and everyone could become the inhabitant of this world who accepted their rigid virtues: without stockings and with ragged dresses they penetrated everywhere, speaking to the crowd with dramatic power the most efficacious words dictated by a sure faith.

In this way the angelic father arrived at the age of 45 years when his life ended which

"would be better sung in the glory of Heaven""
(Dante Par c.xi).

Do I stray from my proposition in speaking of this Saint? Perhaps yes, because I do not find any philosophical theory on which Francis based himself, no intrigues of syllogism or reasonings. But in reality it is not a philosophy of high practical and moral sense, which induces by the simple vision of nature, and which is the power to guide many souls towards the spirit of right.

On the slope of Mount Subaso, opposite Perugia to Assisi in the land of Umbria, wherein the old pagan times was visited a people of grave and religious character, already of many years rising on the mountain heights gradually descending encircles famous Christian hermitages, born in the year 1182, the saint, the most Italian, from whom issued a great air of poetry in the midst of our people, and who was a certain poet.

He is father, Peter of Bernardone, successfully attended to commerce in France. His mother, Pica, would have him like the sacred legend called John for divine inspiration, in remembrance of John, the forerunner of Christ, comparing herself to Elizabeth, mother of John: the father would have him afterwards called Francis, in memory of the country of France.

But perhaps the young man was commonly called so in Italy upon his return from France of which dialect he was familiar.

Advanced in commerce, Francis showed himself little inclined, he at first preferred the gay life of festivals and luxury called from the gay brigade their head, later on he felt maturing in his mind a great conversion. Strongly impelled by the deep change which came upon him by the imprisonment sustained in Perugia, in consequence of one of frequent little skirmishes which afflicted the life of these our general public a grave illness hastened the new direction of his mind. Tired and disgusted with the life until then passed, he aspired already to exalt the remaining of his days with some great enterprise, and at first he longed to follow in Puglia Gualtiers of Brienns, the arm of Pope Innocence the Third, after a new illness and during the fever, he had a vision which in his mind made to him, revolve the ideas heroical from the armies to religion: he will be a knight of Christ. At Assisi he had already the soul imbibed with mysticism and feeling a great sympathy with the trouble of humanity, afflicted by so many errors and aversions, by so many passions and miseries. When praying in the little church of S. Damiano, he though he heard a voice which exhorted him to repair the falling church. Francis intended, in the first place, to be called to a work of material restoration, for which he hastened to gather money. In the meantime he was seen in grave disagreement with the Father, because he distributed to the poor as much as he received from the sale of merchandise entrusted to him; and brought the dispute before the Bishop of Assisi, he made solemn renunciation to the good paternals, even to the clothes which he wore. But already his mission appeared bright to him mostly on the 24th February, 1209, in the oratories of "St. Mary of the Angels" (the so-called Portuincola) hearing the Moss, he is struck by the words of Christ to his Apostles in the Gospel of St. Mathew, where it is said by Christ, "Go ye and preach, saying the reign of the heaven is come, heal the infiorm, cleanse the lepers, seek neither gold nor silver, money nor scrip for the journey, two changes of raiment, nor sandals. Here is the work of reparation truly assigned to him by God, whereupon he gave his all to the poor, shorn and unshod, and wrapped in a coarse sackcloth of grey, encircling the cord to his flanks,

Francis goes about preaching his interpretation of the word of God.

He was an ascetic, a mystical but without the hairy wildness of other ascetics. Not calumnied to nature, he held dear the innocent, like the word of God, he felt and confessed an immense love not only for this but also for the universe from Him created, embracing Creator and creature in a single impetus of love. After the sweet Jesu, the religion of Him, had never been felt and interpreted with so much gentleness,

Francis offered himself the comforter to the throng of the poor and abandoned, giving the example of the happier resignation, morever of the love to the poor life. Potentates, laymen, and ecclesiastics wrapped in luxury, running eagerly behind power and riches moving for that, and harassing the world with implacable odes, and very fierce struggles, abandoning and stamping upon the poor as if Christ had never come. Francesco taught to despise the wealthy, that were founded upon so much misery, and, as so many other preachers who preached religious pureness in those centuries he fought against the worldly vanity of the Church, he spoke to the crowd in the towns and in the valleys, he said words of life, not only theological wisdom but simple speeches, full of imagination and warm feeling that means poetry.

Also his personality inspired poetry, and it followed him in his steps, and was always on his lips, the sacred legend formed his whole figure nearly as holy as Christ and treated him as other ascetics, as is seen by many other "Lifes" and "Feoreth", which the next generation left us of him. See him here full of happiness in God, at night seeking a lady which was despised by all others, and which he found amongst the beggars upon his high burning mountain of poverty. He weds her in a mystic marriage and this inspired the prose of monk Ubertino of Casale in his famous words from chapter eleven in "Dantes Paradise", it inspired the painters' brush also of Geotto. He tried to make place between towns and parties, and it is said that he took a wolf behind himself like a dog, a wolf which terrified Gubbio, once when the crowd would not listen to his preaching, the birds came to hear him speak. This humility, simplicity, and good temper won every heart, and many works soon followed the poor of Assisi, also a woman

of his time, "Clara Sciffi", founded a female order in the same way as Francis had founded one former.

The order of this called for the sake of simplicity "of the minors", had the oral approbation of Pope Innocence the Third. The church really did not trust the preaching of the poor Evangelist, having found that often they were animated by an heretical spirit in opposition to her. Therefore, the Pope had in the beginning refused to bless Francis's religion or sect saying "your rules are more for angels than for men".

Meanwhile Francis travelled and preached in far away countries in France and Spain, and he would also to Morocco. In the year 1218, he was in Italy, at the "Council of the Stuoie". He gave orders to his followers not to bring any food, God himself would think of his poor, and St. Damenico found this rather arrogant. But when all the people of Foligno and surrounding places came, bringing alms and food to the minor monks, Domenico believed and admired, confessed his doubt and embraced Francis. This was the first meeting of these two champions.

In the year 1219, Saint Francis went to preach the faith of Christ to St. John of Acri, in Egypt, only for thirst of martyrdom. He visited the Holy Land and hurried back to re-establish the order and faith amongst his followers in Italy (1223) and as the Francesian religion was now accepted by the Roman orthodoxy, his rules were admitted by Pope Onorio the Third. Next year 1224, a sign of God was seen between the faithful followers of Francesco, when, after long fastings and fervent prayers on the arid mount of Alvernia between the Tiber and Arno, he obtained, as it is called "the saint Migmatic" the Lord's wounds on his own body.

His willing sufferings had consumed his physical forces and he fell ill. He had returned to Assisi, as a visitor of the bishop. Feeling that death was near, he allowed himself to be taken to the "Portiuncola"' and to be shut up in his cell and there he laid naked on the ground, naked in sign of poverty, crossed his arms in agony, and so rendered his spirit to God on the 4th October, 1226. The legend tells us that the monks then saw Nightingales alight on the window of the cess where he died. Two years afterwards Gregory the Nineth gave him the honour of the altar and in 1230,

his body was buried in the place at Assisi, where there was built a church in his name.

The name of this church is written in the story of our poet by the concorded attestation of biographs which say that Francis was a poet. Many times he wrote verses in Latin, called "Laudes creaturarum". The legend tells, that our saint during his dwelling in S. Damiano, was visited by rats and mice, in an aweful place, whilst he suffered from his eyes. Yet he prayed thus to the Lord "God, help me in my weakness, so that I may suffer patiently" and then he felt in his soul words of comfort, coming from heaven, so that next morning, he called his friends, announcing to them, that he wanted to compose a song to sing to the Almighty, which they ought to bring to Monk Pacificio, who was also a poet and was called the King of Verses, so that he afterwards with some other works might bring it in the world to the glory of God he tuned it "Altissimi omnipotents bon signore", and sung the praise of the sun, our brother, because created by God, our sister moon and the stars, the wind and water, fire and the earth and other dead sisters.

This poem is not a regular song, but one of "numerous prose"' that means an interior rhythm with harmony and some rhyme, fresh, inspired, igenious and sincere.

Giordano Bruno

In the Renasciments period, of which we now speak an important position of our philosophers belongs to Philip Bruno, born in 1548 at Nola in the south of Italy. We have scarcely noticed his first years, but his destiny was quickly decided by a false step of which he resented the consequences during his whole life, because, as he said, "if one makes a mistake in buttoning the first button of the coat, none of the others can be buttoned properly". His first mistake was made when Bruno at 16 years of age entered a convent of Dominicans at Naples. That decision taken perhaps in a moment of mystical exaltation, could no more be broken. nevertheless the remainder of Bruno's life was always an attempt to forget it. In the Convent he took the name of Giordano, and it was easily understood that his mind did not suffer the bridle of discipline. He quickly was accused

of heretical actions, and put away all the saint's figures from his cell and left only the crucifix from this fact arose the first suspicions on his account.

When he became priest, he defended the Arian doctrine then seeing that an action was prepared against him, went to Rome, where not feeling himself safe, he abandoned the priestly garb. It was at the end of 1576 and from that moment Bruno commenced travelling from town to town, proposing to himself the triumph and the diffusion of new ideas which had formed in his mind.

His nature was entirely human, certainly not ascetical or monastic strong passions and ardent sensualism occupied his mind. Not even the snows of the Caucasius he says, could cool the heat of his heart. And of his character are witnessed many poems and comedies, bend and imprudent; but in Bruno the intellectual tendency was preponderant, the tendency which could stop the sensual appetities and create in him a work of assiduous and constant thought. When he left Rome he travelled some years in northern Italy. Near Genoa, he directed a school for children for some time and taught astronomy to several young noblemen. But he could not make for himself a secure position so he passed the Alps and went to Geneva (1579) where he was certainly considered as a member of the Reformed Church, if it was possible for him to be inscribed at the University, for which inscription it was necessary for him to confess the Calvanistic doctrine. Here commenced his lot quickly against some Professors until the accusations of hersey came upon him. He was excommunicated, and for taking away this punishment he was obliged to make an act of penitence for what he had done. In the hope of becoming more free he went to Tolosa, where during 2 years, he received a seat in the University. These were the most quiet years of his life, but were not thoroughly free from contests and quarrels. During this period Bruno made the first attempts to return to the Catholic Church, thinking to be able to live in good relations with the church without again returning to the Convent, because in his mind he did not feel himself, nor did he intend to be in contrast to Rome. On the contrary, he desired the union of his new ideas with

those of the Church, he was not a real Reformist and in his mind he strongly blamed the Protestant Religion. But Rome gave him as a first condition of peace to return to the Convent, and to that Bruno was not able to resolve himself. He desired to live in the silence of his studies without putting himself under the claustral discipline.

During that time he continued his travels, and we find him in Paris, where he enters in relation with King Henry III, who asks him for explanations of his ideas. Recommended by the King, he passes in 1583 to England to the French Ambassador. But among the English he did not find himself well, the people appeared to him barbarous and rude, unable to follow him in his new ideas of which Bruno was really most conceited. In a letter he announces himself to Oxford University as a Professor of a pure and innocent wisdom, a Philosopher known in the whole of Europe, strange only to barbers and brutes, the awakener of sleeping minds, the dominator of ignorance.

Such haughtiness united to contrary ideas of intellectual wealth of all the past, arose about the Philosopher, an ambient hostile and despicable. The course of lessons were interpreted, quarrels and questions arose of which we have noticed in the written title, "The supper of the ash" in which Bruno throws out his indignation upon this ignorant people.

During his stay in London he worked very hard, he published 5 Dialogues in Italian where was contained the explanation of his philosophical ideas, in the abovementioned work, he treated on the theory of Copernico, secondly the extension, which Bruno attributed to himself. Then followed his chief work "Della causa, principio ed uno" in which is developed the ideas upon the speculation and religious philosophy. To this can be called the theoretical part of Bruno's philosophy, he suppresses the moral philosophy, the practical conception of life in his "spacio della bestio trionfante", in "ha dottrina segreta dell'asino di Pegess" and in the opera "Degli heroici furori".

In these writings, many chapters show deepness of thought and a certain sense of poetry. but the old scholarship shows itself still here and there; often the inspiration is ruined in

tantastical conception, and the language appears an instrument inadapted to the thought which he wants to express.

From London, Giordano Bruno again returns to Paris and repeats his trials to enter the church again. In vain, like being chased by a horsefly resumes again his errant life at Marbourg, Wittemburg, Praga, and in the end at Frankfort when he at great length studied and occupied himself in the stamping of some of his works, written this time in Latin. Suddenly leaving Frankfort, completed by unforeseen circumstances unknown to us, and certainly not willingly, provoked probably by the bad dispositions which the Governor of the town had towards him. However he had received an invitation to betake himself to Italy, and one can imagine how pleased he was to receive this invitation. Certainly he did not expect the sad events which awaited him. A Venetian patrician, Geovani Moelnigo who had studied Bruno's works, invited him to Venice, saying that he wanted to be instructed by him. After having spent some time in Zurigo, in the autumn of 1591 he got ready to journey to Italy, for the mother country which to him should be a motherly hospitable place. At Venice he attended to the instruction of Mocenigo and finished by living in his house.

After some time the scholar complained that he was not receiving the instruction desired, probably he thought to instruct himself in the occult sciences, and probably also the first remorses and samples were awakening themselves within him owing to the fact that he had under his roof, a heretic therefore after the advice of his confessor, he denounced Bruno to the inquisition and kept him prisoner in his house until he was transported to the cells of the inquisition (1592).

Here we now arrive at the interrogation; Bruno declares himself true to the Church, throwing himself on his knees, he asked pardon for his errors in order that the doors of the church shall be open to him again. Shall we perhaps judge as imposterous and villianous this conduct.

It does not seem because we already said how in full conscience Bruno felt himself united of spirit to the Christendom, as he wanted to introduce his ideas in the body of the Catholic Doctrines of religion. To that end he worked

wanting to present to the Pope a writing in which he expounded his principles, sure that they would be expected and recognised by the Pontiff.

From Venice he passed to the Roman Tribunal of Inquisition, a Tribunal which showed an extraordinary zeal against the philosopher.

Bruno denied the stains of heresy, he declared that his thoughts had been misunderstood by the inquisition, that he has nothing to take back, holding himself faithful to the concession which had formed itself of the Christendom. He wrote a defence to be handed to the Pope but it was not read and on the 9th February, 1600 a terrible sentence was pronounced against him

He was degraded, excommunicated, and handed over to the Governor with the hypocritical demand, used in these cases, to punish him with indulgence and without bloodshed. It is known as the answer of Bruno to whom communicated the sentence, "You yourself have more fear to carry out the sentence than I to receive it". He was burned alive on the 17th February, 1600 in the "field of the followers" and faced death stoically. He pushed away the priest who wanted to hold him the crucifix, and died without a murmur, his ashes were dispersed in the wind. In 1889 at the spot where he was burned a statue was erected with a sum offered by the whole civilised world.

The wish to enter even a little profoundly into Bruno's philosophy means to participate with him in the destruction of all the traditional ideas of his time with regard to Physics, Religion, and Morals, it means to pass from that which was the foundation of Aristotle's philosophy to the foundation of a new science. It is necessary to know at least in the essential points what were the ideas which must be combatted and refused, we have spoken already of the cosmical system of Aristotle's tolemeno, and also of the new physical astronomy which ends with Copernicas.

Giordano Bruno acknowledges for the first to be owner of his doctrines to the Astronomers who had preceded him in the intent of innovation, but he attributes to himself the merit of developing with a larger mind the theories of Copernicas, showing that, as there are not spheres which

divide the several parts of the world, as also the law and the power which directs all things is only one. In face of that all the knowledge our senses give to us become relative with the idea of space of place, of time, of weight have no more an absolute value, nature is always the same to herself and indifferent from that she appears in a place before us, it is possible for us to argue the condition also in other places. Bruno states the immensity of the universe in which state the celestial bodies similar to the earth, and the other systems similar to the solar systems, basing himself upon this rule that the same power acts everywhere.

He tried to demolish the belief in moving spheres believing that is connected with the idea that the earth is the absolute centre, but from the moment that every celestial body is free in the space like the earth, it drives away the necessity of believing in the spheres. Every celestial body has in itself its own impulsive power, and the space is a great centre in which operates the universal spirit which directs everything without need of particular spirits in the spheres for the movement of the various regions.

In viewing the limitations of the universe return to the infinite and seeing the disappearing of the immoveable spheres, Bruno believed for the first time to breathe freely, and he explained that feeling some sonnets which preceded the dialogue "Of the infinite Universe". With the idea of the infinite world is connected also the idea of God, the being also infinite. He produces by his emanation or by development of his nature, the large number of generations of the spaces, of individuals, the cosmical laws, the relation which constitutes life, without becoming himself neither generation, species, nor individual. He is everything and everything is in Him. All the things existing find in Him a source of life and movement, for that participation of the infinite in all particles of the universe, everything in nature is living nothing is annulled, death is only a transformation.

Also the matter is a divinity, creator, mother of all things natural which participate in the universe and in God: it is in a continual evolution, even conserving herself eternally. This continual passage of the matter from form to form. is the expression of the Unity infinite which cannot be utterly

realised in no individual form. And it is for that internal and common principal, which we find almost a point of likeness and accordance in things which are contrary to themselves, like maximum and minimum birth and death, love and hate. The studies of the contraries occupied Bruno, who was able to find in that the sense of his theory of the universal spirit. Disgraces, decomposition, physical deformity, sufferings, all which is not in relation with that which really exists all that disappears if one looks to the eternal being. On his merit, everybody is perfect, because everybody in his individuality is a being which is limited by nothing, and in that remains the internal measure of perfection.

Although Bruno becomes afterwards transformed in some mood, his conception of the world and of God, the conception remains he explained in the more important principles, and it should be too difficult and subtle for us to accompany him in his speculations.

We now are going to occupy ourselves a little with the moral ideas of our philosopher: although he left no developed ethical work we have a prelude of his moral in two symbolical works "The sale of the triumphant Beast" and of "the heroical Furies". The sale shows under an allegorical aspect the social idea of Bruno. The action takes place between the gods of the old Olympia, but in every figure of those gods the men themselves acknowledge so long as they take part in the Divinity. Geove takes the resolution of reforming the heaven, and in the new order of things which must start from the internal reformation of every individual, he puts as the principal virtue, the truth, from which everything depends, searched by many and found by few, it does not require defence, the more it is combatted, the more it grows up. The pleasure and the suffering are intimately bound together, the one presumes the existence of the other, and here we are led to the doctrine of the contraries of which we have spoken before. The penitence must take place in reformed society, before it springs from the aspiration to arise from the low regions to the sun. Also to idleness and repose the doors of the new Olympia are not closed, but accepted only as relative to a right work. Rest and labour must follow together in life with regular habits. In the

golden age when men did no work there was no distinction in the human condition and the animals; there was no virtue absence of vice. Virtue exists only where it finds a resistance to conquer.

Of these resistances Bruno intends to speak in his other writing of the "the heroical furies". Of those contraries which need really, an heroical strength for conquering them.

The fool is his present state in ignorance of the past and of the future possibilities; he lives in a paradise of animal happiness, of sensual pleasure. But the growth of knowledge means growth of pain. The ideal to which the mind is directed rises always higher surrounded by the most difficult resistances, and it is heroical folly to desire to reach it between infinite perils, but the strenuous eye hovers over the immediate pain, and passes to the light of eternity. If it is not possible to reach such a height of satisfaction it does not matter, it is enough to feel in himself so noble a fire even if it produces pain.

Those ideas are interesting as not only for their high moral value, but also for the contrast in which the pose Bruno in front of the idea of old and middle age, no more is placed as ideal a state of indifference for human things but consider the true good only possible with the idea of an eternal aspiration. Giordano Bruno opened to the ethics a wide view, which from others, in course of time, was enlarged more scientifically.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

On May 23rd, 1905, Swami Abhedananda held this class on Questions and Answers at 62 W. 71st Street, Manhattan, New York

Q.—In a recent lecture, you stated that no action was wholly good and none wholly evil. This being the case, how is it possible to obtain perfect freedom in the present life?

Ans.—This is a very good question. It has been the subject of discussion for almost everyone in every age in India. No other country has understood the law of action and reaction so well as the Hindus of India, and especially the Hindus of India have devoted most of their time in trying to solve the mysteries and problems of life through this law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence. Every action produces some kind of reaction, and the reaction must be similar in nature to the action itself. This is the law. Every effect must have a cause and every cause must produce an effect. We cannot escape this inevitable law. It is very difficult to think of even escaping this law. The law of action and reaction binds us to earthly existence. We have come to this earth, being subject to the same law, and we will continue to remain so even after the death of the body. All our physical actions, mental activities like thoughts and desire, and our moral actions and spiritual acts will produce their results. Another thing we must consider, that the results will come back to the source from whence the actions started. They will come back to the doer, the actor, and, consequently, we will have to reap the results ourselves. If we have done anything wrong, we will have to reap the wrong consequence. That is, the result will be of similar nature. It will produce misery, sorrow, suffering, disease, and death, and good acts are those which are in harmony with other laws of nature, i.e., laws which are physical, mental, moral, and spiritual. Those are good acts or good *karma,* as we say. The word *karma* means 'action' or work. It includes physical and mental, intellectual and spiritual works. But at the same time we must remember that this is a world of relativity, or this is a world of duality.

It is not a world of absolute good, or it is not the world beyond relativity. We are within limitations. If we try to understand what relativity means, we must remember that everything is related to every other thing, and the opposites exist. That, if there be light, there would be darkness. If there be no darkness, there would be no light. If there be birth, there must be death. If there be good health, there must be ill health, otherwise there could not be good health. If there be good, there must be evil; if there be virtue, there must be vice, and so on. All these are related, and we cannot avoid them on this plane of existence. These are our limitations. Without the feeling of unhappiness or of misery, we cannot enjoy happiness or pleasure. It will be monotonous.

All knowledge depends upon comparison. When we compare one sensation with another, then we know whether it is good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant, agreeable or disagreeable, and whenever we try to do any act or any work, being limited in our knowledge, in our understanding, in our method, and in our powers, we cannot do it perfectly. We do certain acts, but we make some mistakes, and those mistakes are bound to occur in relation to persons who are limited in knowledge as we are. These limitations will be the cause of making mistakes. We cannot do absolutely virtuous acts, because we do not know what absolute virtue is. We consider an act virtuous as we have been taught, or as we are able to grasp or understand, but we must remember at the same time that our understanding is not perfect, and even if we have better understanding of virtue and even on account of our limitations and environmental conditions, the conditions and circumstances under which we are living would prevent us from performing the acts perfectly according to our ideal, and, therefore, these acts will not be called absolutely virtuous or absolutely good. They are mixed with good and evil. All our acts are mixed with some limitation or some kind of mistake or misunderstanding, imperfect knowledge, and, therefore, we are bound to reap the results of all our acts in both respects. That is, we will reap the good results or good reactions of the good works which are in harmony with the laws of nature, and we will reap the results of our mistakes, also. We cannot escape it. Such being the condition of our existence on this plane,

we cannot perform any act which is absolutely good or absolutely evil. Even the wickedest act that we can think of is wicked in relation to certain conditions, but it may produce some good in some form or other. As we are born under this law of action and reaction, and of cause and sequence, we will have to follow it, and we will have to obey, consciously or unconsciously. But when we think of perfect freedom, then we think what is meant by perfect freedom? The emancipation of the soul from the bondage of all laws and of all limitations. The soul can realize that state after performing virtuous deeds and spiritual acts, when the spiritual awakening has come.

Perfect freedom is the goal of each individual soul. Freedom from birth and death, disease and sorrow, suffering and misery, and from all relativity, is the goal. Now, how are we going to attain to that state when we are bound by the laws as we are at present? The attainment of absolute freedom comes when we realize the nature of our true Self. The true Self is within us and is beyond all laws. It is not governed by laws, but when it is manifesting itself under the limitations and through the relative conditions, it appears as bound. True knowledge makes us understand the laws of nature and the method by which we can transcend those laws. That would be the condition of true knowledge, and true knowledge reveals the nature of our true Self. When we know that Divinity, the Supreme Being, which is beyond all laws, then we realize that He is not subject to any law, He is all-pervading, and we are His children. The Divinity is manifesting through us as the Soul of our souls. By that knowledge we understand the relation which exists between ourselves and the Supreme Being. When we have known that, then if we are devoted to the Supreme Being, if we can love the Supreme Being with our whole heart and soul, if we can love the absolute with our whole heart and soul, we attain to freedom, and transcend the laws of action and reaction, of birth and death, and of all the laws which govern the relative plane of existence.

The law of action and reaction binds those who are on the relative plane, but if we can rise above the relative plane, we can transcend the law of *karma,* and that is possible through

the knowledge of our true Self, or our relation to the Supreme Being, and also through our intense love for the Supreme Being, the Absolute, and by thinking of the Absolute, we rise above all the relativity. Good and evil acts will no longer bind us, and that freedom can be attained in this very life. The very moment when we have realized our true Self and its relation to the Supreme Being, then we have transcended all the laws of nature, and have attained to freedom. According to Vedanta, this freedom is the goal of all human beings, or of all individual souls, and every individual soul is bound to reach that goal sooner or later, either in this incarnation or in some other. If we have not succeeded in realizing our immortal and divine nature, we will have to come back again, we will have to go through the laws of action and reaction, obey them and live as governed by them, but gradually when the awakening comes, we transcend all the laws, and attain to that freedom.

Q.—The four methods of Yoga seem to be presented so as to give the idea that each is complete within itself, exclusive of the others. Is this separation one of classification, primarily arising from the limitations of the various types and temperaments and human nature, whose needs Vedanta seeks to supply? Or is the distinction one of essentials, the practices and conditions necessary to one method of development being irreconciliable with or unfavourable to the practices and conditions of the other methods? It seems to us that under this apparent diversity there must be a common unity, but we are not advanced enough to understand the point. It is of practical meaning to us, for we wish to know whether in our own cases, it is possible to harmonise. As far as we have gone we find that concentration is the greatest help and strength in work.

Ans.—The four different methods of Yoga that are described, are related to the four different types of temperaments or tendencies. Some are naturally inclined to work, and they have no faith. They are not educational in their nature; they simply live to work, and they do not believe in the existence of God even. They may be atheistic or agnostic. They want to work. The Karma Yoga is specially for those. In the first place, those who cannot believe in God and have no faith in

a Supreme Being, who do not understand the spiritual science, and do not care for any prayer or devotion, do not understand what are they going to do ? Karma Yoga supplies them with the method by which they can attain to the same goal which is reached through other methods, i.e., through devotion, prayer and so on. Concentration and meditation are all works. They are included in work. Of course, when we take the word *karma* in its most universal sense, it includes all the activities of mind and body and intellect. They are all *karma*, whether mental or physical. Mental work is just as much *karma*. The effort to concentrate our minds upon some object is as much *karma* as it could be, because *karma* does not merely mean physical activity or manual labour, but it means also mental and intellectual. Even devotion is a *karma* or an action. Emotion is an activity of our mind. So any kind of activity is a *karma*, but Karma Yoga is a specialized method by which the highest goal of freedom and perfection could be reached through work and work alone.

A particular kind of work is not concentration, although that is a *karma* or activity. Other works without devotion, concentration, meditation, or discrimination cannot produce the highest result that can be obtained through Karma Yoga or the right method of work, which brings purification of the heart. When the heart is purified, the absolute Truth will be revealed unto the pure heart. These four different methods cannot be separated from one another. Although we say that there are four different methods, still one includes the other in some form or other, just as I have already described that devotion and concentration are all *karmas* or acts. A devotee cannot get out of Karma Yoga, when he kneels down, he sends supplications to the Supreme Being, and he worships the Lord. He is practicing that Karma Yoga, but his natural tendency is to love. He has emotion. He has more feeling, and his heart is more developed. Then there is another who wants to see God thorugh intellect. For that person, there is Jnana Yoga, which is the path of discrimination, understanding, or philosophical method. Discrimination is a *karma*, still it is separated from Karma Yoga, simply because of the particular type of character which will adopt that method. A working man will have to practise all these different methods of Yoga more or less. For

instances, when he has much work, he would practise Karma Yoga, and when he practises concentration and meditation, he is practising Raja Yoga. If he believes in a personal God and worships Him and when he is loving the Supreme Being and thinking of Him, remembering Him through love, he is practising Bhakti Yoga. Then when he is discriminating he is practising Jnana Yoga. So all these different methods or paths are inter-related with one another, and we cannot separate them absolutely, or make them as separate paths that have no relation to each other. But, if we have a certain tendency which is more predominant than the tendencies of other people, then we can choose the path which is suited to us, and these Yogas have all various sub-divisions again, which include all the varieties of characters among individuals. One individual may like some thing. Now, for instance, I will give you an illustration. There are twenty people, and amongst them you will find perhaps two or three who would like to pray and who would believe in a personal God, others would not. Or you would find perhaps the majority would believe in a personal God. Then you will find some who do not believe in a personal God. Now, those who do not believe in a personal God, will not pray, and will not sit and meditate or worship. Do you think that they will be lost? Whatever they like that would be their path. Each one must start from the point where he or she is standing.

If one believes in one thing, that is all right. Let that person start from that point, and the method which is particularly suited to that character or to his tendency, will be the means to the attainment of the highest goal. Vedanta by formulating these different methods, has succeeded in giving a universal basis to religion, and has given a death-blow to all sectarianism and dogmatism. All Semitic religions teach, you must accept my method, and if you do not accept it, you are going to eternal damnation, and you have no hope.But Vedanta never says such a thing. Vedanta says, if you do not believe in this, try something different, you will reach the same goal, and you will reach perfection. If you do not believe in Christ, that is all right. If you do not believe in a personal God, that is all right. If you are an atheist or an agnostic, that is all right. Vedanta has adopted that universal

principle that each individual soul must attain to the highest perfection through the process of evolution, and that evolution must go through different channels according to the tendencies and characteristics of the individual. One may go in one direction and the other in another direction, but they will all come to the same common centre which is the goal of all individuals. The goal is one, and it cannot be many.

And there is that commun unity. You will find that unity is the highest goal. The highest goal is perfection, and by perfection we include also the attainment of freedom, God-consciousness, and transcending all laws of nature, attaining to immortality. There you will find the unity, but these are different paths which lead to the same goal, or the same unity. In our practical life, we must practice all these various methods according to our position and daily occurrences of our lives. When we are in business, we will practise Karma Yoga. We must learn the secret of work. We must not work for results alone, but we should also consider that these works of our daily life will purify the heart and will be the means towards the attainment of the highest goal. There is no such work as trivial work or unimportant work. Even the most trivial work, like scrubbing the floor, is very important and that will purify our heart if we learn the secret of work. There is no such thing at drudgery. All work is sacred, and work can be made into an act of worship, and that is what Karma Yoga tells us, and it is very helpful. For instance, when you are walking in the street, and if you know the secret of work, you will turn that walking into an act of worship. An act of worship does not mean sitting in a corner. Eating, drinking, and walking are acts of worship, if we know how to do them, and Vedanta tells us this wonderful process or the wonderful method by which all these works of our daily life will be directed towards that one common goal of perfection or attainment of Godconsciousness. Then when you come home, you practice a little concentration. That concentration is for material results. Then you practise concentration for spiritual results. Now, direct that concentrated energy towards the Supreme Spirit and towards your true Self, and you will get spiritual uplifting which you cannot get simply by concentrating your mind upon material objects. The

power of concentration brings the result according to the nature of the object towards which power is directed. If the power of concentration be directed towards material objects, it will bring material results. When it is directed towards psychic objects, it will produce psychic results. When it is directed towards moral objects, it will produce moral results, and when it is directed towards the Supreme Spirit, spiritual illumination will come. So we will have to do all these things as long as we are living upon the material plane. We will have to look after material things and concentrate a little for material results, and that is all right, but we must not forget that the material results are not the highest end and aim of life. There we will draw a line, and we will not think that what we are doing and nothing else is to be done. There are lots of other things to be done which we must do, we must not neglect our soul-life, and must not neglect the works which would bring the purification of the heart and which will ultimately lead to the attainment of absolute freedom and Godconsciousness.

Q.—Is there a work which explains *yama,* and where can it be obtained?

Ans.—Yes, there is a work, *Raja Yoga,* by Swami Vivekananda. You can obtain it here, in New York, from the Vedanta Society.

Q.—What is the meaning of doing works unattached?

Ans.—That is, you work, but do not be attached to the results of the work. You perform duty, the duty of work which you have undertaken with your utmost ability, but if the results do not come, do not worry about it. When you have performed your best to your utmost ability, you could not do better, and if you do not get the results, still you have done your best. You could not do more. You may try again, but you would not be able to do more. When we are attached to the results of our works, we begin to worry, but worry never brings any result. It simply breaks our nervous system, but we cannot help by worrying. That is the trouble. We must worry a little, because we are born with this anxiety and with a tendency to get the result right away. We have neither patience, nor perseverance. You must exercise a little patience and at the same time you must

understand the law of action and reaction. That is, every action will produce a similar reaction, and reaction is the result. The result is to come in some form or other, nothing will be lost. You must know that, and by knowing that, when you have performed your duty or the work which you have undertaken, whether you worry for the result or not, the result is bound to come to you. You will get the result, and you cannot get what you do not deserve. You must rest asured, and, therefore, that is called unattachment. That is unattachment to the results of works, by knowing the law of action and reaction, or cause and sequence, or cause and effect.

All worry will be driven away from our minds if we learn to be unattached. Therefore, remain unattached to your body first. This is the first thing we should learn to do. This body is not ours. This body is just the shell. It is not our true being. We are separate from the body, and, therefore, we must not think of ourselves as one with the body, forgetting our soul-life which is immortal, because we do not truly know ourselves. We are in a state of ignorance and, therefore, we cannot separate ourselves from these material forms, so we care so much for material forms. No matter how much we care for the material forms, these forms are sure to die sooner or later, because everything that has birth, must die. When we become unattached to the body, then we become unattached to those things which are related to the body. These physical things, furniture, and house and property, do not belong to us, but we consider them as belonging to us, and this consideration is the result of the grand mistake which we have committed at the outset by thinking of ourselves as one with the material body which we are not, and one mistake leads to another. Just as one law leads to thousands of laws. so one mistake leads to thousands of mistakes. Really we have made the great blunder by thinking of ourselves as one with the gross material body. Out of ignorance we identify ourselves with all the ailments of the body, and we try to cure ourselves, and the moment we understand that the soul is immortal and unaffected by the changes of the body, we become unattached to the body, and then all other things will take a different shape. We will then live in this world in

perfect peace and happiness, without worrying about anything, without being subject to disease and suffering, sorrow and misery. All these proceed from ignorance, because we do not know ourselves. It must be remembered that the soul never worries, but we who are entangled in the nets of ignorance, worry. We are the egos. The mind worries, because the mind is subject to all these limitations. Christian Science, of course, has taken this idea from Vedanta, and we are one with Christian Science there, but Christian Science teaches only one part of it. Vedanta includes what Christian Science teaches, and yet, at the same time, it shows a universal method for all, whether you believe in Christ or not. That is the difference, and Vedanta goes still deeper than Christian Science will ever lead you, and why? Because Vedanta tells us that this body, this perfect health, is not the end and aim of our soul-life, but the perfect spiritual health is different. The soul is without body. The body is simply the means by which we can accomplish the results of our previous works which we performed in our previous lives and fulfill the desires which we have on the human plane. Then when we rise above the human plane, we shall have human bodies. We can take some other bodies. We may live in spiritual bodies for a long time, or we may come back again to this plane, if we have desires on the human plane. We will have to come back if we have human bodies. Christian Science does not explain the law of action and reaction, the law of incarnation, and birth and rebirth. All these are not explained in Christian Science, but Vedanta explains those things. Therefore, it includes all systems. It includes the systems that existed in the past, that exist today and that will exist in future.

Q.—Is it possible to prolong life in the body indefinitely under the proper environments, and what would they be?

Ans.—This body is dying every minute. By death we mean change. The baby body is dead and gone, the child body is dead and gone. The body of youth is dying, the body of old age will die also. So death means a change. Every seventh year, all the molecules of our body are renewed. By food and drink, we are drawing in new materials. By breathing air we are taking in new particles of matter into our

system, and we are throwing off the old particles which we have used up, and this constant change is meant by death. Our life would be impossible without this kind of change. Our body is nothing but an eddy in the ocean of matter. Imagine if you can see that this whole universe is an ethereal ocean with the finest particles of matter constantly in vibration and in that ocean innumerable little eddies, each of these eddies being what we call the human body. If you look through X-rays, you will find that your body is just like a mist, only a little skeleton is there, and the flesh part is all gone. That will give you an idea of the ephemeral nature of the body. The external world which you know through this body only exists so long as you have this body. Your world is different from my world. That is, your world of perception is different from my world. What you see, no one else can see. We see similar things, but not the same things. No one has seen the same sun twice, but we see the sun. The sun is constantly changing. Science will tell you that. If the phenomenal world be stationary, there would be death, and there would be no progress, no evolution, which means there would be no constant change, and if we want to stop all this change forever, what would be the result? Destruction, dissolution, and everything would be petrified. Then the stone-like substance would go through change in another form. But there are certain conditions under which this body can be preserved from untimely decay and death. Some people can remain young even when they are quite old in years. That is possible. Why? Because their waste is not so rapid. A person under tremendous mental strain will become twenty years older in one night. Several instances of this having occurred in history, and even now you will find such things are happening, that a person when put under tremendous mental strain, will grow twenty years older in one night. Those who heard Dr. Cooke's lecture on his Antarctic expedition, will remember that he spent seventy days, being ice-bound, at the Antarctic Pole and after seventy days everybody looked as if ten years older, because there was nothing to eat a particular kind of food. We saw the photographs of the same person, both before the winter came and after the winter was over, and saw the difference, and

what a tremendous difference it was! All these are untimely results, or changes. These could be stopped by living a normal kind of life, not coming under all those conditions.

Similarly, Hatha Yogins have learned the process by which they can preserve the body from decay and untimely or premature old age or premature death by keeping the vital energy and not wasting it unnecessarily. They eat less food, and do not waste so much of their energy by rushing about, by worrying, and trying to get immediate results. All these are waste of our energy, and if we stop this tremendous rush of our mental and physical activities and get into a quiet and restful state of mind, then we can prolong life. If you can enter into absolute rest, by entering into *samadhi*, the super-conscious state, you will be able to make your life much longer. If you do not worry about anything, you will not suffer from nervous prostration. If you practise breathing exercises, they will prolong your life. If you do not eat and drink too much, if you practise moderation, do a little physical exercise, drink pure water, breathe pure air, and practice chastity and purity of thought, they will prolong your life, and you are sure to live longer, and remain happy while living. Otherwise, if you live for a hundred years with miserable health and being dependent upon others, that life is not worth-having; but if you can enjoy perfect peace and spiritual enlightenment and understand the laws of nature and obey those laws of health and life, then that life would be worth-living. Study Raja Yoga, study a little of Hatha Yoga, practise the breathing exercises, exercise self-control, and practise moderation in everything, then you will find that you have nothing to be sorry for, and your life will be prolonged.

Of course, if you wish to prolong your life over a hundred years, or to live five hundred years, you will have to go through some discipline, and practise Hatha Yoga and each system, and that profession of the system will take a great deal of your energy. You will have to be under strict diet and strict rules. You won't be able to live in a city like this (New York). They would not allow you, because this atmosphere is not right and it would take away a great deal of your energy. And you must remember that is a waste of

energy to live in a great city where the atmosphere is over-crowded and unfavourable. You must live where the environments are absolutely favourable. If you can live in such a spot, in retirement, and practise under the direction of a Yogi, obeying his instructions for some time, you will be able to purify your body and mind, and when the body and mind are purified, you will be able to preserve the vital energy and stop the decay of the system, i.e., organic decay, and that can be done. There are Yogis in India, who have lived there two hundred years, or three hundred years, and it is very difficult to get hold of them. They do not come to the cities which are over-crowded. They live in silence, in caves in the Himalayas, in lonely forests and in other places in India where people do not generally come, and also where there is no commercial value. So, in lonely place, people do not disturb them. They live quietly, subsisting on roots and fruits, and even of those they do not eat much. They drink water, and perhaps they get some kind of root or some vegetable which has some peculiar property to nourish the body for a long time, without much need for other things. What is their object in living for such a length of time? Their object is to attain to absolute freedom from the laws of nature, and to transcend the laws of nature, and become absolute masters.

Q.—How is it possible for a soul to come back to this material world in order to become perfect? How is it possible for that soul to be born again?

Ans.—You see, the soul is born to reap the results of its previous works and to fulfill the desires and to gain experience by coming in contact with the objects of the phenomenal world, and so long as there are desires, we are bound to come back. A soul free from desires will not come back, and so long as these desires are not fulfilled, they will bring us back again to this plane, because this is the only place where our human desires can be fulfilled. The soul manufactures another body,—that is what is meant by birth. The soul is born; that is, the soul takes up another garment. Just as we put on a new garment when the old one is too worn out, so the soul puts on a new garment according to its desires and tendencies. You will get this grand idea in the *Gita.*

Q.—Is not love between man and woman the true awakening of the soul, and does not this true love lead to unlimited love?

Ans.—Yes, when the love is true, it leads to unlimited love and unity. True love is divine. Love is God, and God is Love. But true love is very rare in this world. True love comes to the souls who are awakened to the spiritual truth, or to the spiritual nature. True love is very rare, and if there be any instance of true love, there is Divinity, and that will lead to the unlimited love, to the ocean of infinite love. But most of the love which we ordinarily call true love, is not true love, but it is carnal, and is known as limited selfish human affection. Limited selfish love is based upon human from self-interest. Where there is not self-interest of any kind, *where the two souls are joined absolutely and unselfishly, i.e., without any selfish motive to gain or to reap, there can be found a glimpse of true love, and in that state of true love two souls become one, and each vibrates with the other, and there is no selfishness. If one dies, the other will also die, not by committing sucide, but their death must come simultaneously. They cannot live being separate, and even after death they continue to be together, and if they are born again, they are born again to meet each other, and to be together again, whether it is between a man and a woman, and a woman and a woman, or a mother and a child.* That does not make any difference. True love is one, and if you read these books you will find a great deal of help, and then afterwards when you read the *Upanishads*, you will be able to understand the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* are the oldest writings, just like the expression of inspired truths. The inspired seers of truth described their experiences, and it is very difficult to understand them at first. They are in a very old style. The language is different and the style is different. Without commentaries, very few can understand the *Upanishads*, but if you read these first then you will be able to understand the *Upanishads* also. The Word M. of course, has no particular relation to the M. people. The M. people were civilized, of course, but they did not develop a system of philosophy as high as the Vedanta, but there is a great difference of opinion about these M. . . people. Nobody can

tell exactly how much they knew. The few relics that have been discovered, prove that they were very highly civilized and that they were connected with the ancient Egyptian and Aryan civilization. Some people trace the origin of the Egyptian and Aryan peoples from the M. . . people, and some also say that the M. . . people came from Asia. But it is very difficult to say which is the correct theory, but the word M. . . is to be found in the Rig Veda, the most ancient writings that exist today. The M. . . is that cosmic energy or power by which the phenomena is produced.

Now, it is a fact that the breathing exercises will purify the bodies. When bodies are purified, when nerve centres are purified, the mental condition will be clearer, intellect will be finer, and all human beings will be able to grasp things which are more abstract, and are on the spiritual plane. Then memory will be strengthened, and power of concentration will be increased. Then self-control will come. As you know when you have very good thoughts, your breath is also deep and rythmic. Breathing has a close relation to our mental conditions. When your mind is restless, you will find that your breath is irregular, and the control of breath is the physical method by which you can bring peace and poise in your mind. You can bring rest to your minds. Breathing exercises produce innumerable results, but under the present conditions in which you are living in this city, it is very difficult to get those results, because, in the first place, you have no time to practise. You cannot be regular; you cannot have a quiet, and secluded spot where you can practise without being disturbed. If you sit quietly in your own room, your mind will ask you to go down, or to do something, or other members of the family will disturb you, and you have no place where you can shut yourself in for a half-hour. This is the reason why we cannot get perfect results, but during the summer months when you go out of town, sit under a tree and leave your windows open. If you go to your country home, that would be the best to practise the breathing exercises ,and when you understand philosophy and science of breathing, you can cure almost every disease by breathing exercises, by controlling the *prana,* the vital energy. The healing power is in yourself, and Vedanta teaches that

this vital force or vital energy, *prana,* which is in us can be increased. We can draw this healing power from the atmosphere, from the water, and from the food, and we can drink pure water and breathe pure air, and then have the mind concentrated upon *prana* when you are eating or drinking or breathing, and you will see what wonderful results will come. Then store up that energy in your own nerve-centres, as it is taught in Raja Yoga, and as it is given in the Yoga classes. Learn the method and practise it, and then you will find that your mind, nerve-centres, and brain will all be purified in course of time. These breathing exercises will not produce any injurious effect.

Some people have an idea that the breathing exercises would upset the students, but they are mistaken, and those students who are upset, will be upset anyway without practising anything. They are already upset, but their upset condition can be cured through the practice of breathing exercises if they follow the instructions properly. Those who have been practising for the last six or seven years, have had wonderful results, physical and mental. I have some students in my classes, who have been members of the Yoga classes also. Ever since I started them, and they have gained wonderful results. Of course, we do not hold any class for demonstration, ; otherwise we would make a great show of what has been accomplished, but if you read the books on Yoga, and practise the lessons yourself, you will find what wonderful results would be obtained. Then you can obtain some of them. The older students will help you in explaining how much they have gained. And another thing we must learn, that in order to understand the principles of Vedanta, we must read the books on Yoga and philosophy, and study them, instead of wasting our time in reading novels and other things. Avoid other trivial books which simply distract our attention from the truth, and keep us on the surface only, on the material plane and on the sense-plane. Instead of reading ordinary books, we should study the mysteries of life and unfold the purpose of our existence, and such books you will find published by the Vedanta Society and other similar societies of New York. These books are very philosophical and scientific. Some students may not be able to grasp

them, but when you do not understand at first, read it over again. Try to concentrate your attention on the subject, and do not let it go until you have understood it, and then when you do not understand after making such efforts, you can get help from here. We are here to help you as much as we can. Then during the summer months, Swami Nirmalananda will be here and I will be here for a certain length of time. You should make a point of reading such books as are in touch with this new line of thought. It is new to you, because you have not been trained and brought up in this line of thought. It is so universal and so vast, it includes everything, and, therefore, it takes a great deal of our time to know the whole of Vedanta, and all its branches. Our life is so short and there are a great many obstacles in the path of realization. So, understanding all these difficulties which are to be overcome, we should be very careful in not wasting our time and energy. Then when you are not reading books, practise the breathing exercises. Of course you will get plenty of time even after performing all your duties of daily life to devote a portion in studying these spiritual and uplifting books.

Another thing I must tell all the students, and that is the exercise of self-control. That is, when you deal with others and mix with other people, show that you possess self-control, and what you are practising try to live. Do not lose your temper, because if you want to help other people, you must first set an example. An example is better than precepts. So, remembering that, each student and each member of the Vedanta Society (New York), will help others by living a right example and by showing in the household and to others that he possesses self-control, as also in his business. If you show that, then you would be a worthy member of the Society as well as a worthy student, and I am glad to say that the older members have shown that wonderful self-control which they have gained, as well as poise, not worrying about anything. Give resignation to the Divine Will, and in unselfishness, to help others and to work for humanity. Now, you know this Society (of New York) is based upon entirely unselfish principles. We have started, I think, for the first time an organization where there is no paid servant to do the work. Every-

thing is done voluntarily through love, and not for money. It is the first institution, I think, in this country. It is a great institution, and it is going to be the most powerful institution in the world, and each member will have to show that spirit. We are working with that one principle, to help others without seeking any return, and by helping the work, this work which we are doing not for ourselves without seeking any return, and you would practise that which we teach, and you will show wonderful power, and gain the most wonderful result. That is the purification of the heart. Every member who is performing any work in connection with this Society, is practising Karma Yoga and unselfish work, and we need more workers, because our work is increasing every day. We may start other branches in other cities, and we have already started branches in Washington and in Brooklyn. Next fall we may start branches in Philadelphia, in Boston, and in other cities, and we need more workers, and those who can devote their lives to this work, will find nothing that would make them regret afterwards. We have given our lives to the work, and those who are ready to follow the path, are welcome, and as Christ gave His life to help humanity, so all the members of the Vedanta Society (New York) are living the Christ-life and following that noble example in his or her own individual way. I am glad that other new members who have come, should show the same spirit, and remember the ideals for which we stand.

THE FULFILMENT OF ALL DESIRES

Our earthly life consists in constant efforts to fulfill our natural desires. The desire is like the propelling powers of the machine of our minds and bodies. It may be compared to the steam of a huge engine. As an engine cannot work without steam power, so the machine of our minds and bodies cannot perform any action without being propelled by the power of desire. If we do not have desires at all, then we would be like chairs, like the wall, or like any other inanimate object. Desires have tremendous desires, and we do not understand exactly how much power this desire has. Science tells us that all the internal organs of our bodies, are but the results of our desires.

The desire to see has produced this retina of optic nerve. The desire to hear has produced the desire of hearing. The desire to eat has produced the desire to masticate. The desire to breathe has caused the lungs, and the brain is produced by the desire to think. The desire to walk and to cease has produced the legs, feet, and the desire to feel has produced the hands.

If we do not exercise our desire, for instance, if we lift the hand and let it remain there, it will die, but by exercising our desire it will fulfill our purpose. In short, as all the sense organs and external organs are nothing but the offsprings of the desires of those minute germs of living substance, for what is ordinarily understood by natural selection, is nothing but the expression of desire. These desires are latent in us. We do not get them from outside, but they arise from within. We bring these desires, and we are born with them. They are so latent that they come with us wherever we go, they go with us—from here to China, for these desires will not leave us here, for we carry them with us—wherever we go.

There are various kinds of desire. They may be divided into three general classes:

FIRST:—The desire to live.

SECOND:—The desire to enjoy life.

THIRD:—The desire to avoid pain and suffering.

These three kinds of desires lie at the root of all the works that we perform during our life-time.

The desire to live is the most universal of all other desires. Its expression is not only to be found in human beings, but also in the lower animals and in all living creatures, and in vegetables. Wherever there is a desire for food, there is a desire for nourish or drink, for nourishment, there is also to be found the expression of this universal desire to live. If this desire to live did not exist in our soul, and were not latent in each human soul, then no human being would take so much trouble to earn his living, or would face such competition and struggle for existence. All humanity would have committed suicide long ago, and this world would be a barren desert, if this desire did not exist at the time of all manifestations of life. Think of all the time we spend, in order to sustain life to keep our body in good health, to preserve our physical forms. How much time the Faith-healers and Christian Scientists are spending to keep it in form.

All desires to eat, drink, and clothe ourselves, to have heat and cold air in hot weather, are but secondary desires. They are but the outcome of one desire, which is universal, and that is desire to live. When the question of self-preservation is answered by supplying ourselves with all the necessaries of life, then arises the desire to prolong existence beyond one's own life by begetting children, which is another form of desire to live. Very few people understand this. The desire to propagate children is the outcome of the desire to live in the form of children. Therefore, marriage, taking care of children, is all the expression of the animal desire, and that universal desire to live keeps its existence by propagation.

Along with the fulfilment of this desire to live come other desires. The desires to enjoy life, and therefore, to avoid pain, sorrow and suffering go together, and you cannot separate them. The first is the desire to live. Intrinsically we like those things which bring a pleasant sensation, or an agreeable feeling. We hate those things that are unpleasant or stand in our way of fulfilling our desire to live. For the desire to live and to enjoy life, all human beings like other lower animals are constantly busy in fulfilling these desires. Those who lived in the past, did the same as we are doing, and those

who will live in the future, will continue to do the same. The desire to live again causes the fear of death, which is considered to be the terrible enemy of life and of all enjoyments. Wherever we find the desire to live, there is also to be found the expression of that fear of death in all human beings as also in lower animals. We do not like to die, but every one is subject to death. There is nothing in the universe that will not die. Everything that is born, must come to an end. No matter, however, strong our desire to live may be, we cannot keep this body forever, but it will pass away also in time. We may take special care of the body. We may try to cure all the diseases, bringing all the comforts and luxuries together, but still we will not be able to keep this body forever. If a man possesses all the comforts of life with all the wealth of the whole nation, nevertheless, he will not be able to live forever on this earth, consequently he will not be able to fulfill that desire to live on this plane forever.

If it be impossible for us to live on this plane forever, what are we going to do ? Is there any other way by which we can fulfill that desire ? Those who are materialistic in their views and consider that death is the end of life and nothing remains after death, have neither object, nor solution to fulfill that desire, but those who understand the true nature of life and its meaning and purpose, realize that death is only the means to change, and that entity or being which is the highest, does not die, but continues to live even when this gross physical body is reduced to its elements. But there are some agnostics, who think that if we cannot live forever, let us beget children and live in the form of posterity in the form of children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren. These thinkers dwell on the surface They do not go deeper than the surface. They do not understand the nature of life, nor its meaning and purpose of which they do not know. So long the desire exists in the soul, it must continue to live on this plane or some other plane. It will also continue to manifest that desire to live always. This is one of the strongest proofs of immortality or immortal nature of life and also of this desire to live and this fear of death. Why do we have this desire to live, if we cannot live? It would be very poor solution as well as consolation to us to think to live in the

form of posterity, as the individuality of them will cease to live. What kind of solution or consolation is that? Do you think that they fulfill that desire to live with that kind of idea? Death of the body does not affect the soul. As we wake up from sleep and retain our identity once again we manifest our desires and tendencies, so from the sleep of death we wake up and retain them, and our identity continues to live and to manifest those desires and tendencies by reincarnation or remanifesting other forms of life either on this plane or on some other plane, and they will continue to manifest those latent desires always.

The truth of this continuity of life after death and reincarnation will enable us to discover that method by which we are to fulfill that natural desire to live. This innate desire can be fulfilled by becoming conscious of our immortality. When we know that we cannot desire, then that desire to live is fulfilled, because we know that we live, and that desire will not be attended with fear of death. Then all fear of death will vanish. The fear of death arises from the attachment to the physical body, and this attachment is the outcome of ignorance of our mortal nature. We do not know that we are immortal, and, therefore, we are afraid. Being deluded in the darkness of ignorance, we think we are subject to death. We identify ourselves with this physical form, and think that this physical body is the dwelling house of immortal beings, as the soul is not subject to death. Then, when we become attached to the conditions of this gross material body and try to seek pleasure, in the end it becomes the slave of those desires. All these relative desires are the outcome of that self-will, because we do not know our own nature. We think of ourselves as one with the body, therefore, we fear death, but when the light of wisdom comes and enlightens our own souls, it removes that darkness of self-delusions, then the body appears as living on account of the immortal soul, which is behind it. This body is not the producer of life, but life is in the soul. When we know this, we do not live simply to eat and drink, to enrich this physical body and to adorn it with flowers and costly garments, nor do we think that we can prolong life by begetting children, but we live to fulfill the higher purpose of life. We must not forget the

truth that parents do not produce the souls of their children, but they are merely the channels for these earthly bound spirits to return to this plane, in order to fulfill their desire to live again on this plane. It is for this reason that the wise men who understand the laws of nature, do not want to be animals, but they control their passion and direct it toward the higher purpose of life. Thus they fulfill that animal craving by transferring this energy into a spiritual force. Jesus Christ and Buddha were the two great spiritual leaders of mankind who showed in their lives how to fulfill the desire to live and how to propagate the truth. Wise men do not propagate like animals, but they propagate the highest truths and enlighten the minds of the people and direct them toward the ultimate object or goal, teaching them how to fulfill their desire to live by the best and most spiritual Incarnation in this world.

First of all we must understand the law of life. We are immortal, and we do not create the souls of children, but they come to fulfill their desire to live, and you are only the means to fulfill their will, and give them the opportunities. Now the question may arise as to how are we to fulfill the desire for enjoyments and pleasures and also how are we to avoid pain and suffering? The answer to this question, according to Vedanta, is that not by searching after enjoyments, but by going to the fountain-head of all pleasures and true happiness we can avoid pain and suffering. Those, who are trying to satisfy their desires for pleasure and enjoyment, by seeking external objects and by gathering the best of pleasure, will always remain busy in getting the pleasant things and avoiding the unpleasant things, for there will be no cessation, but at the same time their desires will increase, and the more they will try to gratify those desires, the more they will increase in number, and become stronger in the end. No one has succeeded in gratifying all his desires, for if a person is possessed of all the comforts and wealth of the world, do you think he is happy? He will want more. The millionaire will want more, just as a drunkard is for a drink. So man becomes intoxicated with that desire and ambition and is always restless and unhappy, and he cannot be happy and contented. It is, therefore, said that the fire of desire cannot

be quenched by pouring the butter over the objects of pleasure, and the more we indulge in our desires, they will become stronger.

If you examine your own life, you will find the truth of this saying. How many times have you enjoyed the sweetest things of your life and how many times have you not longed for them? You have eaten the best things, you have worn the best garments, but you do not think that your desires are gratified. Rather we all try to fulfill those desires hundred times more. Those who hold sense pleasures as the ideals of life, will continue to seek the objects of those pleasures again and again. They will make a constant effort, in order to get those things, but at the same time those desires will increase, and they will not be gratified. People who are living on the worldly plane, will adopt certain methods to fulfill their desires for pleasures, and they are not successful. Because they should remember that no one gets pleasures from external objects. The same person, who has found the greatest pleasure and satisfaction in a particular object, will dislike the very sight of it if other desires arise in his mind, and it is for this reason that worldly people cannot stick to one kind of enjoyment for all the time, or for a long time, for they must have change. They want to change the objects of pleasures and enjoyments constantly and their interest in things will also be changed.

If you have a desire for any particular thing, go and enjoy it day and night and see how you like it, and then you will see what foolishness it is, but generally people cannot do that, they want to change their objects of pleasures. This is why we find so many fads among people. There are some who spend the whole of their life running after this thing and that thing, which attracts their senses.

These desires for pleasures will in the end become stronger, will gain enormous strength and power, and will not die at the time of death. They will continue to exist even after death of the body, and will force the egos to come back on this plane, and such is the power of desire.

Our present life is the result of our past desires and our future will be determined by the desires we possess now. Moreover, those who seek pleasure and happiness from external

objects, will have to take also suffering, sorrow, disease, and all kinds of unhappiness, because they are living on a worldly plane, which is a world of mixture, good and evil, and pleasure and unhappiness. If you wish pleasure, you will have to take its companion pain, and it cannot be avoided. In your own life, you will find that in everything that you enjoy, there is something that you did not like, just like the thorns in a rose. This desire for pleasure and enjoyment for an indefinite period of time has created all the conceptions of heaven. The conception of heaven has come from this desire to enjoy. Celestial pleasures are nothing but those types of pleasures which most people like, and they generally think of those enjoyments and afterwards imagine a place where they will get all these comforts and enjoyments *minus* suffering, sorrows and unhappiness. It is for this reason that we find the ideals of Christian's heaven different from those of the Mohammedan's heaven. If you compare them, you will find a vast difference, for it is the production of their own desires. A Mohammedan living in Arabia wants a heaven with plenty of water, etc. How many of us would like to go to a heaven, where there is a constant playing on the harps?

The wise men and the Vedanta philosophers tell us: "That the desire for pleasure and enjoyment can be fulfilled by those alone who can go to the fountain-head of happiness, and understand that true pleasure and happiness never come from outside, but always spring up from within. If you know how to become happy without depending on outside things of this world, you will be happy. Being the child of immortal bliss, you are born to be happy. Few persons understand this truth. Most of the people do not know that the fountain-head of true pleasures is behind their souls, but those who have discovered that source, have found the right method of fulfilling their desires to enjoy pleasure and happiness. They go to that fountain-head where they find the current of blessing and happiness, bathe in it, and enjoy true and unending happiness, which is more intense and more permanent than earthly pleasures and sense happiness. Because it is everlasting and infinite, and there is no end to that happiness, as the eternal spring of that happiness is behind their own soul. Search within, and then you will find it, and the individual soul will

be able to fulfill that desire for pleasure and enjoyment. It is then that the soul will reach that state of cessation from sorrow, suffering and disease. Then birth and death will not touch him. Because we are an immortal soul. Unhappiness will never affect us, because we find greater happiness from within. This state is described by different names in different religions. In Vedanta, it is called *mukti* or *moksha,* for in this state the desire of knowledge, which is so strong in an intelligent being, will also be fulfilled, because, in this state, he sees the dawn of light. When the light of wisdom will shine from within, then the seeker after divine knowledge will be able to fathom all phenomena and their causes, and it is then that the ideal of all science and philosophy, and all religions will be attained. It is then the thirst after knowledge will be quenched[1].

[1] Delivered in New York, February 26th, 1905, in the Vedanta Society, 62, West 71st Street.

HINDU PHILOSOPHY IN INDIA*

WHAT IS VEDANTA?

The popular belief is that 'Vedanta Philosophy' means the "Philosophy of the Upanishads" confined exclusively to the Vedas or the sacred Scriptures of the Hindus in India. But the term 'Veda' in the present case is used to signify, not any particular book, but "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, 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 viewpoints and flowing through different stages of the phenomena, ultimately end in the infinite ocean of absolute Existence, and infinite knowledge—Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam Brahma—the ultimate Reality of the universe. It is the absolute Substance which is beyond subject and object, which is the infinite Source of knowledge, of consciousness and blissfulness, and which is not many, but one. It is the same as the "Good" 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 of his categories of thought.

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It is also more sublime than the philosophy of Kant, because it recognises 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 philosophy has this oneness been so clearly explained and so strongly emphasised as it is in Vedanta. "This constituted the unique character of Vedanta, unique compared with every other philosophy of the world which has not been influenced by it, directly or indirectly."[1] 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 sense, of the mind and of their inherent forms. In this respect, Vedanta holds a unique position among the philosophies of the world. The self or atman, the true nature of the ego or Jivatma is one with the essence of Divinity (Brahman) 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.[2]

Starting from the ultimate conclusions of ancient and modern science, Vedanta says that the absolute Truth is one and not many, yet there can be varieties of expressions 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

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[1] *The Six systems of Indian Philosophy* (p. 223), by Professor Max Muller.

[2] Professor 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." *The Six Systems of Philosophy,* p. 239.

realm of the knowable to that which is beyond the knowable. 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 these knowable phenomena. The monistic 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 the answer 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 generalisations of the various branches of science.

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 can never explain and which will harmonise with the 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. First, it must co-ordinate the ultimate results arrived at by special branches of knowledge which we call sciences, and taking up those conclusions, it must form the widest generalisations possible. When it does this, it is called Phenomenology. Herbert Spencer's philosophy performs this function, but it leaves out the vital problems which perplex the minds of the greatest philosophers as unsolvable mysteries. Secondly, true philosophy must investigate the realm of knowledge and trace its source. A philosophy which does this is called Epistemology. The philosophy of Kant, Hegel, Fichte and others has sought to perform this function. George Croom Robertson says: "Epistemology is just philosophy, because it deals with things, deals with beings; 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 Ontologist, 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."[3]

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 towards 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 the Vedanta philosophy. Hence we may say that Vedanta is the most complete system.

Philosophy and religion must always be in perfect harmony. Ernest Haeckel, in his Riddle of the Universe, 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. His insentient substance may be compared with Kapila's Prakriti which is eternal and unintelligent. According to Vedanta, however, the final reality of the universe is Brahman which is Sat-Chit-Ananda, or 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.

RELIGION OF VEDANTA

The monistic religion of Vedanta does not admit the Sankhyan

[3] *Elements of General Philosophy.*

theory of the plurality of 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. From this Absolute Brahman the phenomenal universe rises and in the end returns into the Brahman.

The religion of Vedanta admits that Brahman has two aspects, the one is without any attribute "Nirguna" and the other is with attributions "Saguna", who is called Isvara 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 which forms His Body. The God of Vedanta is both the efficient and the material cause of all phenomena. He loves all living creatures who live more and have their being in Him, and can be loved and be 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 scholar 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, 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.

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; what he believes he lives up to; and, therefore, practical philosophy still exists among the Hindus in India. The followers of Vedanta live spiritual lives and strive to attain God-consciousness. In India, if anyone writes voluminous speculative philosophy and lives a worldly life, he is not considered a true philosopher.

The philosophy and religion of Vedanta embrace all the sciences, philosophies and religions of the world by accepting their ultimate conclusions, and classifying them according to their order of merit. 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"—Rig Veda. No other philosophy or religion is based upon this fundamental truth of the unity of existence under a variety of names and forms than Vedanta, and therefore it offers, as can no other, an adequate foundation of all the different phases of dualistic, qualified-non-dualistic and 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 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 monistic phase of Vedanta is the most sublime of all. Very few thinkers can appreciate the grandeur of spiritual oneness. Yet, herein lies the solution of the deepest problems of science, philosophy and metaphysics and the final goal of all religions. It alone explains how it is possible for one to say, "I and my Father are one"; "I am He"; "That thou art"; 'Analhaq," as a Mahommedan Sufi says.

The system of Vedanta harmonises with the religious ideals of the human mind and shows the various paths by which a man may attain to God-consciousness and emancipation from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness and all other imperfections, and eventually becomes as perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect. Its notable feature is that it 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 great divisions which together with their subdivisions cover almost

all classes of people; and then it sets for the methods which may be helpful to everyone. Each of these methods is called in Sanskrit "Yoga."

First is "Karma Yoga"—the path of work. It is for the active man; for those who like to work and are always ready to do something for the help of others. In short, it is for the busy, everyday working man or woman. Karma Yoga reveals the "Secret of Work" and opens the way to complete Self-Mastery.

The next method is "Bhakti Yoga." It is for such as are of devotional and emotional 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"—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, the curing of diseases through mental power and the performing of all such acts as are ordinarily called miracles. All psychic powers which were displayed by Jesus of Nazareth and his followers, and which have been manifested by the Yogis of India from time immemorial, are described rationally in Raja Yoga. Furthermore, the marvellous powers achieved by the practice of Pranayama, the control of breath, and by the awakening of the "Serpent Power," or "Kundalini," are scientifically explained in this system of Raja Yoga. The principal aim of Raja Yoga is to lead the seeker after Truth through the path of concentration and meditation to the highest state of superconsciousness, where individual soul communes with the universal Spirit and realises the unity of both on the spiritual plane.

Jnana Yoga is the fourth method. It is the path of right knowledge and discrimination. This is for those who are intellectual, 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. 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. A 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 losing their relativity merge into the ocean of the absolute Brahman. Thus, we see how universal is the scope of Vedanta.

ETHICS OF VEDANTA

Standing on the rock of the spiritual oneness of the universe, Vedanta explains the basis of Ethics. If we injure, hate or cheat others, we injure, hate or 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 as we love our own self, we are truly ethical. Then we do not think that we have fulfilled the highest end and aim of life by eating, drinking and begetting children like 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 real Self of others. Moral perfection consists in the destruction of selfishness. Having attained perfect freedom from the limitations of the animal self, the individual soul must strive to gain spiritual perfection which is the ultimate goal of evolution.

Spiritual perfection is the manifestation of the true nature of Spirit or Atman which is immortal, free, divine and one with the Universal Spirit or God. Evolution attains to the highest fulfilment of its purpose when the Spirit manifests itself in its pristine purity and full glory. Each individual soul according to Vedanta is bound to become perfect in the end. As this 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 amoeba 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. They supplement each other. The Vedantic theory of Reincarnation rejects the one-birth theory of Christianity, Islam and other religions. It is not the same as the theory of Metampsychosis or Transmigration of souls, 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 and higher in the process of the unfoldment of the latent powers, passing through various births and rebirths, always reaping the results of its own actions, 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 diversities of nature which the theory of heredity has failed to explain. The doctrine of Karma denies the dogma that God punishes the wicked with eternal damnation and rewards the virtuous with celestial felicity. This 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 no 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.

We create our own destiny, mould our future, determine our character by our own thoughts and deeds. We cannot blame God or Satan for our own misery and sufferings for which we ourselves are responsible; because what we deserve we have got now, and what we shall make, we shall rceive in future. Our present was determined by our past and our future will be determined by our present. This is the Eternal Law.

Thoughts on Yoga, Upanishad And Gita

(TIRTHARENU)

(THE CLASS-LECTURES OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA)

Recorded and Edited by
SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

PREFACE

To the English Edition

Well has it been said by Swami Abhedananda, the Apostle of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and a Man of Realization : "He that hath seen the Son, hath also seen the Father. The latest manifestation of Divinity was in the form of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Him I have seen, therefore, I have seen God, and through him I have realized Christ, Buddha, Krishna, Chaitanya, and other great Prophets and Saviours."[1] To these words of Swami Abhedananda, we also add : "Those who have seen the Apostles of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, have seen Sri Ramakrishna, the Incarnation of God, and through Him have realized the greatness of all the Prophets and Saviours." Really, it is a great privilege to see and to come in contact with divine presence of the Apostles of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, because Sri Ramakrishna himself said about his Apostles that they are the flocks of Homa birds (the birds, who never touch the dust of the delusive world) : or 'they are the churned butter of the early morning'. However, in various ways, in different times, Sri Ramakrishna said about His Apostles, or His disciples of the inner circle (*antaranga*), and said that His chosen companions will come (incarnate) with Him in every age, to help Him in His sportive play or divine *lila.*

Swami Abhedananda was one of the Master's divine Apostles, who came with his Master to help him in various ways. The Apostles are the 'Men of Realization', and are absolutely free from the fetters of the delusive world, but they appear with their Master, as Bhagavan Sri Krishna said in the *Gita* : "Whenever there is decay of religion, and an ascendary of irreligion, I manifest Myself" (IV.7). The Saviours and their divine companions appear in human form in every age to set a living example before the world, with their practical *sadhana* and *siddhi,* so as to help the aspiring spiritual seekers as well

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[1] Vide *Great Saviours of the World,* Introduction (1966), p. 17.

as ordinary men to march onward towards the path of their progress.

Swami Abhedananda was born in Ahiritola in Calcutta, in October 2, 1866. His father, late Rasick Lal Chandra, was a student of philosophy and a teacher of English in the Oriental Seminary in Calcutta, from 1838 to 1863. Swami Abhedananda's formei name was Kali Prasad Chandra. Kali Prasad was educated first in a Sanskrit School, then in a Bengal Vernacular School, and afterwards in the Oriental Seminary, from which he successfully passed the Entrace Examination at the age of eighteen.

Kali Prasad was very studious, He studied Indian and Western philosophies under veteran professors. He eagerly studied Patanjali's *Yogasutras, Astavakra-samhita, Siva-samhita, Satchakranurapana,* etc., not only to quench the thirst for theoretical knowledge, but also for learning the practical method of Raja Yoga. But he was told not to practise any of those methods, described in the *Yoga-shastras* without being properly guided by a competent Yogi *Guru.* His great anxiety was to find a practical *siddha-Guru* who could guide him in his Yoga practice.

An opportunity came, and he came to know about the great Ramakrishna Paramahansa who lived at Dakshineswar near Calcutta. So, one sunday morning Kali Prasad marched to Dakshineswar by the side of the Ganges, and reached at last the Temple Garden at Dakshineswar where he met the great Yogi, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and requested him to teach Yoga *sadhana.* Paramahansadeva gladly agreed, and said: "You were a great Yogi in your past incarnation. Come, my boy, I will teach you Yoga." Then Paramahansadeva initiated him, and wrote a *mantram* on his tongue, by saying.

शुचि अशुचिरे लये दिव्यघरे यबे शुबि।
दुइ सतीने पीरित हले तबे श्यामा मा-के पाबि ॥

That is, 'when you will go beyond the senses of the pure and the impure, and will transcend duality and commune with the non-dual Reality, then you will get the Divine Mother, who is formless and also with form, is indeterminate and also determinate'. Swami Abhedananda writes in his Autobiography : "Then he gave me instructions in concentration and

meditation. He touched my chest, and aroused my Kundalini, the 'Serpent Power' at the base of my spinal column, and I went into Samadhi, the state of superconsciousness. In him (Ramakrishna) I found the embodiment of the absolute Truth of the highest philosophy, as well as universal religion which underlies all sectarian religions of the world, and became his humble disciple. I had good fortune to be with him and to serve for two years. There I met his other Apostles, among whom Swami Vivekananda was the most brilliant. I was attracted to him, and became his close companion."

In 1880, after the departure of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Kali Prasad renounced the world, and became a Sannyasin along with Swami Vivekananda and other *Guru-bhais*. In the newly-founded Baranagar Math near Calcutta, he took Sannyasa initiation after the performance of *Viraja-Homa*, and his Sannyasa-name was 'Swami Abhedananda', as was selected by Swami Vivekananda himself.

Afterwards, Swami Abhedananda took the life of Parivrajaka, and travelled bare-footed from place to place, depending entirely upon alms cooked or uncooked. Swami Abhedananda himself narrated the life of that time thus : "I endured all sorts of privation and hardship, practised austerities of all kinds, walked up to the source of the Jammuna and the Ganges, where I stayed for three months in the caves of the Himalayas * * . Thus wandering ten years all over India, and visiting sacred places like Kedarnath and Badrinarayan, Dwaraka, and Rameswaram, Jagannath and Puri, etc. I met great saints of India."

While travelling as Parivrajaka, Swami Abhedananda reached Gazipur and took shelter at the residence of Mr. S. C. Basu (Sisir Chandra Basu), who was then translating the *Siddhantakaumudi* of Panini, *Mahabhasya* of Patanjali, and ten *Upanishads* along with the commentaries of Sankara. Swami Abhedananda previously studied all the *Shastras* like *Astadhyayi, Mahabhasya* of Patanjali, *Vedantasutras* of Vadarayana with the commentaries of Sankara, Ramanuja, Nimvarka, Ballabha, Madhva and others. He helped much Mr. S. C. Basu in his work of English translation. At that time, the Swami translated the sayings of Sri Ramakrishna into English with the help of Mr. S. C. Basu and Bipin

Ganguli. While at Gazipur, the Swami met the great Sannyasi, Powhari Baba in his Ashrama, and was very glad to discuss with him. Then Swami Abhedananda went to Varanasi, and came in close contact with Swami Bhaskarananda and Yogi Trailanga Swami. From Varanasi the Swami went with Swami Nirmalnanda to Hardwar and Hrishikesha. At Hrishikesha the Swami spent some months in severe austerity (*tapasya*), and studied monistic Vedanta philosophy under the great scholar Dhanaraj Giri, who was the eminent Advaita Vedantist of those days. From there he went to Kedarnath, Badrinath, Triyuginarayana, Uttarakashi, Gangotri, Yamunotri, Gomukhi, Kailas and Manaswarovara, and other Himalayan shrines. He also travelled all over South India and Ceylon. While travelling in North India on foot, he met Swami Vivekananda (then Sacchidananda) at Porabandar, at the residence of Pandit Sankara-Pandurang. Swami Vivekananda introduced Swami Abhedananda to Panditji, and there was arranged a memorable discussion on Advaita Vedanta between Swami Abhedananda and Pandit Sankara-Pandurang. Swami Vivekananda was very pleased in the victory of his beloved brother Swami Abhedananda. Similarly, Swami Abhedananda met Swami Vivekananda (then Sacchidananda) second time in Gujrat at the residence of the scholar Munsukhram-Suryaram Tripathi. Swami Abhedananda also had a discussion on Advaita Vedanta with the Gujrati Pandit, Mansukhram-Suryaram Tripathi at the request of Swami Vivekananda, and that learned discussion on Vedanta was worth-remembering. After a long time Swami Abhedananda returned again to the newly-founded Alambazar Math, and there spent his days in study and deep meditation. In 1893, the great Parliament of Religions was arranged in America, and Swami Vivekananda conquered the hearts of the American citizens with his eloquent lectures and oratory. A special meeting was arranged for Swami Vivekananda's appreciation for preaching Hinduism in America by the citizens of Calcutta in the Town Hall under the Chairmanship of Peary Mohan Mookherjee of Uttarpara. Swami Abhedananda with the assistance of Swami Ramakrishnanda laboured hard to organise that meeting in the Town Hall, and arranged to send the resolutions of that meeting to Swami Vivekananda,

Dr. Barrows and Mr. Snell and others in America. In 1895, Swami Abhedananda went to Nainital and Almora. While living alone at Almora, Swami Abhedananda wrote an English article on *Hindu Preacher* in appreciation of the Hindu preacher, Swami Vivekananda, which was published by M. C. Alasingaperumal in the Madras "Brahmavadin" journal on 23rd November, 1895.

In 1896, when Swami Vivekananda invited Swami Abhednanda to assist him in his work in London, Abhedananda accepted the invitation of his beloved spiritual brother, and sailed from Calcutta in August, 1896. His first lecture was delivered before the Christo-Theosophical Society at Bloomsbury Square on 27th October, 1896 on the *Philosophy of Panchadashi* of Vidyaranya Muni. Swami Vivekananda entrusted him with the charge of conducting his classes on Vedanta and Raja Yoga there, and left for India in 1897. Swami Abhedananda continued his class lectures on Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga, and delivered public lectures in churches and before many religious and philosophical societies in London and its suburbs for one year. In London, the Swami met Professors Max Müller and Paul Duessen. In August, 1897 at the request of Swami Vivekananda, Swami Abhedananda crossed the Atlantic, and landed at New York, to take charge of the Vedanta Society which Swami Vivekananda started in New York City. To quote in this connection some lines from the book, *Hinduism Invades America* (1930), where Dr. Wendell Thomas said : "In 1897, Swami Abhedananda had come from England to help him (Vivekananda), finding the new world richer soil for the Hindu seed, and together they incorporated the Vedanta Society at New York in 1898. But Saradananda returned to India when Vivekananda came over to America then second time. * * Since the work was prospering so rapidly, the leader (Vivekananda) wrote for Turiyananda to come to California after Abhedananda had returned from his own preaching tour to relieve Turiyananda at New York."[3] Further Dr. Thomas wrote : "In the meantime, Abhedananda also left New York, retiring in 1917 to

[2] This lecture has been published in book form, by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

[3] *Hinduism Invades America* (1930), pp. 85-86.

an Ashrama of 370 acres at West Cornwall, connected in the foothills of the Berkshires, and Bodhananda was called from Pittsburgh to take his place. Nine years later, Abhedananda went back to his native land after a long and fruitful period of service in America, pleasantly interrupted by about ten visits to Europe during the summer vacations."[4]

Regarding the success and fruitful works and activities of Swami Abhedananda in America, Dr. Thomas said : "Paying more attention to history and his field of operation, Swami Abhedananda did more than his leader to adjust Vedanta to Western culture. Rather than overpowered by flashing oratory, he (Abhedananda) seeks to convince by sweet reasonableness and a vast array of new and picturesque facts. His case for vegetarianism,[5] for example, makes a strong appeal on its own merits. Again, he argues with a show of reason, that we accept the Christian Bible, as revealed of God, we must then accept *all* bibles. Unlike Vivekananda, he (Abhedananda) did not scorn spiritualism as a clear American product competing with the measureless penetration of the Hindus, but simply states that for all his conversation with spirits through Western mediums, he has learned nothing, and so regards them as earth-bound and ignorant. He even reinterprets his message to suit Western demands. * * In Abhedananda, we notice considerable adaptation. * * *[6]

Further, about the appreciation for works and activities of Swami Abhedananda in America, Dorothy F. Mercer, in her article in the book, *What Vedanta means to Me,* (A Symposium); edited by John Yale, and published by Rider and Company, London, in 1961, wrote : "A few years after Swami's (Swami Trigunnatitananda's) death in 1914, we returned to San Francisco. * * and whatever intellectual curiosity I had, was entirely absorbed by the Vedanta and Swami Abhedananda, who came to San Francisco in 1918. En route to India from New York, where he had been since

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[4] Ibid, p. 104.

[5] Remaining seven or eight years as a vegetarian in America, Swami Abhedananda fell in serious illness. Then with the advice of a noted physician of America and specially being requested by a letter, written to him, by the Holy Mother: Sri Sarada Devi, from Udbodhan, Calcutta, he was bound to give up the vow of vegetarianism.

[6] *Hinuism Invades America,* p. 112.

1897, Swami Abhedananda was urged by my mother and other older students of Swami Trigunnatitananda to stay in San Francisco at least for a short time. He stayed for about two and a half years, lecturing twice a week and giving a class once a week.

"Swami Abhedananda was tall, handsome, austere, and of commanding presence. An eloquent, scholarly and well-organised lecturer, he addressed hundreds every week, including many eminent San Franciscans. Even a maternal aunt and her husband went to hear him, not because they were eminent nor because they felt any religious need, but because Swami Abhedananda was one of the finest lecturer in the Bay Area. In a social group he was quiet and reserved, taking each man's measure.

"I can remember one occasion when a prominent and rightfully considered great San Franscican Doctor was factiously holding for the Yogis' ridiculous claim to psychic power. Knowing intimately the doctor's own psychic power, Swami Abhedananda rhetorically questioned, 'You do not go out mentally to your sleeping patients at night? Not only did I go to all of Abhedadanda's lectures and classes, but during this period I read Swami Vivekananda assiduously."[7]

Swami Abhedananda was very very popular in all the societies, universities, colleges, and churches, religious and philosophical institutions and every corner in America during his stay in U.S.A. The Swami was introduced to the professors, scholars, scientists, and artists, of America, and everywhere he was honoured and warmly appreciated. In 1898, Professor William James held a discussion with the Swami in the Professor's house on the problem of the *Unity of the Ultimate Reality*. That discussion lasted for nearly four hours, in which Professors Royce, Lanman, Shaler, and Dr. Janes, the Chairman of Cambridge Philosophical Conference, took the Swami's side and supported his arguments in favour of 'Unity'. To describe that historical moment and happenings, let me quote from Swami Abhedananda's *Leaves from Diary* : "In the afternoon I delivered my lecture on

[7] *What Vedanta means to Me* (1961), pp. 71-72.

Unity in Variety at Mrs. Ole Bull's house. Dr. Janes presided. Prof. William James and Prof. Lanman, the great Sanskrit scholar, who afterwards edited Whitney's translation of the Atharva Veda, were among the audience. It was a very learned lecture which the audience listened with rapt attention. In my discourse I brought out Prof. James' points against Unity and logically showed how fallacious they were.

"Dr. Janes announced after my lecture was over that the Swami would be glad to answer questions. Prof. James had his students with him sitting by his side. He then whispered to them to ask his own questions, which I answered without any hesitation. After I had answered several questions of his students, Dr. Janes remarked : 'Swamiji will be very happy if Prof. James puts question to him directly. To this Prof. James replied that it was not the place for him to ask questions. I supposed that the Professor was rather afraid lest he should be refuted in his arguments in the presence of his students.

"At the close of the meeting Prof. James shook hands with me and congratulated me for my lucid and logical discourse on the subject of Unity and invited me to come to lunch with him in his house next afternoon. I accepted the invitation and thanked him for coming to my lecture.

"In the evening I went with Mrs. Brocklesby to her house in Newton, a suburban town near Boston, and spent the night there as her guest.

"On May 30th, I returned from Newton to Camridge and went with Dr. and Mrs. Janes to hear Prof. Shaler, the author of the scientific book entitled "Matter, Motion and Mind," at the Memorial Hall. Then went with Dr. Janes to lunch with Prof. William James in his house. There were Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman and Prof. Shaler with us at the table. After lunch, Prof. James started a discussion against Unity with me because he believed in the Plurality of the Infinite, and was against the idea of the Unity of the ultimate Truth of the universe. I, on the other hand, supported the theory of Unity (*Advaitavada*), and refuted his pluralistic arguments. The discussion lasted for four hours, in which Prof. Royce, Prof. Lanman, Prof. Shaler, and Dr. Janes supported my arguments against Prof. James, who was at last convinced

that the Vedanta point of Unity of Brahman, the ultimate Truth, was unassailable. Dr. Janes remarked to me after the discussion was over that he never heard such a learned and wonderful discussion before and that he wished that there were a stenographer to take the whole discussion in shorthand writing.

"Then another day Prof. Lanman invited me with Dr. Janes to his house where we spent the whole afternoon. Prof. Lanman showed me his private library in which there were all the Vedas and Sanskrit scriptures, philosophy, *kavyas* in Sanskrit and other works of Sankaracharya, etc., a rare collection which he collected from India and other countries. He showed me the *Vedantasutras* with Sankara's commentary (Bombay edition) in three volumes, and asked me whether I read them and could understand the *Sankara-bhashya.* I answered in the affirmative. Thereupon he said putting his fore-finger on his head, "My brain cannot understand it." To this I replied : "You needed a *Guru,* preceptor who would have given you the key to open the secret door of your *buddhi,* the faculty of understanding, to realize the spiritual oneness of Vedanta." The learned Professor bowed to me saying : "You were lucky to find such a *Guru.*"

"In course of our conversation when I repeated the Sanskrit *Sloka* :

अनन्तशास्त्रं बहुवेदितव्यं, स्वल्पश्च कालो
बहवश्च विघ्नाः ।
यत्सारभूतं तदुपासितव्यं, हंसो यथा
क्षीरमिवाम्बुमिश्रम् ॥

"Prof. Lanman asked me how it was possible for a swan to drink the milk and leave the water as it was mentioned in that verse he could not understand. I explained that some acquatic birds possess some kind of acid in their mouth which curdles the milk there. Then it would be easy for the bird to swallow the curd of the milk without drinking the water. Prof. Lanman was very pleased to hear my explanation and said that it had never occurred to him. How true and wonderful was the illustration! The professor in his article on "The Milk-drinking Hansas of Sanskrit Poetry," on June 7, 1898, says : "Now by a singular coincidence, Swami Abhed-

ananda.....calling at my study last week.....while my mind was upon the subject of this essay.....had explained the hansa-fable.....by saying that there was a secretion in bird's mouth which coagulated the milky part of the mixture (somewhat after the fashion of rennet), so that the resulting curdy portions became easily separable..... The Swami's theory seems to be essentially like that of Sayana." From that day Prof. Lanman became a good friend to me and later on became an Honorary member of the Vedanta Society of New York, after I had organized it and had it incorporated."

Swami Abhedananda established a Vedanta Society in America by the end of September, by holding regular classes and delivering public lecture (as has been said before) on every sunday. In six months, he delivered ninety lectures in Mott Memorial Hall alone, and made the Vedanta Society self-supporting. He also opened a regular class on the *Bhagavad Gita* for the first time in America, and by his clearly instructive and scientific explanation on the religion and philosophy on the *Bhagavad Gita,* he created an absorbing interest among his students, admirers, and learned audiences for the study of Sanskrit language to acquire first-hand knowledge of the *Gita* and other Sanskrit scriptures.

After the end of the New York session, Swami Abhedananda went to Washington D.C. for a rest. But at the request of the students and the people who were more and more eager to hear him, he gave lectures and addresses in the public halls, parlours, and studios. At that time the Swami was introduced to Mr. McKinley, the President of U.S.A. who cordially received him, and discussed about the Vedanta philosophy of India. He also met Mr. John Brady, the Governor of Alaska. He was once the guest of Dr. Elmer Gates, the celebrated scientist and psychologist. He then went to Boston to lecture before the Free Religious Association of America. At the invitation of Prof. William James, the celebrated psychologist and philosopher, Swami Abhedananda delivered a lecture before the students and talented Professors, at the Harvard University. Next, he visited Mitford Newton Highland, O'Satern, Montclair and Eliot, and delivered lectures in that places. He stopped in Greenacre and worked there for four weeks. He went also to the

White Mountains in New Hampshire, where he enjoyed rest for some days.

The New York session began in November, 1898, and Swami Abhedananda lectured for five months during the session of 1898-99 and spent the summer in travelling and lecturing in New England and other parts of the country. In October, 1899 the Headquarters and the Office of the Vedanta Society of New York were established, and this gave the new impetus and energy to begin his work and to deliver instructive and impressive lectures on the Vedanta philosophy and Yoga. He also delivered lectures in Tuxedo Hall.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1900, Swami Abhedananda lectured again in New England and Middle States, while at the close of the following winter Swami Turiananda went from India to help the Swami. By his untiring energy, unfailing courtesy and his readiness in answering questions, his erudition in Sanskrit language and scriptures, his knowledge in science and philosophy Eastern and Western, Swami Abhedananda firmly established in U.S.A. not only Vedanta philosophy, but also ideas and ideals of his beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the latest Incarnation of God.

Early in 1904, more spacious quarters were established at 62, West 71st Street, in the New Headquarters, the Swami carried the regular lectures and discussions, and Sunday services. In 1905-1906, the Swami delivered some courses of lectures on "India and Her People" in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science, dealing with culture, civilization, arts, science, education, political condition of India during the British rule, religion, philosophy, and cultural fusion between the East and West, and the women's place in Hindu religion. Mr. Franklin W. Hooper, the Director of the Berkeley Institute of Arts and Science, presided over those memorable and historical lectures. Those lectures were published afterwards in America, and created a great sensation among the American people. This book also brought a reaction among the British Government and the British people. The book was sent to India for its Indian edition, but when it reached the India Gate, in Bombay Port, it was prohibited to enter into India, and was banned by the then Government of India,

though afterwards the book was released, and was printed in India, by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

Swami Abhedananda's lectures and discussions on various subjects made a deep impression on the public and the press in America. The best paper of the State, such as Sun, New York Tribune, Literary Digest, Critic, Times, Intelligence, Mind, etc., published from time to time highly appreciative reports and comments on his learned lectures and discussions. It is a great pleasure to mention in this connection that many of the paper-cuttings of those papers and journals were brought by the Swami with him when he returned from New York in India in 1921. But before 1921, he once came back to India on May 16, 1906. The Swami after ten years of hard toil in preaching Vedanta, Yoga, and other subjects, together with the ideal of the universal teachings as well as philosophy and religion of Bhagavan Ramarkishna, in quite distant foreign lands, sailed from New York to England and thence to India, and landed in Colombo in June 16, 1906. Then in 1906, he lectured throughout South India and North India, on various subjects, which were published afterwards in book form, under the title of *Abhedananda in India in 1906*. In November 10, 1906, Swami Abhedananda, accompanied by Swami Paramananda, sailed again for London, and from there to America.

From 1907 to 1920, he again lectured all over the United States of America, Canada and in different places of Continents, and took regular classes, and held learned discussions with eminent scholars, philosophers, scientists, and others. At last in 1921, Swami Abhedananda sailed from San Francisco, and crossed the Pacific Ocean, breaking his voyage at Honolulu, where he was a delegate from India at the Pan-Pacific Educational Conference. Then the Swami went to Japan, and studied Japanese culture, philosophy, and religion, stopping at Shanghai, Hong Kong, Canton, Manila, and Singapore, and delivered lectures in those places. From Singapore the Swami was invited to Kuala-Lampur, Rangoon, and other adjacent places. At last he landed in Calcutta.

Returning from the West, Swami Abhedananda made up his mind to go to Tibet via Kashmere, and to visit the sacred shrines and stopped at 'Leh', the capital of

Ladak, in western Tibet. He visited Amarnath shrine through Srinagar and Pahelgaon, and returning from Amarnath, he went to Tibet. In Tibet, he visited many places, and historical Buddhist shrines, and Monasteries or Gumphas. From the Hemis Monastery the Swami discovered the life-incident of Jesus the Christ, which was discovered before by the Russian traveller, Nicholas Notovitch. The Swami has described his journey to Amarnath and Tibet, as well as his visit to Hemis Monastery, from where he took the records of unseen life of Jesus in his Bengali book, *Kashmere O Tibet*.[8] In that book, Swami Abhedananda has discussed about religion, culture and customs of the Tibetans in a lucid way. The Swami also visited the sacred shrines of Khirbhavani and Jvalamukhi. After returning from Tibet and Kashmere, the Swami established the Ramakrishna Vedanta Society (afterwards it was named as 'Ramakrishna Vedanta Math') in Calcutta, of which he was the President. In 1924, he purchased the Ruby Cottage at Darjeeling, and established there the Ramakrishna Vedanta Ashrama. He left his mortal coil on 8th September, 1939.

During the stay at Calcutta, Swami Abhedananda used to take religious and philosophical classes in his new establsh-ed centres at Calcutta, and Darjeeling from 1923 to 1928, and among those, the classes on *Yoga, Upanishad* and *Gita*, in the Vedanta Society premises, then situated at 11, Eden Hospital Road, Calcutta, in 1923-24, are worth-mentioning. The class lectures were delivered by the Swami thrice a week, on Sunday, Wednesday, and Friday at 5-30 p.m. Some of the notes of those lectures were taken by some of the Swami's disciples, and they were published in book forms. The present book, *Thoughts on Yoga, Upanishad* and *Gita*, is the English rendering of the Bengali book, *Tirtharenu*. Before the book *Tirtharenu*, Srimat Swami Chitswarupananda, one of the foremost disciples of the Swami, published the book, *Maharajer Katha* in Bengali, and that book also contains the class-lectures of the Swami, delivered at 11, Eden Hospital Road, Calcutta, together with other lectures.

Now, this book, *Thoughts on Yoga, Upanishad and Gita*,

[8] This book has been published by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta.

the English rendering of the *Tirtharenu,* contains only some fragments of the lectures on *Patanjala-darshana, Katha-Upanishad* and *Bhagavad-Gita,* which have been translated into English by Swami Prajnanananda. The Bengali edition *Tirtharenu* was recorded by him. It is to note that in this English edition some alterations and new additions have been made by the translator or author. It is to note further that in some places the readers will find some repetitions of the same subjects. It so happened because the lectures were delivered in different days, and same subjects were raised and discussed again and again, though in some new ways.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA.

RAJA YOGA

तपः-स्वाध्यायेश्वरप्रणिधानानि क्रियायोगः ।

—पातञ्जलदर्शन २।१

'Asceticism, muttering, and resignation to God, constitute the practical Yoga'.

CHAPTER I

RAJA YOGA

(22nd February, 1924, Friday, at 5-30 p.m.)

Swami Abhedananda discussed about the *Patanjaladarsana* or Raja Yoga, in a very lucid manner. He said that *pranayama* or breathing exercise is essential for everyone. It is also a part of the Hatha Yoga. But, in the Raja Yoga, there is no place of the Hatha Yoga.[1] *Pranayama* has been prescribed as an indispensable part of the Raja Yoga, so as to control the breath and to control the modifications (*vrittis*) of the mind.

Now what do you mean by the word *pranayama*? *Pranayama* does not only connote the idea of taking breath by the nostrils and of holding it for some time, but its real meaning is 'to control the breath'. *Prana* means 'breath' and *ayama* means 'to control', and, therefore, *pranayama* means 'a process or an act of controlling the breath or *pranasakti*.

If we know the secret of the power of breath (*prana*), we know everything. The mind is intimately connected with the breath; and, for that reason, when breath is controlled, the mind is simultaneously controlled.

The power of breath is not a gross material thing, but it is known as *prajna* in the *Upanishad*. In the Rig Veda (X.229), in *nasadiyasukta*, it has been said,

नासदसीन्नो सदासोत्तदानीं
नासीद्रजो न व्योमो परो यत्।
किमावरीवः कूह कस्य शर्मन्नम्भः
किमासीद् गहनं गभीरम् ॥
न मृत्युरासीदमृतं न तर्हि
न रात्र्या अह्न आसीत् प्रकेतः।
आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकं
तस्माद्धान्यन्न परः किं चनास ॥

[1] The Hatha Yoga may be considered as a supplementary part of the Raja Yoga. But the Hath Yoga *sadhana* is not esential to the Raja Yoga.

"Before the beginning of evolution of the universe there was neither non-entity, neither atmosphere, nor sky beyond. Death there was not, nor, therefore, immortality, nor day and night. The One breathed breathless by Itself in essence. There was nothing different from It, nor beyond It. From that germ burst forth mighty productive powers, nature below and energy above. Who has seen the First-born? Where was the life, the blood and the soul of the universe? Who can declare whence the creation? The gods (Devas) cannot, as they came later. Who can know what Its source is, and whether created or not? He who rules It in the highest heaven, knows, or perhaps He knows not. That is, before the beginning of creation or evolution, there existed only a breathless breath, which is known as the undivided *prana.*

In the *Shruti* or *Upanishad,* it has been said : 'ऋतमेकाक्षरं ब्रह्म'। * * i.e., in the time of dissolution, there were *rita* and Brahman like *satya.* From *prana* or vital power, earth, sun, moon, and stars and all sentient and insentient beings were created. This *prana*-Brahman is known as the determinate One. And from the vibrations of *prana* or vital power, electrons, ions, atoms, and molecules evolved. We find that this Upanishadic description exactly corresponds with that of modern science.

I have said before that there was neither existence, nor non-existence, but there existed only the supreme Brahman which transcends the duality of *sat* and *asat.* He was like 'आकाशबत् सर्वगतश्च नित्यम्' which means that there was an all-pervading substance like the sky. There was no iota of nescience or *maya* in that indeterminate Brahman. But 'स तपोऽनप्यत' i.e., when he performed his conscious act of thinking that though I am one, yet I shall be the manifold—'एकोऽहं बहु स्याम' * * then there came the manifestation of the universe. The will-to-manifest was in the form of vibration in the determinate Brahman, and it created the universe from within : 'स तपस्तप्त्वा इदं सर्वमसृजत' i.e. he became the manifold, universe, and not only that, but he also enterd into the creation or manifestation : 'तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेबानुप्राविसात्'।

The creation is eternal and is like the current of water. In the Rig Veda, we find 'सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्व

मकल्पयत्' * * i.e. God created the universe as before. The eternal process of creation conveys the idea that nothing was lost in dissolution, but everything was stored up in the *Prakriti,* or the cosmic mind. In fact, creation existed in the cosmic mind in the form of impressions (*samskaras*), and therefore, impressions were the seeds of creation. It is better to use the word 'projection' instead of creation, because projection implies the idea of manifestation or re-appearance which was causal and unmanifested. The impressions were different in different living beings. God creates means God projects the creatures (living beings) with the help of their respective impressions, and, at the same time, God was not possessed of any agency. The sum total of seeds or impressions of projection was, in truth, in the *Prakriti,* and it was known as the primordial Energy, or *Mula-Prakriti.*

God willed to create, and from His willing the manifold universe was created. In fact, God's willing is the cause of creation or projection, and, therefore, creation, or projection was God's sportive play. The cosmic mind was known as the *Prakriti* or *Avyakta,* and God was known as an existent and powerful something co-existing with the *Prakriti* or *Avyakta.* And from the word 'यथापूर्वमकल्पयत्' it is proved that creation or projection is endless and eternal like the continuity of time. This idea is also found in the *Puranas* : 'मन्वन्तरेषु संहार संहारान्तेषु सम्भवाः' (ब्रम्भाण्डपुराण १।५७) i.e., dissolution comes after a *mannantara,* and again after dissolution, creation begins. In this way, creation or projection happens throughout eternity.

Regarding creation or projection, the *Shruti* or *Upanishad* says : 'यथोर्णनाभिः सृजते गृह्णते च * * तथाक्षरात् मम्भवतीह बिश्वम् ।' (vide मुण्डक उः १।७) .e. as a spider projects and withdraws within itself the threads, or as the herbs (and trees) grow on earth, or as hairs grow automatically on one's head and body, so from the determinate Brahman, the gigantic universe was created or projected, and again after dissolution it will go back to the determinate Brahman. So the Brahman is both the material and efficient cause, and there is no cause or ground other than the Brahman. The *Mundaka Upanishad* states :

यथा सुदीप्तात् पाबकाद् बिस्फुलिङ्गाः
सहस्रशः प्रभवन्ते स्वरुपाः ।

तथाक्षराद् विविधा सोम्य भावाः
प्रजायन्ते तत्र चैवापियन्ति ॥ २।१

That is, 'as from a fire, fully ablaze, fly off or emit thousands of spark of fire, similarly O good-looking One, from the immutable originate different kinds of creature and into it again they merge'. Again in the *Mundaka Upanishad* we find :

तपसा चीयते ब्रह्म ततोऽन्नमभिजायते ।
अन्नात् प्राणो मनः सत्यं लोकाः कर्मसु चामृतम् ॥ १।८

That is, 'through penance of knowledge Brahman increases in size, and that increment or expansion means that the determinate Brahman was ready to manifest as the manifold universe. From food evolves *prana* (Hiranyagarbha); (thence) the cosmic mind; (thence) the five elements; (thence) the world; (thence) the immortality.

Tapasah or *tapasya* is the knowledge or conscious desire for creation or manifestation, and for that desire Brahman *chiyate* means becomes ready for creation or projection. First of all, He becomes the *anna*, i.e. undifferentiated consciousness (*Avyakrita* or *Avyakta*), and thence evolves the *prana*, or the Hiranyagarbha-Brahman. From the *prana* evolves the mind (*manas*) which is no other than the positive and negative willing (*samkalpa* and *vikalpa*), from the mind evolves the *satya* or relative subtle elements. Then evolve the ten phenomenal planes or worlds like *bhuh*, *bhuvah*, *svah*, *mahah*, *janah*, *tapah*, *satya* and *tala*, *atala*, *patala*, *sutala*, etc. Then evolves the *karma*, and thence the *amrita* or effect.

Regarding creation, the Sankhya philosophy said, 'नाबस्तुनोबस्तुसिद्धिः' * * (1.67), i.e. non-existence does not come out from existence, or void or nothingness cannot generate the suchness or thatness. According to Kapila, *Prakriti* is the cause of creation, i.e. the *Prakriti* is the material cause of the world-appearance, and the *Purusha* is the efficient cause. The vast universe evolved from the attraction and repulsion of the atoms : 'रागविरागयोर्योगः सृष्टिः' According to the Vaishesika philosophy, creation is possible from the mutual conjunction of cause and effect (1.2.1). Kanada said that effect cannot evolve without cause : 'कारणाभावात् कार्याभावः'। Maharashi Kanada considered the atom (*anu*) as uncreated and permanent (7.1.20), and the atom is the cause of

the manifold universe. The will of God is the efficient cause, whereas the atom is the material cause. The universe is composed of fine elements like earth, water, heat or fire, air, and others, which evolved from the twofold, threefold and fourfold atoms. Kapila also said about the existence of this subtle atom. Kapila said that the *Prakriti* evolved first, and then evolved *Mahat, Ahamkara* and other subtle elements. The *Prakriti* is the root cause of the manifold universe. Kapila said in the Sankhya 'आद्यहेतुता तद्द्वारा पारम्पर्येऽप्यणुबन्' (1.72) i.e. all things evolved gradually from the primordial cause, *Prakriti.* According to Kapila, *Prakriti* is insentient, but she creates the universe in collaboration with the sentient and intelligent *Purusha.* In fact, the *Prakriti* creates the manifold world, when she comes in contact with the all-intelligent *Purusha,* as a lame man passes the road with the help of a blind man.

We get the mention of water and darkness in connection with the act of creation or projection, as described in the Rig Veda. Now this water is the causal or primordial water, which is known as the *Prakriti.* In the Rig Veda, it has been mentioned : 'आसीत्तमसागूढ़मग्रेऽप्रकेतं सलिलं सर्वमा इदम्' i.e. creation and the creatures all were covered by darkness and water of dissolution before coming into being. Manu said :

आसीदिदं तमोभूतमप्रज्ञातमलक्षणम् ।
अप्रतर्क्यमविज्ञेयं प्रसुप्तमिव सर्वतः ॥ १।५

In the *Purana,* it has also been mentioned : * * 'आसीदेकार्णव घोरमविभागं तमोमयं' etc., i.e. everything was enveloped by the undivided ocean of darkness. Now, this darkness was the *Avyakta* or *Mula-Prakriti.*

In the *Shrutis* and *Smritis,* we get many references of causal water. In the *Upanishad,* it has been mentioned : अधस्तात् ता आपः' * * (*Aaitareya Up.* 1.2), i.e., the regions underneath the universe are water: 'रेतस आपः' * * (*Aaitareya Up.*), i.e., the presiding deities of the senses manifested as water ! 'अथैतस्य प्राणस्य आपः शरीरम्' (*Brita, Up.* 1.5.13), i.e. the water is the *Arka;* 'आपो वा अर्क, यद्वा देवा अदः सलिले सुसंवद्धा अतिष्ठत' (Rik, 10,72,25 and 10.32.5-6), i.e. even the *Devas* made themselves hidden in the water; 'अप एव ससर्जादौ' * * (Manu, e.8), i.e., the Creator created at first the water, etc.

In the Rig Veda (10.190.3), we find also a gradual order of creation, and there we find the mentions of darkness and causal water. As for example,

ऋतं च सत्यं चाभीदात्तपसोऽध्यजायत ।
ततो रात्र्यजातत ततः समुद्रो अर्णबः ॥ १
समुद्रादर्णबादधि संबत्सरो अजायत ।
अहोरात्राणि बिदधद्विश्वस्य मिषतो बशी ॥५
सूर्याचन्द्रमसौ धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत् ।
दिवं च पृथिबीं चान्तरीक्षमथो स्वः ॥३

That is, 'the manifold universe (*rita* and *satya*), evolved from the primordial energy or heat-energy. Then darkness and (causal) water were created. From the causal ocean (of water), time evolved, and thence day and night evolved. Then God created the sun, the moon, the sky, the earth, the ether, and the heaven with the help of His imagination or will-to-manifest'.

This story of creation has beautifully been described in the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (1.2.2.). The words *tapasa* in the Rig Veda and *tapasa* in the *Manduka* convey the same idea. The word *tapah* conveys the idea of imagination (*kalpana*) or desire (*samkalpa*). So *tapah* means the Divine will of the (determinate) Brahman. This will remains in a static form in the Brahman, and this unmanifested static state of the Divine will (of the Brahman) is the primordial Energy, as has been described in the Sankhya philosophy. The scientists call it the ether or ethereal space.[2] The ethereal space is ordinarily known as the sky. In the *Upanishad*, it is known as *tapah* or the causal ocean. When the particles of the ethereal ocean vibrate, then that state is known as air (*marnta*). The nature of air is to vibrate, so air is always active. The vibrating state of air is the second stage of manifestation, or is Divine will of God. The entire ethereal ocean, being too hot, begins to boil to the highest point. And that is the third stage of *apah*. At that time the creative state of the universe remains in the gaseous state. In Sanskrit, this state is known as *Agni*, and in Latin, it is known as *Ignes*. Then

[2] Cf. I.W.N. Sallivan : *Basis of Modern Science*, pp. 71-72, and Dr. Jeans : (1) *Mysterious Universe*, and the *Universe Around Us*, p. 344.

that gaseous state is changed or transformed into the liquid state.[3] In the Vedas, sky and air have been called as *'apah'* or *'āpah'*. This *apah* or *āpah* is the causal water, or the seed of creation. *Apah* is the next stage of the subtle element, heat or fire, and it is the gross form of the subtle causal water (of creation). After water, the material crest of the earth is created. *Mundaka-Upanishad* (II.1.3) says that from the undifferentiated primordial Energy evolves ether. Then the ethereal particles or atoms begin to vibrate, and that vibratory state of the ethereal ocean is described as *vayu*, i.e., that which vibrates or moves, or blows (*vati*). It is the state of extreme heat, caused by attraction and aggregation of matter. On account of high temperature it is sometimes described as the gaseous state of the material world. Therefore, production of heat is called *agni*. When that extreme heat begins to radiate and the ocean of gaseous matter cools off, then the gaseous condition is changed into liquid, and it is called in Sanskrit *apah*. The liquid state being further cooled off by the radiation of heat into space, the particles of matter appear in the form of a solid mass or crust which is called *prithvi* or *prithivi* or the solid mass. Thus, when the solid mass is yet more cooled off, the germs of life begin to manifest on the physical plane, first in the form of the vegetable, then as animals, and lastly, as man (vide the *Taittiriya Upanishad* II.1). This description of the Sankhya philosophy is similar to the conclusion of that of modern science. Modern science says that firstly, something cannot come out of nothing. Secondly, the effect lies in the cause, i.e., the effect is the cause reproduced, or, in other words, cause is a potential or unmanifested state, and when it is manifested, it is called effect. Thirdly, destruction means the reversion of an effect to its causal state :'नाशः कारण-लयः' (vide Sankhya), until lately this truth was denied by many of the Western scientists. Fourthly, the building up of the cosmos is the result of evolution of the cosmic energy, which is called the *Prakriti*. Kapila understood the law of attraction and repulsion when he described : 'राग-बिरागयोर्योगः सृष्टिः' * * (II.3), i.e., the appearance of phenomena is due to the processes of *raga* or attraction and

[3] Vide *Jeans : The Stars in Their Courses*, p. 123.

viraga or repulsion. Kapila described that this vast universe with the sentient and insentient beings evolved from the undifferentiated causal Energy (*Prakriti*), which is uncreated and eternal. It is the state of equilibrium (*samyavastha*) of all forces which are co-related to one another, and are its expression. The chain of the process of evolution and involution is a circle. It is beginningless and endless. Vedanta says when a man breaks up the chain of delusion, he breaks up the chain of cycle of birth and death, and he then realizes the *Atman*, which is the Soul of souls, and the prime essence of all things.

Now, both Vedanta and science say that nothing of the universe is permanent, as everything is changing in every second. Change means the universe. And, but for the changing phase of the universe, it is impermanent, and is known as *maya* or *ajnana*. That which is flowing or continually changing, is the universe or *jagat*— गच्छतीति जगत् i.e., a flux. Every atom and molecule of the universe are changing in every second, and, therefore, they are not in a static state at all. Again, the universe is manifold, as for example, there are animal world, plant-world, solar-world, etc. The human body is also known as a world in a miniature form. Let us think of the vastness of the solar system. Thousands and thousands of planets and satilites are revolvoing around the sun. So, how great or vast is the sun? The scientists have determined after calculation that the circumference of the sun is 109.7th times greater than the earth. The sun is greater than the earth, and as a consequence no fewer than 1,300,000 earths could be packed inside the sun. The sun is also greater than the moon, and the Jupiter is half of the circumference of the moon. The diameter of the Jupiter is nearly eleven times greater than the earth. The weight of the Jupiter is three hundred and eighteen times heavier than the earth. Besides, there are many other stars and satelites in the sky, which are million times greater than the sun.

There are other planets and satelites. The sun is a mere satelite of those greater solar systems. There are some comets from which lights reach this earth for nearly millions and millions of years. Now, if the speeds of light of some stars are calculated as thousands and thousands of miles per

second, then it will take some millions of years to reach the surface of the earth. The scientists have mathematically calculated these figures.

There are also some stars in the sky, the lights of which are extinguished before they reach the earth. The speed of light is 1,86,000 miles per second. Now, if a star is created twenty-five years ago and if the light of that star does not reach the earth even to this day, running in the speed of 1 86,000 miles per second, then imagine the vastness of the sky! Imagine also the immensity of depth of the sky. A man cannot ascertain it even by his imagination.

The sun is shining 9,29,00,000 miles away from the earth. The sun is like a blazing pire. But this burning sun (also some stars) will be extinguished and be cold in some day, because it is losing three hundred and sixty thousand million tons of matter every day. The same transformation of material weight into radiation is also in progress in all the stars. The new suns and stars are in the way of becoming in the form of nebulæ. Many cold suns are also revolving round the sky, and they are observable through the telescope.

W. N. Sullivan, Dr. Jeans and other scientists are of the opinion that at first the universe was in a chaotic mass of fiery gas, but, as it cools, its centre liquifies. In time, the universe in the form of shaping becómes so cool that a solid crust forms over its surface. And it has already been said that the sun is the gigantic burning planet of the solar system. It is also losing three hundred and sixty thousand million tons of matter every day. Dr. Jeans says that here are many new-born suns in the vast ethereal space of the sky, and they have had many times the mass of the present burning sun. Besides, there are stars probably something like the total number of grains of sand on all the sea-shores of the world. The sun may be compared to a grain of sand, but it should be remembered that the sun is 3,00,000 times greater than this habitable universe. The 100 inches telescope at Mount Wilson reveals one million photographable stars, and 1,500,000,000 in the galactic system. There is a 200 inches telescope in the Pyasadener Observatory, and its weight is 550 maunds. The tomb of the Pyasadener Observatory is 137 feet, and from that Observatory even a little flicker of

light is seen by the open eyes, which is situated in 10,000 miles distance. The visions of the lence of the telescope of the Pyasadener Observatory is stretched up to $186,000 \times 60 \times 60 \times 24$ lights years. Now, the modern physicsts impress us particularly with the truth of the old doctrine which teaches that there are realities, existing apart from our sense-perception. These realities are of greater value for us than the richest treasures of the world of experience. Some of the leading scientists say that there is only the way of intuition which is helped by a feeling for the order, i.e., Divine Order, lying behind the mystery of the appearance.

When I was in California, U.S.A., I went to see the greatest Karnegi Observatory at Mount Wilson. Its telescope was largest in the world. Its diameter was 100 inches. I was struck with wonder, when I looked at the sky. The distant stars, which were not seen with open eyes, were visible through that telescope, at the Mount Wilson. That day I saw that the entire sky was covered with stars and blazing nebulæ. The 100 inches telescope at Mount Wilson used to reveal one million photographable stars, 1,500,000,000 in the galactic system. But this vast creation, including the sun, moon, stars, and earth will go one day into an utter destruction. All the phenomenal things are changing their forms in a gradual process. That change happens like the moving pictures of a bioscope. The scientists also admit this fact, and, for that reason, they are not today satisfied only with the changing material things, but are looking forward for some new things which will not change, but be constant.

I remember that in the evening, in May, 1898, I went with Mrs. Jannus to the Observatory in Washington, and saw through a 12 inches telescope Saturn, Jupiter, Uranus, Double Star (one star revolving around another star), Pole Star, and Nebulæ Lyre. The American astronomers, in charge of th Observatory, showed me all those planets, etc., and explained to me everything connected with them.

But there is something unchangeable amidst the changes, and that unchangeable something is the *Atman*. The *Atman* has only a real existence in the phenomenal universe, and except the *Atman*, all things are under the sway of time, space and causation. Everything other than the *Atman* borns

and dies, and, therefore, they are impermanent. The *Atman* only trancends the categories of time, space and causation. Time, space and causation are, in reality, nescience or *maya*. The *Atman* is not limited by *maya*. It is birthless and deathless, and, is, therefore, permanent.

The *Bhagavad Gita* (II.20) says,

न जायते म्रियते बा कदाचित्
नायं भूत्वाऽभविता बा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

"The *Atman* is not born, nor does, it ever die; after having been, it again ceases not to be; nor the reverse. Unborn, eternal, unchangeable, and primeval, it is not slain when the body is slain'. Really, the immortal *Atman* transcends six *vikaras* or changes like birth, existence, growth, transformation, decline, and destruction, because the *Atman* or Brahman is absolutely detached from *maya*, which can be said to be 'desire' or *vasana*. This desire or will-to-create or will-to-be is an action in the form of attribute, which limits the unlimited and undivided *Atman*. The *Upanishad* says that there remains no will or desire in the absolute (indeterminate) Being, whereas the determinate Brahman (Isvara and Hiranyagarbha) is possessed of will-to-create. The indeterminate Brahman transcends all adjuncts and categories.

The *Atman* or Brahman is the background or substratum of the world-appearance. The world of appearance always changes. It passes all the time like the passing pictures of the bioscope. But it should be remembered that though the pictures of the bioscope change one after another, yet the screen, on which the passing pictures are reflected, remains all the time fixed and changeless. Similarly, the ground or substratum of the changing world of phenomena is changeless and permanent. The Brahman remains all the time immutable and transcending amidst all the changes of the world. And this change is called the form of nescience or *ajnana*. Vedanta says that the world of phenomena is the product of *maya*, so it has no real existence. This idea has been depicted in a different way in Tantra philosophy. In Tantra, Kali (or Mahamaya) is regarded as the embodiment of the cate-

gories of knowing, thinking and willing powers, (ज्ञान-इच्छा-क्रियामयी)। Kali or Sakti is the dynamic aspect of Siva. Kali plays the sportive play, standing on the breast of Siva, the pure consciousness. Siva is immutable and static, and, for that reason, Siva is known as the corpse (dead body) in Tantra. Siva is the indeterminate Brahman, because He transcends *maya* and activity. But, in Tantra, Kali or Sakti cannot remain without Siva, and Siva also remains with Sakti. As the power of burning remains with the fire, so Kali or Sakti remains as inseparable from Siva. Or it can be said that Siva manifests Himself as Sakti or divine play, and when the play is over, he eternally co-exists with Sakti. Tantra calls this co-existing state as the polarised I-consciousness and It-consciousness.

We also get the idea of the indeterminate Brahman in Tantra, and that Brahman is Sadasiva. The determinate Brahman is Mahakala. Mahakala lies on Sadasiva and Kali is seated (not standing) on Mahakala. Two Sivas have been conceived in Tantra, one indeterminate (*nirguna*) and the other, determinate (*saguna*). Sakti means the primordial energy. Sakti co-exists with the pure intelligence, Siva, like an undivided pea, in which the positive and negative parts of the pea co-exist. The Brahman, which creates, or the Brahman, in which the seed of creation remains, is the determinate Brahman. In Tantra, Kali and Mahakala co-exist. On the aphorism, जन्माद्यस्य यतः (vide the *Brahmasutra*, 1.1.2), Sankara has quoted the reference of the *Taittriya Upanishad* (3.1) : 'यतो वा इमानि भूतानि जायन्ते, येन जातानि जीवन्ति यत् प्रयन्ति अभिसंविशन्ति, तत् विजिज्ञासस्व, तत् ब्रह्मेति' that is, 'from which the creation (or projection) emits, on which it rests, and in which it destroys, is the determinate Brahman'. In the indeterminate Brahman, there is neither creation or projection, nor is the conception of it. The creation or projection is the phenomena like the waves of the ocean. The ocean itself is motionless, waveless, and quiet, and this state has been conceived as Siva, the indeterminate Brahman, in Tantra. But when waves are created on the ocean, that disturbed or agitated condition of the ocean is known as creation or projection, and then it is known as Sakti or Kali. But, in Tantra, these two prime

principles, Siva and Sakti are one and the same, only one is static, and the other is dynamic; one is actionless, causal and unmanifested, and the other is active and manifested. Similar is the conception of Vedanta. The indeterminate Brahman, which has been conceived by the non-dualistic Vedanta, is not possessed of any *maya*, and this state has been compared with the motionless ocean. The idea of static state of the Brahman is conceived in relation to its dynamic state. In fact, the word 'static' connotes the idea of the manifested causal state of *Isvara*, and the seed of creation lies dormant in *Isvara*. Similarly the word 'dynamic' connotes the idea of the manifested state which is known as the Hiranyagarbha-Brahman. So one is known as cause and the other as sequence or effect. Sri Ramakrishna used to give an example of a serpent, which, sometimes does not move and sometimes moves. In truth, the coiling motionless serpent and the moving serpent are one and the same serpent. Another example can be given of the wave and the water. The same water remains calm, and again takes the form of the wave. Now the calmness and the change are only different states of one and the same water.

Siva has been described as the background of Sakti in Tantra. Creation, preservation and dissolution happen on the breast (i.e., background) of Siva, but Siva remains absolutely free from those actions or changes. For the act of creation, Kali dances on the breast of Siva. Kali dances means she creates, preserves and destroys everything, and Siva lies under Kali's feet like a corpse and this idea suggests that the base or ground is one, whereas the manifestation is manifold.

The modern scientists also admit that the whole universe is the manifestation of one force (*sakti*). The scientists call this force the energy. As for example, Prof. Edington says in his book, *Where is Science Going* : "The term 'energy' represents the work that can be done by forces acting on matter"'. This energy has been called as the primordial one or Adyasakti in Tantra. The energy is one and the same, but sometimes it is manifested, and sometimes it remains as unmanifested. The manifested state (of energy) is known as kinetic, and the unmanifested state as potential. One aspect

is gross, and the other one is subtle or causal; one is manifested (*vyakta*), and the other is unmanifested (*avyakta*). Vedanta says that one and the secondless Brahman is sometimes manifested with the help of active *maya*, and sometimes it remains as unmanifested co-existing with inactive *maya*. The Brahman of Vedanta can be said to be the energy of science. But this fact is not wholly true, as the scientists do not proceed so far as to accept that the primordial energy and the Vedantic Brahman are one and the same reality. In the Sankhya philosophy, *Prakriti* has been called inactive and inert, and *Prakriti* creates the universe when she comes in contact with the intelligent *Purusha*. Now, according to the scientists, heat and motion are the two manifestations of the same energy In the Sankhya, two forces, attraction and repulsion, have been mentioned. According to science, heat, light, motion, sound, and electricity, are different forms or manifestations of the same energy, for which they are known as the heat-energy, light-energy, etc. The Sankhya also says that all the manifestations are the product of the primordial *Prakriti*.

According to the scientists, the energy is indestructible and uncreated. Matter is also of the same nature. The scientists further admit the theory of conservation of energy, and for that reason energy may take any form, though its amount remains the same, i.e., energy neither increases, nor decreases, and its forms only differ. The conservation of energy may be applied to our physical body. We can also conserve vital energy within us, and this vital energy is called the *prana-sakti*. The *prana-sakti* is called *prajna* in the *Upanishad*. Again the words *prajna*, *prajnatma* and *prana* connote the same idea : 'यो वै प्राणः सा प्रज्ञा, या वा प्रज्ञा स प्राणः' (*Kaushitaki-Upanishad*).

The *prajna* has also been called as the (determinate) Brahman : one breathed the breathless breath (Rig Veda), and in the beginning there was only one existence. In the *Nasadiyasukta*, we find : 'आनीदवातं स्वधया तदेकम्' Similarly in the *Katha Upanishad*, it has been said that the universe has been created out of the vibrations of the *prana* : 'यदिदं किञ्च जगत् सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम्।' Acharya Sankara has explained the word '*ejati*' as '*kampate*'. The phenomenal universe came

out of the vibrations of the *prana* or vital energy. Modern science has also stated that everything in this world is in the state of motion or vibration. In fact, all the materials of the universe are in constant motion or vibration. The vibration means the change, and change connotes the idea of manifestation of the world-appearance.

The *Upanishad* says that everything is the manifesation of the *prana*. Everything is also the vibration of the *prana*. The utility or importance of *pranayama* has been stated in the Raja Yoga. Patanjali has said that importance of the *pranyama* is to conserve the vital energy. There are two cords or nerves like *ida* and *pingala* by the side of the spinal column. In the middle there is *sushumna*, the central cord. In Yoga, these have been conceived or described as the rivers like Ganga, Jamuna and Sarasvati.[4] This conception is useful for spiritual practices. But there is some reason behind all conceptions or imaginations, as without reason no conception or imagination can stand. But the Brahman transcends the limiting adjunct of all conceptions or imaginations. The world is also the creation of the mind; or it can be said that the world is the construction or projection of the mind. In the *Upanishad*, it has been described that the Creator imagined : 'I am one and unique, I shall be the manifold', and, therefore, He became the manifold universe.

In Yoga and Tantra literature, *muladhara* is known as the basic lotus. The Yogis have imagined it as a lotus. The basic lotus *muladhara* is the store-house of energy (*prana-sakti*). The current of energy generally flows by the two side-nerves, *ida* and *pingala*. But the Yogis try to direct the flow of energy by the *sushumna-nadi* or the middle central nerves. The mode of the natural current of the vital energy is changed or diverted for spiritual development. The vital force is increased by the practices of breathing exercise (*pranayama*), concentration (*dharana*), and meditation (*dhyana*). To increase the vital force means to store up energy and also to concentrate the vital energy in the *sushumna* canal, and that means to restore conservation of energy in the system. Now, if we repeatedly think that 'I am the Brahman, and not the petty self', then we realize that self is no other than the

Brahman.

For the practice of Yoga, control of senses is necessary. We should regulate not only the habit of eating, dressing, walking, sitting, etc., but also the habit of all the works of our life for that purpose. To regulate means to bring everything under control. In fact, the physique is under the control of the psyche, because if we can control the mind, or psyche, the body or physique automatically comes under control. If the mind is controlled or concentrated, everything of the world comes under control. So it is said that it is easy to conquer the kingdom, but it is difficult to conquer the mind. Raja Yoga has instructed all to conquer the mind or psyche, and to conquer the mind means to bring the vital power (*prana-sakti*) under control, and to control the vital power means to bring the *prana* under control. So, the breathing exercise, the practice of sitting posture and the methods of concentration and meditation (*pranayama, asana, dharana,* and *dhyana*) have been prescribed in the *Yoga-shastra.*

There is a definite process for practising the breathing exercise. First, we should imagine that we are carrying our nerve-current to the spinal column (*sushumna*) by the way of *pranayama* from the basic lotus, *muladhara.* The vital force remains stored up in the basic lotus and that vital force is known as the coiling energy or *Kundalini.* It has been beautifully defined and described in Tantra. The coiling energy is the vital force (*prana-sakti*). This force or energy generally remains inactive in *muladhara.* Ramprasad has described it in a song :

जाग मा कुलकुण्डलिनी ।
प्रसुप्ता भुजगाकारा स्वयम्भूशिववेष्टिनी ॥

i.e., the basic energy, *Kundalini,* naturally remains in sleeping condition, like a lifeless serpent. It coils around the Siva

In Tantra, the coiling energy is an unmanifested causal energy, and it exists in potential form in every objects, living and non-living, of the world. Tantra says that this energy is shining and looks like a lightning—विद्युत्लताकारा । *Kundalini* is also known as *Kamakala.* The *Kamavilasha-Tantra* has elaborately defined and described this energy. It says :

'काम कमनीय तथा कला च दहनेन्दुविग्रहौ बिन्दुः'। The word *kama* means Kamesvara-Siva and he is shining (*prakasharupa*). He represents the fire or Agni. *Kala* means *Vimarshasakti* and it is known in Tantra as *Agnisomarupini.* It has been conceived as a moon, and *Bindu* is the combined form of fire and moon. Again *Bindu* is *Mahatripurasundari,* who co-exists with Kamesvara-Siva or Agni-Soma. This *Tripurasundari* is *Bindu* or *Kamakala,* the combined form of all energies. The *Vimarshasukti* is Kamesvari or Shodashi : 'विमर्शरुपिणी विद्या षोड़शी य प्रकीर्तिता'। *Kundalini* is the combined form of Siva and Sakti. This Sakti has been conceived as *Bindu, Nada,* and *Vija. Kama* means the divine creative Will, which is no other than the cosmic Will or *Isvara, Prajna* or *Avyakta. Bindu* is an embodiment of Siva, whereas *Vija* is that of Sakti, and *Nada* evolved from *Bindu* and *Vija.* The *Saradatilaka-Tantra* (1.10) calls the *Kundalini* as the combined form of *jnana, iccha,* and *kriya,* which are again known as Agni, Chandra, and Surya (i.e., fire, moon, and sun). The German philosopher Kant calls the *ego* as the combination of thinking, feeling, and willing, and these attributes of *ego* appear similar to the functional categories of *Kundalini.* Pandit Raghavabhatta calls *iccha, jnana,* and *kriya* as Agni, Chandra, and Surya, which may be considered as the presiding deities of willing, knowing, and acting. These are the varied forms of *Isvara* and *jiva.* In the *Yoginithridaya-Tantra,* these three have been known as *iccha, vama,* and *pasyanti.*

According to Tantra, the causal aspect or form of the Brahman is known as the Sabda-Brahman or Sphota or *Kundalini. Kundalini* is the source or fountain-head of music. The Sabda-Brahman or *Kundalini* appears like a triangle, combined form of *Bindu, Vija* and *Nada,* and these three form the Tantric principles. The *Saradatilaka* (1.11.12) and the *Prapanchasara Tantra* (1.44), have said that Sabda-Brahman evolved from the shining evolutes of *para* or *maha-Bindu.* They say,

(क) भिद्यमानात् पराद् बिन्दोरव्यक्तात्मा वरोऽभवत्।
शब्दब्रह्मेति तं प्राहुः सर्वागमविशारदाः॥

(ख) बिन्दोस्तस्माद् भिद्यमानाद् स्वोऽव्यक्तात्मको भवेत्।
स स्वः श्रुतिसंपन्नैः शब्दब्रह्मेति कथ्यते॥

The *Parabindhu* or *Mahabindu* is the primordial Energy (*Kundalini* or *Paramasakti*). The *Padukapanchaka* has defined *Kudnalini* or Divine Energy with three letters अ+क+थ This Sakti is known as the Avalalaya', the form of which is ह+ल+क्ष । In the *Mahesvari-samhita,* the Avalalaya is known as *Kundalini* which is the combination of sun, moon, and fire, i.e., *tribindu.* Again *tribindu* represents Brahma, Vishnu, and Maheswara. In the *Lalitasahasranama, Kundalini* or *Kamakala* is known as Devi Kamata, and Raghavabhatta has defined *Kama* as willing or the combined form of Siva and Sakti, and *Kala* means manifestation of them.

An individual self (*jiva*) is Siva in essence (*svarupa*). But coming in contact with nescience (*ajnana*), Siva appears as the individual self. Force or energy moves in a crooked way like a serpent. It is the nature of force or energy to move in a crooked way. In science also, energy has been described in the similar way. The movement of sound is also in the wave-form. For this reason, force or energy (*sakti*) has been called the serpent. Energy sleeps in the basic lotus in a circle form. The circle is the emblem of eternity, and circle indicates that force or energy is endless and eternal, and for this reason, force is conceived as a circle. Both individual self and the Brahman are endless and eternal. Coiling means the inactive state of the basic energy, and when that energy gets a stir of will or will-power, it arouses and rises upward towards other lotuses, *svadhisthana, manipura, anahata, visuddha, ajna,* and at last it reaches the thousand-petalled lotus, *sahasrara,* where Parama-Siva, the pure consciousness, shines fully in His own eternal bliss and existence. The *Kundalini-Sakti* can be called as sleeping Siva in the *muladhara* and awakened Siva in the *sahasrara.* The *Kundalini* can also be known as an individual being or *Jiva,* or an individual phenomenal consciousness, and when it is transformed into pure consciousness, it is known as Siva. Transformation means the being is transformed into becoming and *'jiva-sivaiva'.*

When the pure consciousness is unmanifested, i.e., sleeps like a coiled-up energy, it appears as an individual self. The individual self then resides in nescience, and even then it is not awakened. To be awakened means to restore pure

consciousness, or to recognise the pure nature of the Self. In the thousand-petalled lotus, the supreme Siva is self-manifested, and shines as the supreme consciousness all the time. That supreme consciousness is the *Atman*, or the Paramasiva. In the *Upanishad*, it has been called the *Prajnatman*.

The *Atman* is the real form of the individual self. When the will-to-be-revealed of a spiritual aspirant is intense, the divine flash of revelation comes to him. The divine revelation or realization means awakening of the sleeping energy in the basic lotus (*muladhara*), and then it communes with the supreme Siva-consciouness in the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrara*). The divine communion means manifestation of the unmanifested divine consciousness which is the essence-in-itself. It does not come through any process or religious practice, as it is the self-revealing transcendental consciousness. When the individual self is communed with the divine Self, a man realizes his real nature, which is above nescience Then divine awareness or knowledge comes. Then the spiritual aspirant transcends the cycle of birth and death, and is never entangled in the trap of nescience or *ajnana*

Different stages of religious practice for attaining the state of perfection have been conceived in the *Yogashastra*. Experiences of these different stages also differ from one another. The Yogis feel or realize them in the realm of their spiritual thought. These stages are no other than the different layers of mind or consciousness. These have again been conceived as different circles or lotuses like *mutadhara, svadhisthan, manipur, anahata, vishuddha,* and *ajna*. Besides them, there is a thousand-petalled lotus known as *sahasrara*. Between *ajna* and *sahasrara*, there are again some subtle circles (*chakras*) with different feelings or sensations. In the *Yogashastra, sahasrara* is known as the seventh state of consciousness. Different contemplative forms (*dhyana-murtis*) of all these circles have been conceived or imagined. When I was in America, I attended a dissection class in a hospital, being requested by one of my doctor friends. I was rather eager to join that class. All the students of Anatomy know that there is a cord inside the spinal column, and all the nerves and arteries throughout the body have been projected

from the spinal column. These projected nerves and arteries are called the spinal nerves. Inside the spinal cord there is a thin and subtle hole, known as the central canal of the spinal cord. This canal is filled with a fluid substance. The Yogis imagine it as *sushumna*. This imagination is possible only in the world of idea. The spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is neither intensified, nor successful, if there exists no idea or imagination of this kind. This idea or imagination is afterwards materialized into a form, and idealism is changed into realism. Whenever we think or will, we form some mental images in our mind, and when we project those mental images outside, they take material forms. The world is also a product of some divine ideas. The *Upanishad* says that the world remains in the mind of God, and when He wills to be the manifold, the mental form of the world is projected outside, and it takes the form of the material world. Therefore, the world remains in the form of an idea in God, or in cosmic mind, and God or cosmic mind projects those ideas outside. God or cosmic mind is under the circumference of time, space, and causality. Time, space, and causality are no other than nescience or *maya*. *Maya* or nescience in causal form resides with God, and God with the help of causal nescience projects the universe, and, again, in the time of dissolution, the universe with its name and form goes back to its causal state. In this way, the cycle of origin and decay of the manifold world goes on throughout eternity.

CHAPTER II

RAJA YOGA

(10th December, 1924, Wednesday, at 5-30 p.m.)

"यादृशी भावना यस्य सिद्धिर्भवति तादृशी" i.e., a man reaps what he sows, or a man reaps the result according to his thought. From the childhood if you wish to be a lawyer, afterwards you will be a lawyer. If you wish that you will be a great musician, you will really be a great musician in future. If you desire to be a great spiritual man, you will be successful to attain that state in life. In truth, you will be dragged down to that direction towards which your current of thought runs. The current of your thought will mould your body, mind, intellect, character, and everything.

Now, what is the origin of the current of your thought? The source of your thoughts is the mind. Every kind of thought originates from the mind. Now what is mind? By mind Vedanta means the internal organ or *antahkarana*. The functions of the mind can be divided into four, *manas*, where doubts arise, *buddhi* or the faculty of ascertainment, *chitta* or mental impression, and *ahamkara*, the sense of 'I' or egoism. All these four are the functions, i.e., modifications of the mind or *antahkarana*. These are konwn in Sanskrit as *vrittis*. The *vrittis* are the activities or active forms of the internal organ. One and the same *antahkarana* or mind is manifested as both positive and negative aspects of thought, i.e., when the mind which thinks that it is to be done, is known as *samkalpa*, and its opposite aspect is *vikalpa*. When the mind ascertains something to be done, it is known as intellect or *buddhi*, when the mind imagines something, the image of that thing is known as *chitta*, and the egoistic aspect of the mind is known as *ahamkara*. Therefore, one and the same *antahkarana* takes different forms in its different functions.

The power of mind is immense. The mind can do or undo everything in this world. In the Hindu scriptures, mind has been compared with a mad elephant. By nature a mad

elephant is furious, so is the mind. The mind is active all the time. It thinks one thing in one moment, and then thinks another thing. Different currents rise in the mind in one moment, and then in the next moment, it changes its course. Thus currents after currents evolve in the level of the mind, and again those currents subside. Therefore, there is no calmness in the mind. It runs like a flowing current of water. It can be compared with an ocean, the breast of which is agitated or disturbed always by thousands and thousands of waves. As in the ocean waves rise and roll one after another, so the modifications of the mind appear one after another in the mind. The psychologists call this mind a finer matter in vibration. The finer particles of the mind substance are vibrating all the time. They are thrown into different *vrittis* or whirlpools or eddies by these stimuli which are the sensations from the outer world. So the mind is active or vibrated all the time. But through practice this disturbed state of mind can be controlled. This bringing under control means to quieten the mind, or to make the mind silent or calm. The practice by which the mind is quietened and controlled, is known as Yoga. Yoga means tricks or dexterity, Sri Krishna says in the *Gita* : "योगः कर्मसु "कौशलम्" i.e. Yoga means dexterity in actions. The literal meaning of Yoga is 'to join' two things for bringing into one.

The mind is the mover or conductor of the physical body. The body moves, and does everything by the will or suggestion of the mind. In fact, the mind is the director. Everything we do, the thought of that doing or action first appears in the mind, then it is translated into the brain through the muscles of the body, then the muscles are active by that stimulation. As for example, you wish to raise a chair. Now, an impression of that desire (of raising the chair) originates in the form of will in your mind. Then that will is translated into the brain-centre in the form of vibrations, and afterwards those vibrations of will instigate the muscles of your body. There are thousands and thousands of finer atoms in every part of the muscles, and those atoms are living. When any will or desire evolves from the mind in the form of vibration, that will or desire creates a stimulation in the muscles in the form of sensation, and the living

atoms of the muscles are also vibrated at that time, and then your hand is ready to raise the chair. So will-to-raise the chair first appears in the mind, then the mind sends it to the brain-centre and the brain-centre sends it to the self-conscious *ego* or *Atman* that resides in the brain, and then that stimuli is sent to the muscle of the hand, and the hand moves or works. This internal psycho-physical process happens in a moment, which we do not know, but we only notice that work is done as soon as will or desire rises in the mind.

The psychologists generally divide the mind into three states, conscious, subconscious or unconscious, and super-conscious. The Indian psychologists divide the mind as the mental, the sub-mental and the super-mental or supra-mental. The conscious state of mind is that which acts or does work. As for example, we awake, we move, we speak, we think, we eat, we sit, etc., and these are actions or movements of the muscles. The subconscious or unconscious state of mind is that which is the storehouse of hundreds and thousands of mental impressions of the works done in the past incarnations and also in this present incarnation. It is the vast field, and innumerable impressions of the past as well as present incarnations are stored up in the form of sleeping energy. This subconscious or uconscious mind is like an ice-berg, three-fourth part of which remains under water, and only one-fourth part of which floats on water. The impressions are stored up there in the subtle or causal form, and some of those sleeping impressions rise on the conscious mental plane being instigated or stimulated by the will of the mind in gross form, and they operate, or are active. So the subtle or causal impressions remain as unmanifested (*avyakta*) before rising in gross manifested (*vyakta*) form. The unmanifested ones are known as the cause, whereas the manifested ones are the effect. So the impressions which remained unmanifested, are manifested in gross form. The psychologists say that subconsciousness or unconsciousness is a state which lies below the threshold of our consciousness or conscious state. Some of the philosophers like Prof. Van Hartmann calls the subconscious or unconscious state as purely of positive conception. Vedanta calls this state something

which is covered with nescience. According to Vedanta, unconsciousness is called the suppressed consciousness. Generally unconsciousness suggests the idea of a state which is devoid of consciousness or knowledge, but, in truth, it is an unmanifested state of consciousness, and Vedanta says that consciousness (*jnana*) is the base or ground of unconsciousness (*ajnana*).

The mind is so powerful that it can do everything, and nothing appears difficult to it. This power of the mind is known as will-power or will-force. The supernatural power or unnatural psychic power is also the power of the mind. Hypnotism, telepathy or thought transference, clairvoyance, clairaudience or thought-reading, etc., are also the powers of the mind. It is ordinarily believed that these are the miraculous powers of the disembodied spirits, but that is not true. All these powers are not at all supernatural or unnatural, on the contrary, they all are governed by the natural law, though higher, and, therefore, that which is ordinarily known or called as miracles by the ignorant people, is the natural result of the finer forces working on the higher plane.

Again, we think that in the unconscious state, there remains no consciousness in man, but, in truth, consciousness exists in that state of unconsciousness in an unmanifested state. Or it can be said that in unconsciousness, consciousness or conscious mind goes back to its causal state. Otherwise, if we admit that consciousness does not exist in the swooned or unconscious state, then how it is possible for a man to restore consciousness when he comes back again to the conscious state? It happens that when a person comes back from the swooned or unconscious state, he restores his power of remembrance that lies in the bed of unconsciousness.

The *Atman* is powerful than the mind, because all powers lie in the *Atman* in unmanifested forms. The *Atman* is the source of the mind. A man can develop his powers if he wishes. In India, a Yogi can develop and manifest his powers of the mind. These powers are known as the psychic powers. In the *Yogadarshana*, Patanjali has described eight kinds of mental powers which are known as the *yoga-vibhutis*. The eight kinds of power which are developed by the practice of Yoga are the powers of the mind. But spiritual realiza-

tion of the *Atman* (*Atmajnana*) cannot be attained through these eight powers (*siddhais*). Sadhaka Kamalakanta has said : "There are scattered full many a gem in the courtyard of Chintamani, the all-merciful God." The Yogic powers are like the precious pearls, and if you wish to attain to Chintamani (God), you will have to go beyond the charming attraction of these eight *siddhis*.

Now-a-days culture of mental science has considerably been developed in America. In America, people take keen interest in culture of psychic powers for which they have established different societies. Now, the Americans have lost their faith in Homeopathic treatment, and they try to cure diseases through mental treatment by will-power. The Aelopathic science says that the human body is like an iron pot, and different elements of organs exist therein. When the chemical action in the organ becomes worst, the human body is attacked by diseases, so herbs or medicines are applied to cure those diseases. The Aelopathic science further believes that herbs or medicine can cure the dieases of the body, but the spiritualists believe quite the opposite things. The spiritualists are of the opinion that mind is the director of the physical body, so when mind is affected, the diseases automatically appear in the body, therefore, diseases can be cured only by the mental power or will-power, and for that purpose herbs or medicines are not necessary.

Now let me relate a story in this connection. In 1897, when I was in London, I became acquainted with a noted physician. The physician was also a mental healer. In America, the mental healers cure every disease by the suggestion through will-power. It happened that there came to the physician an European woman who was suffering from non-digestion, and whatever food she would take, that would go out of her system by vomitting. The physician took the case, and treated her by sending suggestions in the mind of that woman through will-power. While making her treatment, the physician requested me one day to go with him and to see the woman. I was also very curious to see her, therefore, I went with the physician. There I saw a lean and thin woman, and heard that whatever she takes, she vomits. That day also, according to the instruction of

the physician, the woman sat on a chair, and the physician took his seat in her front, and said to her to fix her attention on the finger of the physician. While she fixed her attention towards the finger, she gradually became unconscious. Then the physician made her eat some biscuits, breads, and milk in her unconscious state, and the woman did know nothing of them. Then, after she took those foods in her unconscious state, she gradually began to restore her consciousness, and did not vomit, rather she felt quite better and natural I noticed everything, and said to the doctor that it was nothing but the mental healing, through the power of will.

So, if you wish to prosper in your life in any business, you will have to take help of the will-power. You will have to concentrate your mind on any object, and you just remember that the result of concentration is no other than the conservation of energy. The method of concentration is generally known as that of attention. As for example, when you concentrate your mind on any particular object in the outer world, you do not hear, or see, or understand, any other objects. It happens also in the case of the inner spiritual world. If you do not fix or concentrate your mind on any of your choosen object, you will not be able to make progress in the spiritual world. As for example, you are reading a book, and there happens a disturbance, so your mind is attracted to it, and you become then unable to fix your mind on reading. Now, that means your attention to reading is diverted. But, in spite of that disturbance if your mind does not feel any distraction, then you must know that you have controlled your mind, and this controlled state of mind is known as an attention. This attention gradually brings concentration, and that concentration brings meditation. And then after meditation, comes the superconsciousness. In that state, the Brahman is realized, and the mind is controlled means the mind is transformed into pure consciousness.

But the mind is active and distracted by nature. The tendency of the mind is always to run outside, and it is mad after enjoying the pleasures of the phenomenal world. The *Katha Upanishad* (I.1.1) says,

पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत् स्वयम्भु
स्तस्मात् पराङ् पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।

कश्चिद्धिराः प्रत्यगात्मानमैक्ष-
दावृत्तचक्षुरमृतत्वमिच्छन् ॥

That is, 'the self-existent Lord has killed or destroyed the outgoing senses. Therefore, one sees the external phenomenal things or objects, and not the *Atman*. A rare discriminating (*viveki*) man, desiring for immortality, turns his eyes away and then sees the indwelling Self.' Really there are few persons who change the course of the senses from the outer worldly objects and concentrate those senses in the *Paramatman*. The powers of the mind, we know, are scattered like the rays of an electric light which illumines the surrounding objects. An electric light which enlightens the objects within a very limited circle, appears as bright, and then it possesses immense power. Similarly, the concentrated mind of a Yogi is powerful, and appears like a search-light, and can penetrate immensely the depth of darkness even at a distance. So when the modifications of the mind are controlled and concentrated to a point, they are calmed, and then the power of the mind is immense.

Now it should be remembered that the senses are the instruments and the mind is the master and director of the senses. The natural tendency of the mind is to run outward, and the mind enjoys the material pleasures through the gateways of the senses. Those who aspire knowledge and emancipation, try to control the mind before controlling the senses. The modifications (*vrittis*) are no other than the active state of the mind. The Yogis fix their mind to some definite object, and through concentration and meditation, when the mind is tranquilled and calm, the *Paramatman* is realized, and that is the realization of the *Atman* or Brahman.

Again, the mind can be compared to a lamp or lantern. The light of the lamp or lantern is scattered in all directions, so the force of the light is not so great at that time. Such is the condition of the mind. When the mind of a man is scattered in all directions, then its power being limited, he cannot completely accomplish any work. Then his spiritual progress or quest is also hampered. So the mind must be concentrated to any object, as the light of a search-light is concentrated and directed to one definite object. It

is found that when a search-light is directed to one point, it goes to a distance and is very powerful and direct. Similarly when the mind is concentrated to a definite object, it is very powerful. So the Yogis concentrate their mind, and if they like, they can even know all kinds of mysteries of the sensible and supersensible objects.

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that the mind is like a bundle of the seeds of mustard oil. It is found that when a bundle is torn, the seeds of the mustard oil are scattered in all directions, and then it is difficult to collect all the seeds together. The impressions (*samskaras*) of the mind are like the bundle of mustard oil seeds. The impressions of hundreds and thousands of incarnations are stored up in the bed of subconscious mind (*antahkarana*). When they are scattered (distracted), it is very difficult to collect or concentrate them. 'Hundreds and thousands of impressions of the past incarnations, as well as innumerable impressions produced in this present incarnation are accumulated in the subconscious layer of the mind. So if you let loose the onrush of those impressions of the mind, they will make you mad. The innumerable impressions of desires and passions are stored up in the bed of the mind, and there is no end of desires and passions. The Hindu scriptures say that for extinguishing the blazing tongues of the fire, if you pour butter into the fire, then the fire will be more and more growing and blazing instead of being extinguished : "हरिषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूयो एवाभि बर्धते" * *. So if you wish to extinguish the fire, you will have to pour water instead of butter. Desire is the fire and the act of enjoying the pleasures is the butter, so you will not be able to extinguish the fire of desire through enjoyment. You will have to control your passions and desires. Just remember that habit is controlled by counter-habit. The fire of habit of desire (*pravritti*) can, therefore, be controlled by the counter-habit of desirelessness (*nivritti*). Therefore, you will have to adopt the negative process. Advaita Vedanta teaches that the Brahman is realized through the negative process of 'not this, not this' (*neti neti*). This world of desires and enjoyments is unreal for its changing phases, and the real thing is the Brahman which is immediately known through the negative method of *neti neti*. God-realization is possible only through

this negative process, says Advaita Vedanta.

In religious quest, we should adopt the means of virtue. As much effort we will sow, so much result we will reap. If we wish to realize God, we will have to devote our mind cent percent to God, otherwise we will not be successful. Sri Ramakrishna has said that Girish Chandra Ghose, the well-known dramatist, had the whole-hearted faith in him. So, whatever act we desire to accomplish, we should devote ourselves to them sincerely. We should make our mind and speech parallel, and should dive whole-heartedly deep in our *sadhana.* The spiritual practice is the only means to check or control the onrush of the mind, and without practice it is difficult to control it. The mind plays a mysterious role in its field, and it is the habit of the mind to deceive you. Perhaps you think that you are proceeding in the right path. but if you wisely notice, you will see that your mind is leading you in the wrong path. Ordinarily a man cannot determine what is right and what is wrong. So the faculty of discrimination should be developed. You will have to purify your intellect and cultivate the power of reasoning. Leaving aside mischievous and bad thinking, adopt always good thinking. Then the mind is checked. Practice of everything is necessary. Practice means *sadhana.* Patanjali said : 'तत्र यत्नोऽभ्यासः i.e., repeated efforts are known as habit. It is also said : 'यत् साधन तत् सिद्धि' i.e., where there is practice, there is success. Without *sadhana* or practice, no one can get success. When the mind is silenced, all modifications are calmed, and the mind shines in its truest form, then success is bound to come. Repeated practice or *sadhana* brings calmness in the mind, and if once the mind is quietened or controlled, then success, i.e., realization of the *Atman* is attained, and there is no doubt about it.

Sri Krishna repeatedly said to Arjuna to control the mind. When Arjuna found that it is easy to control a mad elephant than to control the mind, then he took shelter in Sri Krishna, and said :

चञ्चलं हि मनः कृष्ण प्रमाथि बलवद्दृढम् ।
तस्याहं निग्रहं मन्ये वायोरिव सुदुष्करम् ॥ ६।३४

O Krishna, as it is difficult to entangle wind of sky in a

definite place, so it is difficult to control the mind in an object'. Hearing it, Sri Krishna said (vide the *Gita,* VII.35),

असंशयं महाबाहो मनो दुर्निग्रहं चलम्।
अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय बैराग्येन च गृह्यते ॥ ६।३५

(Yes Arjuna, it is quite true that the mind cannot be easily controlled, as it is not calm in its nature, but it can be checked or controlled by the practice of concentration and meditation and also by renunciation'. In the *Sankhyasutra,* II.34), it has been said : "बैराग्यदभ्यासाच्च" Similarly, Maharshi Patanjali said (vide the *Patanjaladarshana* I.12) : 'अभ्यास बैराग्याभ्याम् तन्निरोधः' The commentator Vyasa said : 'चित्तनदी नाम उभयत बाहिनी, बहति कल्यानाय बहति पापाय च। या तु कैबल्यप्राग्भारा विबेकबिषयनिम्ना सा कल्याणबहा। संसारप्राग्भारा अबिबेकविषयनिम्ना पापबहा। तत्र बैराग्येन बिषयस्त्रोतः खिली क्रियते, बिबेकदर्शनाभ्यासेन बिबेकस्त्रोतः उद्घाट्यते इत्युभयाधीनचित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः। i.e., Vyasa said : 'The stream of mind flows in two directions, virtue and vice. The virtuous current is that which flows on to perfect freedom (*kaivalya*) down the plane of discriminative knowledge, it is called the stream of happiness. That which leads to rebirth and flows down the plane of undiscriminative ignorance, is the stream of vice or sin. Among those the flow of the desirability is thinned by non-attachment or desirelessness ; the flow of discrimination is rendered visible by habituating the mind to the experience of knowledge. Hence suppression or control of the modifications of the mind is dependent upon both'. Vachaspati Mishra also said that the modifications of the mind are restrained by practice and desirelessness. The word *pragbhara* means the bank (of the river) and that means limitation, and the idea is that the stream is banked, i.e. limited in its flow as to reach the state of perfect freedom.

But the question is whether perfect freedom or *mukti* is attained by suppression of the modifications of the mind, or by transformation of the mind ? Suppression connotes the idea of reduction of the numbers of modifications, or the idea of nullifying or killing.[1] But you cannot kill the mind or its modifications out. Some say : 'Kill out all the desire, and make your mind blank'. But we cannot do that. It will be absolutely impossible to do that. We can reduce the number of desires

[1] Vide Swami Abhedananda : *Doctrine of Works,* Appendix.

by discrimination (*viveka*) and not by allowing indulgence. In that way we can purify our mind.

Now, what do we mean by purification of the mind? As has been said before that purification means reduction of the numbers of desires and also making the desires into nil. We can easily transform the mind into pure consciousness. We can reduce the positive and negative tendencies (*samkalpa* and *vialkpa*) of the mind into perfect calmness or balance which is the real form of the mind. When the mind is silenced, the flash of pure consciousness comes to the mind, and the mind is transformed into pure consciousness (*chit*).

Generally the mind runs mad after the objects of senses for enjoyment, so it will be our duty to forcibly withdraw them back to the centre, to the mind. This process of withdrawing the mind back to the centre is known as *pratyahara* (*prati*+*ahara* =repeatedly drawing back). This should be practised repeatedly. Again *pratyahara* is generally taken as the means to concentration and meditation. But meditation is quite different from the process of withdrawal. In the *Gita*, it has been said.

यतो यतो निश्चरति मनश्चञ्चलमस्थिरम् ।
ततस्ततो नियम्यैतदात्मन्येव वशं नयेत् ॥ ६।२६

That is, 'whatever cause the wavering and unsteady mind wanders away, from that let him restrain it and bring it back direct under the control of the Self'. The *Gita* further says :

शनैः शनैरुपरमेद् बुद्ध्या धृति-गृहीतया ।
आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ २।२५

That is, 'little by little let him withdraw, by reason or intellect held in firmness; keeping the mind established in the Self, let him not think of anything', because 'प्रशान्तमनसं ह्येनं योगिनः सुखमुत्तमम्' (३।२७) i.e., supreme bliss verily comes to this Yogi, whose mind is quite tranquil'.

Regarding *pratyahara*, Patanjali said : 'स्वविषयासम्प्रयोगे चित्तस्य स्वस्वरूपानुकार इवेन्द्रियाणां प्रत्याहारः * *' (II.54), i.e., 'when the mind is withdrawn from the objects like sound, etc., the senses are abstracted and do not come in contact with any other objects and follow as it were the real nature of the mind. The commentator Vyasa wisely said : 'यथा मधुकरराजं मक्षिका उत्पतन्त मनूत्पतन्ति, निविशमानमनुनिविशन्ते, तथेन्द्रियाणि चित्तनिरोधे निरुद्धानि, इत्येष

प्रत्याहारः।' Just as the bees fly, as the queen flies, and sit as the queen sits down, so the senses become restrained, as the mind is restrained. This is *pratyahara.* Vachaspati Mishra quoted in this connection a passage from the *Vishnu-Purana* (VI.7.43) that a Yogi who is devoted to the practice of withdrawing the mind, should restrain the senses which are attached to the objects of sound, etc., and makes them imitate the mind'. In fact, when the mind is withdrawn from the objects, the senses are automatically withdrawn.

Now, when *pratyahara* is completed, *dharana* comes, and when *dharana* or the method of holding the mind to an object is completed, *dhyana* or meditation comes. Otherwise if you sit with your eyes closed only, that is not meditation. Meditation is not so easy. The *Gita* says,

युञ्जन्नेवं सदात्मानं योगी नियतमानसः।
शान्तिं निर्वाणपरमां मत्संस्थामधिगच्छति ॥ ६।१५

That is, 'thus always keeping the mind balanced, the Yogi, with the mind controlled, attains to the peace abiding in Me, which culminates in *nirvana* or *moksha*'. So, when the mind is calm, i.e., is reduced to its real nature or consciousness, then absolute peace comes.

Kapila in the Sankhya described three qualities (*gunas*), *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.* The quality, *sattva* is pure and shining, whereas *rajas* is active or dynamic, and *tamas* is full of morbidity. So when the mind is disturbed, it comes into the influence of *rajas.* Then the quality, *sattva,* must be recalled or developed to calm down the active state of the mind, and when the mind is calm, then comes the flash of the Brahman-knowledge. Therefore, the course of the senses must be controlled, so that they cannot run towards the object of senses. Again it is a fact that the effort of controlling will be made by the medium of the mind, because the mind is the director of the senses, and if the mind is controlled, the senses will automatically be controlled. So with patience, the mind should be withdrawn from objects of senses, and be concentrated on the Self. At that time the mind should meditate upon the Self only, and nothing else, and then the mind will commune with the *Atman.* Then separate existence of the mind will be lost, and absolute tranquility and

peace will be attained (Vide the *Gita* 6.25, and the *Katha Upanishad,* I.3,13, and 2.3.10).

There is nothing great or supreme than the Self-realization. It is the essence of all religions. When Yaksha asked Yudhisthira :

अहन्यहनिभूतानि गच्छन्तीह यममन्दिरम् ।
शेषाः स्थिरत्वमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतःपरम् ॥

That is, 'everyday in the world the individual souls are going into the jaws of death, but yet they desire to live in this world of pangs and sufferings. How wonderful it is!'

Yudhisthira replied : (vide the *Mahabharata,* Vanaparva) :

तर्कोऽप्रतिष्ठः श्रुतयोर्विभिन्ना
नैको ऋषिर्यस्य मतं प्रयाणम् ।
धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां
महाजनो येन गतः स पन्था ॥

That is, 'no real conclusion is deducted from intellectual debate: the conclusion of the *Upanishads* always differ, no *Rishi* or wise man is of the same opinion, rather all of them differ. The essence of religion lies in the cave of the heart, so to realize that essence, we shall have to follow the path of the wise ones'.

The word 'cave' here connotes the idea of mind or heart, and the real essence of religion is the *Atman.* The *Atman* is the greatest achievement and it should really be adored and attained. In different *Upanishads,* this case has been mentioned. As for example, the *Mundaka-Upanishad* (III.17) said,

दूरात् सुदुरे तदिहान्तिके च
पश्येत् स्विहैव निहितं गुहायाम् ।

In the *Katha* (I.2.12) it is also mentioned : 'दुदर्शं गूढ़मनुप्रविष्टं गुहाहितं गह्वरेष्ठं पूराणम्'। The *Narayana-Upanishad* (12.1) said : 'महीयानात्मा गुहायां निहितोहस्य जन्तो :' Again while explaining supreme senti-ment of intellect, Vyasa said : 'वृत्तिरविशिष्टां * * ब्राह्म शाश्वतं गुहा यस्यां कवयो वेदयन्ते'। While mentioning about the five levels of consciousness (*pancha-koshas*), the *Pancha-dasi* and *Taittiriya Upanishad* said that the words 'cave (*guha*) connotes the idea of the *pancha-kosha* like *annyamaya,*

manomaya, pranamaya, vijnanamaya and *annandamaya.* The word *guha* connotes also the idea of intellect or *buddhi* : ब्रह्मविंदाप्नोति परम्। * * यो बेद निहितं गुहायां परमे व्योमम्' * * i.e., the God-realized man knows the Brahman in the cave which is known as the supreme ether'. The idea is this, that intellect which shines in the heart, and supreme consciousness that shines in intellect, are the *Atman* or *Brahman,* and we should know that. The pure consciousness, reflected in the internal organ, is the *Atman,* and it is the prime goal of the human life to realize that *Atman.*

The way to realization is easy if we come in contact with the wise ones and get their grace. If you associate all the time with the holy ones, there rise in your mind a tendency and an inspiration which help you to live the holy life. They make the mind sacred and calm, and the mind also becomes strong. So the life of the great ones is the living ideal. The *Gita* similarly said :

यद्यदाचरति श्रेष्ठस्तत्तदेबेतरो जनः।
स यत् प्रमाणं कूरुते लोकस्तदनुबर्तते ॥ ३।२१

That is, 'ordinary men follow the path, adopted by the great ones, and get divine light in the heart. And the path which is recognised by them as great and genuine, is followed by the others and for this they achieve real good and peace'. Those who aspire to attain to God, or who whole-heartedly wish to get Him, are the real Sadhakas. Their mind becomes purified and is devoid of worldly thoughts, so their mind proceeds naturally towards God. Ordinary men are entangled with worldly desires, and so their mind is not pure and transparent. Their impure mind runs always after desires. So when they associate with the purified holy men, their *antahkarana* or mind becomes pure, and when they discuss holy matters about God, their mind is gradually purified, and there arises eagerness in their mind to know about God or the *Atman.* Really the holy discussions and thoughts create influence upon the human mind. The ordinary mind is hightened, and is enlightened and pure, and is directed towards God. It is the nature of the mind to seek pleasure in worldly things, so inertness of their mind is not removed. When the mind is sacred and pure, then

it seeks for the realization of the *Atman.* And it should be remembered that consciousness which shines behind the mind, is the real nature of the *Atman.* So the mind should be directed towards the *Atman,* as the *Atman* is the director and illuminator of the mind, and when the mind is directed towards pure consciousness, the mind commits suicide, and is one with the ocean of pure consciousness like the salt doll, which went to measure the depth of the ocean, but is lost. Then the mind is transformed into pure *chit* or consciousness. The non-dualist Vedantists say this. Now, though the Brahman is beyond the mind, yet the mind (i.e., intellect) is the only instrument or medium which determines genuineness of realization of the Brahman. The mind or intellect determines, or ascertains the glory of the Brahman, which is reflected in the mind or intellect, and, consequently, nescience (*ajnana*) that lies in the mind or intellect, is absolutely removed, and the pure consciousness that shines in the mind or intellect, is revealed. We know that mind or intellect is the product of nescience or *ajnana,* so when the mind comes in contact with the self-shining Brahman-conscious, nescience is the mind, or their mind, the product of nescience, is absolutely removed, and the consciousness, which is the real nature of the mind or intellect, is revealed and shines in its fullness. This can also be said about *vritti* that goes to ascertain the Brahman-consciousness.

CHAPTER III

RAJA YOGA

(17 December, 1924, Wednesday, 5-30 p.m.)

The mind-stuff is divided into five states (or planes) according to its five manifestations. Vyasa in his *Sankhya-pravachan-vasya* mentioned about these five states of the mind in connection with the aphorism "अथ योगानुशासनम्", Vyasa said : "क्षिप्तं मूढं विक्षिप्तमेकाग्रं निरुद्धमिति चित्तभूमयः" * * i.e., the five planes of *chitta* (mind) is wandering, forgetful, occasionally steady or distracted, one-pointed, and restrained. Bhojaraja in his *Rajamartandyavritti* described these states or planes of the mind (*chitta*) in connection with the second aphorism : "योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः" Bhojaraja said : "तत्र क्षिप्तं मूढं विक्षिप्त एकाग्रं निरुद्धमिति चित्तस्य मूयमः चित्तस्याबस्थाबिशेषाः।" i.e. the conditions or different states of the thinking principles are restless activity, mischievous, ignorance, valuptuousness, concentration, and suppression. These states have also been described separately (vide the *vritti* by Bhojaraja). Let us mention here the definitions or meanings of the states as given by Vachaspati Mishra. Vachaspati Mishra (and also Bhojaraja) said :

(a) The wandering (*kshipta*) condition of the mind (*chitta*) is that in which it is always thrown by disturbing active energy (*rajas*) towards these and those objects, and is thus extremely unsteady.

(b) In the forgetful stupid (*mudha*) state, the mind is possessed of the modification (*vritti*) of deep sleep on account of the excess of inertia which is the quality of *tamas*.

(c) The occasionally steady or distracted (*vikshipta*) state is differentiated from the wandering. The difference consists in the occasional steadiness of that which is for the most part unsteady. This excess of its unsteadiness is either acquired, or brought about by the obstacles of disease, disinclination, etc., to be mentioned later.

(d) The one-pointed (*ekagra*) is that which moves along one line only.

(d) The restrained or suppressed (*niruddha*) state of the

mind is that in which all the mental modifications have been restrained, and exist only as potencies.

In fact, the Hindu psychologists have divided mental conditions into five different parts. The first one is the scattered state of the mind, or *kshipta*. The next is the *mudha* that is stupid. The scattered state (*kshipta*) is one extreme, and the stupid (*mudha*) is the other. The mind is wholly idiotic, cannot think, cannot see anything clearly. The third state is *vikshipta* that swings between two extremes; sometimes tremendously, active and sometimes wholly stupid. The fourth state is called *ekagra*, the one-pointed state of the mind. The fifth state is that of the mind which is held under restraint or absolute control by the will-power. In that state, the oneness of the senses are completely closed.

Again it has been described in Patanjali's *Yogardarshana*: वृत्तयः पञ्चतयाः क्लिष्टाक्लिष्टः' (1.5), i.e., the modifications are five-fold. which are painful and not painful. Besides, the modifications or states, the state of one-pointedness (*ekagra*) and the state of absolute control (*niruddha*) are restrained by repeated effort or *abhyasa*. The one-pointed state, cognitive trance or superconsciousness (*samprajnata-yoga* or *samadhi*) comes, and in the absolute controlled state ultra-cognitive trance or superconsciousness (*asamprajnata-yoga* or *samadhi*) comes. Vyasa said: 'यस्त्वेकाग्रे चेतसि सद्भूतमर्थं प्रद्योतयति क्षिणेति च क्लेशान् सर्वबन्धनानि श्लथयति निरोध मभिमुखं करोति, स सम्प्रज्ञातो योग इत्याख्यायते' i.e., that however, which in the one-pointed mind, fully shows forth an object existing as such in its most perfect form, removes the afflictions, loosens the bonds of *karma* (work) and thus inclines it towards restraint, is said to be the cognitive trance'. Vyasa further said: "सर्ववृत्तिनिरोधेत्वसम्प्रज्ञातः समाधिः" * * * i.e., when, however, all the modifications come under restraint, the trance or *samadhi* (superconscious state) is ultra-cognitive (*asamprajnata-samadhi*)'.

Now, what is cognitive or conscious trance or superconsciousness (*samprajnata-samadhi*)? In connection with the seventeenth aphorism of the *Patanjalasutra* (वितर्कविचारानन्द...') Bhojaraja said .'ध्येयातिरिक्तसकलवृत्तिनिरोधः सम्प्रज्ञातः सबीजसमाधिरिति यावत्' i.e., 'that which makes manifest without any doubt or error, or makes thoroughly manifest the exact nature of the object pondered, is cognitive or conscious trance or superconscious-

ness'. 'स वितर्कादिभेदात् चतूर्विधः। सवितर्कः, सविचारः, सानन्दः, सास्मितश्च' i.e., '*samadhi* is a kind of pondering (*bhavana*). That *samprajnata* is divided into four, argumentative, deliberative, joyous and egoistic (vide the commentary of Bojaraja). Further it can be said : 'सम्प्रज्ञाते साक्षात्क्रियते ध्येयस्वरूपमत्र' i.e. the supreme state which reveals the real essence of the object of meditation is *samprajnata.* It has already been said that this kind of *samadhi* is accompanied by the appearances of philosophical curiosity, meditation, elation, and egoism. The philosophical curiosity (*vitarka*) is a superficial attempt of the mind to grasp any object. Meditation is a subtle attempt. Elation is bliss, and egoism is the consciousness of being one with the Self. Now, when the state of *samprajnata-samadhi* comes, then nescience (*avidya*), egoism (*ashmita*), attachment (*raga*), aversion (*dvesa*), and love of life (*abhinivesha*)—all of these afflictions (*kleshas*) are removed. Patanjali described about these afflictions in the chapter 'II.3) : अविद्यास्मितारागद्वेशाभिनिवेशाः क्लेशाः'। To this Vachaspati Mishra said that nescience or *avidya* is unreal cognition itself. Egoism or *raga* and other afflictions also carry *avidya* with them and cannot exist without it, because they are the products of nescience. All the afflictions are, therefore, unreal cognition (*ajnana* or *avidya*). So it is found that when knowledge is realized in the *samprajnata-samadhi,* nescience is removed, as with the rise of light, darkness dies out.

Further Bhojaraja said in connection with the aphorism II.4: सर्वेषां क्लेशानां चित्तविक्षेपकारित्वात् योगिणां प्रथमेब तदुच्छेदे यत्नः कर्तव्य इति' i.e. 'as all the afflictions cause distraction of the mind of the Yogis (not only of the Yogis, but also of all men and animals), so they take care for destroying those afflictions together with their root, *avidya* or nescience.

We have already discussed that conscious or cognitive superconscious state (*samprajnata-samadhi*) is accompanied by the appearances of philosophical curiosity, meditation, elation, and egoism : 'वितर्कविचारानन्दास्मितारूपानुगमात् सम्प्रज्ञातः' (I.17). We have also discussed separately about these *vitarka, vichara, ananda* and *ashmita.* These four always accompany *samprajnata-samadhi,* or conscious superconscious state. In *vitarka* or philosophical curiosity, the current of the mind runs towards the outward world, taking a medium of a gross

material form. When the mind is concentrated to some subtle object, it is known as *savichara*. When the mind is concentrated in the objects of senses, it is called *sananada*, and when the mind is absolutely concentrated in the *Atman*, the non-related pure consciousness, then it is known as *ashmita-yoga*. Vachaspati Mishra elaborately defined these four states in his glossary. He defined (a) *vitarka* as a superficial attempt of the mind, because it has the gross phenomena for its sphere of action, (b) *vichara* as a meditation which has for its sphere of action, the causes of the gross phenomena, the subtle elements, the five *tanmatras*, the manifested and the unmanifested essence of matter (the *linga* and the *alinga*); (c) *ananda* as the blissful modification of consciousness, which consists in the illumination of the mind, as regards the acts of sensation, with gross phenomena for their objects, and (d) *ashmita* or egoism as the consciousness of being one with the Self or *Atman*. Egoism is the subtle cause of the instrumental powers inasmuch as they are born out of it; and egoism appearing as the Self, the subject is the consciousness of being one with the Self.

It should be remembered that these states of Yogas or *samadhis* occur with some objects as mediums, so they are known as the *savishaya-samadhi*, i.e., the state of superconsciousness, having some objects as contents. To this Vyasa said : 'सर्वे एते सालम्बनाः समाधयः'। And when there remains nothing but impressions (*samskaras*), then that state of superconsciousness is known as the *nirvishaya-samadhi* or *samprajnata-samadhi*. Regarding this state Patanjali further said : 'विरामप्रत्याभ्यासपूर्वः संस्कारशेषोऽन्यः' (I 18). In the commentary, Vyasa said : 'सर्ववृत्तिप्रत्यस्तमये संस्कारशेषो निरोधः चित्तस्य समाधिः सम्प्रज्ञातः। तस्य परं वैराग्यं उपायः। * * स च अर्थशून्यः * * एष निर्बीजः समाधिः सम्प्रज्ञातः', that is, 'in the *asamprajnata-samadhi*, all the modifications (*vrittis*) of the mind are quietened or silenced, and there remains no seed or object, and so it is called *nirvija* or *nirodha-samadhi*. This *nirodha-samadhi* is divided into two, disembodied or *videha-samadhi* and *samadhi* in which the *purushas* live in the *Prakriti* with their causal bodies. Patanjali defined these two *videha* and *prakritilin samadhis* in the aphorism I.19.20.

We have already discussed about five states of the mind,

which are known as wondering (*kshipta*), forgetful (*mudha*), occasionally steady or distracted (*vikshipta*), one-pointed (*ekagra*) and restrained (*niruddha*). These states originate from the qualities (*gunas*) which are contained in, or make the stuff of the *Prakriti*. The qualities or attributes of the *Prakriti* are *sattva, rajas*, and *tamas*, Maharshi Kapila said : 'सत्तरजस्तमसां साम्याबस्था प्रकृतिः' (I.59), i.e., when these three qualities, *sattva, rajas*, and *tamas* are balanced, that balanced state (of the *gunas*) is known as the *Prakriti*. From the *Prakriti* evolved *mahat*, from *mahat, ahamkara*, from *ahamkara, pancha-tanmatra* or five subtle elements, all inner and outer senses (*indriyas*), and from the subtle elements or *tanmatras* evolved the gross phenomenal universe : 'प्रकृतेर्महान् महतोऽहंकारोऽङ्कारात् पञ्चतन्मात्राण्युभयमिन्द्रियं, तन्मात्रेभ्यः स्थलभूतानि (*Sankhayasutra* I.59). Now it should be remembered that the *Prakriti* and its attributes (*gunas*) are not different from each other, and the balancing state of the attributes is known as the *Prakriti*, as has been said before. In the quality of *sattva*, the mind remains as calm and tranquil, without any modification (*vritti*); in the quality of *rajas*, the mind is agitated and then it is manifested as active or dynamic ; and the quality of *tamas* is an uncontrolled state of the mind. The *Gita* said.

सत्तं रजस्तम इति गुणाः प्रकृतिसम्भबाः ।
निबध्नन्ति महाबाहो देहे देहिनमव्ययम् ॥
तत्र सत्त्बं निर्मलत्वात् प्रकाशकमनामयम् ।
सुखसङ्गेन बध्नाति ज्ञानसङ्गेन चानघ ॥
रजो रागात्मकं बिद्धि तृष्णासङ्गसमुद्भबम् ।
तन्निबध्नाति कौन्तेय कर्मसङ्गेन देहिनाम् ॥
तमस्त्वज्ञानजं बिद्धि मोहनं सर्वदेहिनाम् ।
प्रमादालस्यनिद्राभिस्तन्निबध्नाति भारत ॥
सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रजः कर्मणि भारत ।
ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तमः प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत ॥

* * *

सत्त्वात् सञ्जायते ज्ञानं राजसो लोभ एब च ।
प्रमादमोहौ तमसो भवतोऽज्ञानमेब च ॥
ऊर्ध्वं गच्छन्ति सत्त्वस्था मध्ये तिष्ठन्ति राजसाः ।
जघन्यगुणवृत्तिस्था अधो गच्छन्ति तामसाः ॥
—गीता १४।५—१८

In these verses, Sri Krishna defined and described the states as well as the results of three *gunas, sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.* He said : "*Sattva, rajas,* and *tamas*—these *gunas* O mighty-armed Arjuna, born of the *Prakriti,* bind fast in the body the embodied, the indestructible (5). Of these, *sattva,* which, from its stainlessness is lucid and healthy, binds by attachment to happiness and by attachment to knowledge, O sinless one (6) But, know thou *tamas* to be born of unwisdom deluding all embodied being; by heedlessness, indolence and sloth, it binds fast, O Bharata (8). *Sattva* attaches to happiness, *rajas* to action, O Bharata, while *tamas,* enshrouding wisdom, attaches on the contrary, to heedlessness (9). * * *Sattva* arises, O Bharata, predominating over *rajas* and *tamas*; and *rajas,* over *sattva* and *tamas*; so *tamas,* over *sattva* and *rajas* (10). * * From *sattva* arises wisdom, and greed from *rajas*; heedlessness and error arise from *tamas,* and ignorance (17). Those who follow *sattva* go upwards; the *rajasic* remain in the middle; and the *tamasic,* who follow in the course of the lowest *guna,* go downwards (18)".

Sankara said in the commentary on the *Gita* that attachment which arises from *avidya* or *gunas,* is the cause of worldliness (*samsara*) and bondage. So we should rise above all attachments, and shall concentrate our mind, which is the storehouse of desires of attachments, and impression, to the *Atman,* the infinite ocean of pure consciousness, and then we shall be able to cross the ocean of *samasara* or cycle of births and deaths.

Now, pleasure and pain—desires and passions—all these are the modifications of the mind. The modifications or *vrittis* are the effects or distractions. When the mind comes in close contact with the sense-objects, then the mind takes the forms of the objects, and those forms are the modifications or *vrittis* : 'विषयसम्बन्धा या चित्तपरिणति सा वृत्तिः'। Now, when we see a picture, the image of the picture is reflected in our mind, or when we hear a sound, there arises a sensation of that sound in our mental sphere. This image or reflection together with sensation are known as modification or *vritti.* In fact, when the mind is active, that active state of the mind takes the form of modification (*vritti*). In the calm ocean, there arise the ripples or waves, and those

ripples or waves are known as the *vrittis.* The *vrittis* are, therefore, the outcome or product of the quality of *rajas.* In that state, the mind is diverted from its original state or condition.

Reflections are the emotions, feelings, sensations, etc. At all the other times there is reflection of the mental conditions upon the soul. Or it can be said that the soul is like a colourless white crystal ball, and a coloured flower is placed before that ball, and you will see that the colour of the flower is reflected in the crystal ball, and this reflection is known as *vritti.* Therefore, the mind substance is constantly throwing the reflection of its various states of emotion, sensation, feelings and other mental conditions upon the crystal ball of our true Self, and for that reason, they are called the modifications or *vrittis.* The mind can also be compared with a vast ocean where whirlpools or eddies are evolving all the time. But these agitated active states of the mind should be concentrated so as to come back or reach to its real state. One-pointedness is the opposite state of the diverged or agitated active mind. As for example, I am speaking and you all are hearing me with rapt attention. This hearing with attention is known as one-pointedness. But if at that time the mind runs away, then the mind becomes active and diverted. But the natural tendency of the mind is to run towards different objects, and at that time the mind should forcibly be concentrated to an object. It requires habit and will-power. Stronger the will-power, easier becomes the controlling power. Meditation is difficult for the weak, because they cannot bring their mind under control, so their mind is not one-pointed.

As for example, a clock is tickling, and some one of you do not hear that sound because of attention towards the reading of a book. The nature of the ears is to hear something, but as you are reading a book and your attention is there, so you do not hear any sound. The cause is this that ears are only the instruments, and as the mind is not there, your ears did not attend to the object of hearing. Really the mind is the agent of hearing, so if the mind is not attentive to, or is absent from, hearing, you will not hear anything. So the mind should be attentive to the objects of hearing, and

when the mind is attentive, it does not run away from the objects of hearing. Therefore, attention is necessary in all spheres of knowledge.

The Nyaya-Vaishesika philosophers consider the mind as an atom (*anu-parimana*), so when it is engaged in one object, it cannot attend to the other. They say that it is impossible for the atomic-sized mind to attend simultaneously to two or different things. Kanada explained in the Vaishesika philosophy (7.1.23) : 'तद्भावादणु मनः' i.e., the mind is like an atom'. In the *Bhashapariccheda* (Karika 84), Visvanath Nyaya-Panchanana said,

साक्षात्कारे सुखादीनां करणं मन उच्यते ।
अयौगपद्याज्ज्ञानानां तस्याणुत्वमिहेष्यते ॥

That is, 'the mind is the instrument for enjoyment of perception (or of the perceived objects), but as it is of atomic size, so it cannot acquire the knowledge of perception of two or many things at a time. The author of the *Siddhanta-muktavali* also supported this view, when he said :

'तत्र मनसोऽणुत्वे प्रमाणामाह । अयौगपद्यादिति । ज्ञानानां चाक्षुषरासदीनामयौगपद्येमेककालोत्पत्तिर्नास्तीत्यनुभवसिद्धम् । * * तन्मनसो विभुत्वे चासान्निधानं न सभवतीति न विभुः मनः' i.e., 'the mind being atomic in size, it cannot attend anything simultaneously, and so it (mind) cannot be taken as universal or all-pervasive'. Further in the *Upanishad*, we find : 'अन्यत्रमना अभुवम् नाश्रौषम्, अन्यत्रमना मभुवत् नाद्राक्षम्' i.e., 'when the mind hears a thing, it cannot hear other things, when it sees a thing, it cannot see other things.

Some of the Western psychologists have also admitted the view of the Indian philosophers. Being of atomic size, the mind is not all-pervasive, so it attains one object at a time. It is also found that a man can write, speak, laugh. etc., in the same time and from it, it appears that the mind can attend to all things at the same time. But that is not correct from the phychological viewpoint, as the mind attends to only one thing at a time. Two sense-perceptions do not occur at the same moment, as there must be an interval of time between them. For instance, when we see a sight and hear a sound apparently at the same time, proper or logical analysis will show that one sensation is followed by another, we cannot therefore have two or manifold percep-

tions simultaneously.

Such is the case of sensation. When any sensation arises, it comes through some nerves, and by certain stimuli the nervous matter is agitated, and this agitation flows in the form of a current through the nerves until they reach the cortical cells of the brain. So, sensations, or vibrations of the external objects which come through the nerves, are nothing but suggestions, and these suggestions are carried by these nerves to the brain.

However, it can be asked as to how sensations of objects originate. To this it can be said that you hear a sound and sensation of the sound comes to you, but you do not know the process through which sensation comes or passes to you. The fact is that the sound enters into your ears through the auditory nerves and produces vibrations. Again those vibrations passing through brain cells, create other vibrations, and when those vibrations being illumined by consciousness, reach the mind, then the mind gets the feeling in the form of sensation. So the mind becomes a medium for all kinds of perception or sensation, and that which shines behind the mind, is the conscious entity. That conscious entity perceives or gets sensations of all objects through the medium of the mind. That conscious entity is the *ego* (says Kant), or the *Atman* (says, Vedanta).

The brain is just like a higher office or court, and there remains, i.e., shines the self-consciousness as an officer or a judge. That self-consciousness controls and conducts everything by the help of the mind. Generally we consider the mind as the director of all things but, in truth, the mind is an instrument, and it has no consciousness of its own. It appears as conscious, because the *Atman*, the storehouse of consciousness or knowledge, shines behind it. So if any kind of incident happens in the outside world, the duty of the mind is to send them at once to the brain. The mind sends those incidents to the higher office or court (to the brain) in the form of a message or current. The court or brain receives that message, and sends forth again to the mind. The mind then receives it and affirms it, and this affirmation of the mind is no other than sensation or perception. Therefore, there must exist a conscious entity for becoming

sensation or perception. This conscious entity is the *ego*, or the *Atman*. The *ego* or *Atman* is the doer of everything, but it does through the medium of the mind. The mind as a medium does everything for sensation, or feeling, or perception. But, in truth, the *ego*, or *Atman*, is the source and director of the mind, and without the *ego* or *Atman*, the conscious entity, psycho-physical condition is not fulfilled. As for example, when the *ego* or *Atman* goes out of the gross physical body, the body remains as dead, and there remains no sensation or feeling. The body with its face, eyes, nose, ears, and other organs remain as it is, but the organs are not possessed of feelings or sensations.

Perception or every kind of sense-experience involves a psycho-physical condition or process. In Advaita Vedanta, knowledge or consciousness can be said to be an experience or perception, because until and unless knowledge or consciousness in the forms of the knower (*jnata*), the known (*jneya*) and knowledge (*jnana*, the process) become one, so long an experience, or a perception, does not happen. Advaita Vedanta says that immediate perception (*pratyaksha*) as a process (*pramana*) is that which gives rise to a modification (*vritti*) that manifests consciousness (*chit*). So, from the standpoint of Advaita Vedanta, the consciousness (*chit*) itself is regarded as an immediate valid knowledge or perception (*pratyaksha-pramana*). The subject 'I' or the internal organ (*antahkarana*) and the object (*vishaya*) are the presupposition of the act of perception. Consciousness (*chit*) is the ground or substratum (*adhisathana*) of all of them. This consciousness shines always in both the subject (*antahkarana*) and the object (*vishaya*). The subject is known as *pramata* or *pramatri-chaitanya*. *Pramata* or *pramatri* is the subject and consciousness is *chit*, and in this sense, *pramata* when it is in the internal organ (*antahkarana*), is called the *pramana-chaitanya*. And in this sense when it is in the object, it is called *vishaya-chaitanya*.

Now, the internal organ (*antahkarana*) is the abode of all modifications (*vrittis*) or *vritti*-consciousness. The consciousness (*chit*) that resides in the *Atman* (really pure consciousness itself is the *Atman*) goes out of the body through sense-organs to the object, and when it (consciousness) comes in contact

with the object, it assumes the form of the object. This form is called the *antahkarana-vritti*. In fact, this *vritti* is a state of *antahkarana*. Now, when consciousness (*chit*) goes out of the body through space and covers the object, the subject-consciousness, the process or space-consciousness and the object-consciousness (*pramata, pramana* and *prameya chaitanyas*) become one, being completely identified with one another. As for example, when water is raised from a tank and is taken to a field through a canal or passage, then water of the tank, water of the canal for passage, and water of the field become one or identified. Such also happens in the case of perception or sensation. During perception, all consciousness of the subject, object, and process are one or identified. Three kinds of consciousness (*pramata, prameya* and *pramana*) that occupy the same point of space are identical. Specially the Advaita thinkers somehow assume that the things that occupy the same point of space, are identical. So before knowing an object, or a thing, it is not known, and that means there is non-knowledge of the object, or of the thing. Nescience (*ajnana*) obscures the object or thing, which is also the product of nescience (*ajnana*). Now, consciousness (*chit*) that lies in modification (*vritti*) really destroys the nescience (*ajnana*) that exists in the object or thing, and then the object or thing is revealed. So Advaita Vedanta says that an object, or a thing (*vishaya* or *vastu*) is not known by perception (*pratyaksha*) when there is nescience (*ajnana*) in the *vishaya-chaitanya*, and from this it follows that knowledge of perception or *pratyaksha* (of an object, or of a thing) presupposes destruction or removal of nescience (*ajnana*), and simultaneously the object or thing is revealed, i.e., perceived.

As for example, there is a jar. It is not known, because there is nescience (*ajnana*) in the consciousness (*chit*) which is the ground (*adhisthana*) of nescience (*ajnana*). The jar comes in contact with the eyes of the percipient. His internal organ (*antahkarana*) goes out through the outlet of the eyes, and reaches the jar. Then the jar and its modification (*vritti*) occupy the same point of space. In the modification (*vritti*), there is the process-consciousness (*pramana-chaitanya*), and, in the jar, there is the object-consciousness (*vishaya-chaitanya*). On account of modification (*vritti*), nescience (*ajnana*) that lies

or resides in the object-consciousness, is destroyed or removed, and as a result of this, the process-consciousness (*pramana-chaitanya*) becomes identical with the object-consciousness or *vishaya-chaitanya*. This identity (*tadatmaya*) is known as the knowledge of perception (*pratyaksha*). Now, it is a fact, as I have said before, that from the standpoint of consciousness or *chit* there is neither difference in it as the subject-consciousness (*pramatri-chaitanya*), object-consciousness (*vishaya-chaitanya*), and the process or relation-consciousness (*pramana-chaitanya*), nor does it need to be identical. The difference lies that it is superimposed (*adhyasta*) only from the standpoint of nescience (*ajnana*) and its products. So, after the difference is made, the necessity arises for identifying one consciousness with another consciousness.

According to Advaita Vedanta, perception (*pratyaksha*) is of two kinds, *savikalpaka* and *nirvikalpka*. A perception of an object that involves relation (*samyoga*) of the substantive and the attributive, is *savikalpaka*, as for example, a jar is qualified by jarness. In the *nirvikalpaka-pratyaksha*, there occurs no relation between the substantive and the attributive, but perception becomes only of that which exists * * "सन्मात्रविषयकम्" Some of the Western psychologists also admit that the subject recognizes the object, because the object is one with the subject. Regarding the process of recognition, the scientist-philosopher Whitehead said : "The awareness of an object as same factor is what I call recognition. * * Recognition is an awareness of sameness". Some of the Critical Realists also admit it. But the Vedantic conception is more rational and critical.

Now, it is a fact that the senses are the instruments and the mind is the director. The mind directs everything through its will-power, that lies within it. All kinds of desire, passion, and tendency are the effect of the will-power of the mind. The mind can be compared with water, and the will-power, with the eddies or waves. Though the waves are no other than water itself, yet they evolve separately. So the will-power is non-different from the mind, and yet they appear as different. Such is the condition of the individual souls which are essentially non-different from the Brahman, and yet they appear as different from the Brahman owing to the

inscrutable power of *maya*. The individual souls, as if, play the role of the world-play only to realize their identity with the source or essence, the Brahman. Their mortal frames are frail and destructive, but their spiritual entity is eternal and undying. The individual souls die or leave their old bodies, and take the new ones, and thus they create the cycle of births and deaths. They take new bodies after their death through the medium of their will-power, which is the power of the mind, i.e., their bodies, old and new, are the result or outcome of their will-power.

When men die, where do they go? They go to their mental plane, where they do works of all kinds, eating, speaking, thinking, etc., mentally. Their death does not mean complete destruction of their entity, but they exist and exist in the mental or psychic plane with their subtle bodies (*suksma-dehas*). After death, the individual souls do everything through the medium of their thoughts that reside in them in the form of impressions. But, in the mental plane, all their desires are not fulfilled, so they want to take birth again in the material world, with the material bodies. The material bodies are known as the *bhogayatana*, i.e., the place where all kinds of their enjoyment and desire are fulfilled. Besides the material bodies, they eagerly wait after death to come back again in this world of phenomena, because this material world is the only plane, where men can do their all kinds of duty and can unfasten the chain of *maya* and go beyond the cycle of *samsara*. The Hindu scriptures say that even the *Devas* or bright spirits are willing to come down to this phenomenal plane to solve the mysteries of their life, and also to attain to God-realization. But if the disembodied spirits wish to come to the phenomenal world, they will have to take material body, which is constituted out of five subtle elements, otherwise they will not be able to enjoy the material sense-pleasures.

But it should be remembered that the disembodied spirits take birth in this phenomenal plane through their will-power, which is known as a desire. Desire is the cause of everything and, therefore, desire is the cause of taking birth in this world. So when the disembodied spirits wish to take the material body, they create eyes, ears, nose, mouth, and every

instruments of senses by their will-power. Without will-power they cannot take any material body. Therefore, will-power exists in the root of everything. We create the teeth, because we know that we chew all kinds of solid food, for which digestion is possible, and that idea or will pre-exists in the bed of the mind. Similarly we create eyes from the will-to-see, create the legs from the will-to-walk, create mouth from the will-to-eat, create the tongues from the will-to taste, and create stomach from the will-to-hold and digest food. Therefore, everything, material or organic, is created from the will-power. The will-power acts upon every atoms and molecules of the material body. The senses are the instruments and the will-power of the mind is the source which directs them.

Now, when a man dies, his external (gross) senses are destroyed (i.e., they are consumed in the womb of the Nature), but still the powers of hearing, seeing, and eating, etc., remain in subtle forms in the subconscious bed of the mind. Those will-powers are like the minutest ethereal particles. After death, the material bodies are left, but the will-powers are retained in the mind of the departed spirits in the form of impressions. The spirits hold the subtle bodies through their will-power also. But the spirits do not know the existence of their astral bodies, so they cannot hold them for a long time, and, for that reason, their astral bodies die out, or are melted away in the air like mist or vapour. Similarly we create our material and ethereal bodies together with the senses by the will-power. But the difference lies in the fact that we can realize and also hold up our material bodies, but we cannot do that in the case of subtle or astral bodies.

WHAT IS YOGA

Patanjali said : 'योगश्चित्तवृत्तिनिरोधः' * * (1.2), i.e., 'Yoga is the restraint of the mental modifications'. It has been said before that the mind is possessed of three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, or natures of illumination, activity, and inertia. It has already been explained that the mind is very active by nature, as it runs here and there. But the Yogis say that the mind must be held up to an object, and to hold up or to restraint means to concentrate the modifications as well as energy so that the

volume and power of the energy become very acute and strong. In the process of holding up of the mind, we should think of some good objects. As for example, you are thinking of a lotus or rose. You just move your mind around the petals of the flower, then fix the mind upon the centre of the flower and concentrate the mind upon it. That concentration of the mind becomes deep, and then it is called meditation (*dhyana*). The mind is active by nature means the impressions (*samskaras*) of the mind force the mind to run, or move around. So, with the help of repeated experience or habit, we will have to forcibly draw the flow of course or current of the mind, and to concentrate upon an object.

It has already been said that the courses of the mind is restrained by practice (*abhyasa*) and desirelessness (*vairagya*). Now, what do you mean by practice? Patanjali said :'तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः' i.e., 'practice is the effort to secure steadiness'. Steadiness is the undisturbed calmness of the flow of the mind when it has become free from any modifications (*vrittis*). Effort (*yatna*) creates impression and brings balance in the flow of the mind. Practice is the resort to the means thereof with the object of attaining it.

Then what is desirelessness or *vairagya*? Patanjali said : दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णस्य वशीकारसंज्ञा वैराग्यम्' (1.15), i.e., "desirelessness or detachment is the consciousness of supremacy in him who is free from thirst for perceptible and scriptural enjoyments'. When attachments to enjoyments are removed, the state of desirelessness really comes. Now, desirelesness is not the mere absence of desire, as darkness is not the mere absence of light. On the contrary, desirelessness is the consciousness of indifference to enjoyment, even though divine and worldly objects be in contact. Consciousness of supremacy is the consciousness of indifference and freedom from attachment or aversion, said Vachaspati Mishra.

It has been said that a habit is formed by repeated efforts. If a habit is formed, that cannot be easily changed. But a habit can be changed by a counter-habit. If we make an effort to form a counter-habit to control or check a pre-established habit, then that deep-rooted habit can be conquered by the opposite habit or counter-habit, which is formed for controlling the previous habit. Habit creates some

impressions, and those impressions help men to do or undo all things in this world. Habit also intensifies the will-power, which, in turn, brings unto men success. So mind should be controlled and concentrated through habit, and when concentration really comes, then admist all kinds of disturbance, the mind remains undisturbed and calm.

In 1897, I used to take regular classes on Vedanta in a Hall situated on the Victoria Street. One day my subject was on 'Concentration'. While I was delivering my lecture in the Hall, a Brass-band party of the British soldiers happened to bass by that Street, and the audiences felt much disturbance of it. Rev. Dr. Haweis was among the audiences that day. When the class was over, Dr. Haweis asked me : "Swamiji, did you not feel any disturbance ?". I said : "No, what happened the matter ?" Dr. Haweis told me about the passing of a Brass-band party of the British soldiers, and on hearing it, I said that I did neither hear the sound of the Brass-band, nor did it disturb me. Hearing my reply, Dr. Haweis said : "Swamiji, you have given us today a perfect demonstration on concentration".

Concentration is a very essential thing in the sphere of life of a man, because without concentration success of any kind is not gained. Now, if you ask me how will we concentrate our mind, then I will say that concentration is atained through practice (*sadhana*). Practice is necessary in every sphere of life, and practice makes a man perfect. Jesus the Christ said: "Search and ye shall find; knock and the door shall be opened unto you". So, without practice, success (*siddhi*) is not attained.

But if you practise, an efficient teacher (*Guru*) is necessary. As without a teacher, students cannot learn well, so without an efficient spiritual teacher, an aspirant cannot progress in the religious field. A well-trained guide is required to lead a man in the path of spiritual progress. If you wish to be a good tailor, you need a master-tailor for your guidance. If you wish to be a good musician, you require an Ustad. When you read in the schools and colleges, there you need efficient well-trained teachers or professors. If you wish to pass the Attorneyship, you also require a reputed efficient Attorney, with whom you will work as an apprentice. Therefore, as the

teachers or guides are required in all fields of work, so a real *Guru* who has realized the *Atman*, is required for your training in the religious practices, as well as for your attaining the self-knowledge. It is, therefore, an absurd question that a spiritual teacher is not necessary in the path of religious practice.

To know a thing means to knock at the door of knowledge. Jesus the Christ said: "Knock and the door shall be opened unto you". But you will have to know the process or tricks as to how to give a knock. If you wish to learn something, you require some good teachers or trainers. For that purpose you also need effort or perseverance, and the teachers or guides will help you. Now, though the teachers will guide you, yet you will have to perform the religious practice by himself. Regularity is required in that respect, otherwise if you practise haphazardly, i.e., practise one day and omit the practice four or five days, then you will not get the success. Idleness should be given off, because idleness spoils the work as well as the ideal of life. Sincerity and earnestness are also needed. If there is no earnestness behind any work, failure is bound to come. As long as the door of realization is not opened, so long you will have to knock at the door of practice. Be enthusiastic, and avoid dullness. A dull and enervating man never gets into the kingdom of religion or spirituality. The mere muttering of beeds without effortful practice, sincerity, and desirelessness is meaningless. So muttering of beeds will always be accompanied by sincerity and eagerness. There shall be earnestness and firm resolution behind your thinking that you will realize God in this very life. Meditation should always be accompanied by *vichara*, and it should not be vacant. When we used to practice spiritual *sadhana* in the monastery of Baranagar, we faced many difficulties and adverse circumstances. Many a day we had to fast, and many a day we had to take only cooked rice with salt only. We had no sufficient cloth and clothes, and when we used to go out to meet some persons, we had only one cloth, and used it by turn. Everyone of us used only *kaupina*, and our ideal was to absorb ourselves in deep meditation and in reading the scriptures (*shastras*). Our only goal of life was to realize the Brahman and to live the pure

saintly life with the ideal of our beloved Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna.

Everyone should try their utmost to attain to God-realization. The *Upanishad* (*Katha*) said : 'नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः' i.e. the *Atman* is not realized by the weak'. Be steady, and be firm in the field of spiritual strength in your mind. The *Upanishad* further says : 'उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य बरान् निबोधत' i.e., 'arise and awake, and stop not till the goal is reached'. Remember that the *Atman* is not realized without strength (of the mind), and this strength is no other than self-confidence. This strength is again redoubled by faith and belief in God. Be resolute and be determined that you will attain to God in this very life. 'Either accomplish your *mantra*, or let your body die : मन्त्रेर साधन किंबा शरीर-पतन' * * . Just see how Gautama Buddha was determinate and firm in his goal. While he took his seat in the *yogasana* to realize the highest Wisdom (*Bodhi*), he promised :

इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरं
त्वगस्थि मांसं प्रलयञ्च यातु ।
अप्राप्य बोधिं बहुकल्पदुर्लभां
नैवासनात् कायमतश्चलिष्यते ॥

That is, "in this way (or seat), I shall destroy my physical body, and I do not care whether this body is turned into flesh and bone. I am firm in my resolution to achieve the supreme goal which takes thousands of years to attain', etc. Tathagata Buddha promised that either he will attain to *Bodhi* (Wisdom), or he will die. This kind of firm resolution is necessary in every walk of life of a man. Otherwise effortless life never achieves success. The attainment of Godconsciousness is not like a fruit of a tree, which can easily be plucked and be taken. Utmost effort in the practice of spiritual *sadhana* is necessary, and it requires earnestness, sincerity, and perseverance. These three at least are necessary in one's spiritual life. A sour-taste policy in *sadhana* is regrettable. Only lip-prayer to God without sincerity should always be avoided. So sincere effort is required, otherwise success (*siddhi*) is not attained in one's life. Success is not so easy a thing that you will gain it effortlessly.

As for example, you are learning music from an Ustad, or taking lessons in an Art School. Now, if you cannot do one task,

will the teacher give you another one? By mere playing a trick, or by cleverness or shrewdness, you will never gain any success. As much foul play you will adopt in your spiritual *sadhana,* so much failure you will get in attaining to *mukti* or God-realization. So regular practice with sincerity is required in your life. If you are unable to meditate upon your choosen deity in any day, sit at least in your seat and try to meditate for a few minutes. The result may not come within a second, or in a day. Remember that Rome was not built in a day. So repeated efforts and practice are needed. The repeated efforts create a habit or *abhyasa*— 'तत्र यत्नोऽभ्यासः' said Patanjali.

I think that you have no real desire or earnestness for attaining to God, which is the supreme goal of the human life. You superficially put questions about God, and ask, 'Swamiji, is there any God?' But be sincere in the putting of yours questions about God, because God is not like a hot cake or sweet-meat in a shop, so that you will buy it in exchange of money. This kind of displaying cleverness will not bring success in life. So, if you really wish to do something, or want to get something in your life, ask it sincerely, then you will get the real answer. I can assure you that a man can prosper in his religious and spiritual life, and can surely attain God-realization in this life. But sincere quest and effort are necessary, and that effort means *sadhana* and practice (*abhyasa*). As you are born with a human body and as this human life is very difficult to attain, so do not while away your valuable time without attaining to God. Do not allow your precious human life fruitlessly. There are ample time and opportunity for you, so if you desire that you will attain to God, I am sure that you will attain to Him. If you sincerely make effort, the all-merciful God will help you in your path of progress, so only earnest desire or eagerness is required. If you do not ask, why will God grant you blessing? This asking means knocking at the door of spiritual *sadhana. Sadhana* connotes the idea of progress onwards towards God. Sri Ramakrishna, my Master, used to say that if you go forward one space, God will be forward towards you ten times more than you, and this is a truth. But I do not know whether you have faith or belief in it, or you sincerely

wish to attain to God.

I have already discussed that the word 'Yoga' means suppression of the modifications of the mind : 'योगश्चित्तवृत्तिः निरोधः' The word '*nirodha*' does not only mean suppression, but also 'conservation of energy' and that means, 'to hold our mind and energy in a centre'. Revelation does not come to one unless he has that concentrated or one-pointed state of mind. Revelation is pouring its flash all the time, into each mind or heart, but the mind or heart is not ready to receive it. It (mind or heart) is dissipated. So converge and concentrate it in one point. Make the receiver ready to receive that flood of revelation. How can you make it ready ? By stopping all the disturbing elements, and by focussing and converging your efforts and energies, to the *Atman*. So by conservation of energy, you can make your mind quiet and peaceful, so as to receive Divine revelation.

It is quite true that every particle of the universe is in constant motion or vibration. That which we call heat or light, sound, taste, odour, touch, or any other object of sense-perception, is nothing but a state of vibration of one and the same unknown substance. The whole world consists of vibrations of atoms and molecules which are the most minute particles of material substance.

But this movement must be stopped and perfect balance or rest can be restored or gained. The mind is the mover or director of everything in this phenomenal universe. There is a close relation between the vital air (*prana-vayu*) and the mind. So the *Yogashastras* advise us to control the breath, and when the breath is controlled,, the mind is automatically controlled. Patanjali said to adopt the method of *pranayama*. The word *pranayama* (*prana* plus *ayama*) means 'to control the breath'. We know that to control and conquer the mind is more difficult than to control and conquer the whole world. The Yogis say that if a man conquers the battles thousand times, and if another man conquers himself, he (the latter) is the greatest of the conquerors of the world. I have already said that the mind is steady and active by its nature. One day Ramachandra asked Vashistadeva as to what is the true nature of the mind. Vashistadeva replied ; 'O Ramachandra, the mind can be compared to a monkey who is naturally

very fickle and active, who is moreover mad after drinking wine and is taken over by a disembodied spirit, and he is again stung by a scorpion. So imagine the tremendous and terrible condition of the active mind of the monkey. So try to concentrate the mind, and make it calm and peaceful. You will have to culture the power of concentration, because all kinds of success in the universe have been achieved by the power of concentration. And this power of concentration is the result of the practice of Yoga. Sir J. C. Bose made untired research upon whether the plants have any life or not. Perhaps a tree, or a plant, is 300 ft. high, and a pumping machine cannot lift up or raise water more than 300 ft. high upon the level of the earth, so how is it possible for a tree, or a plant, to raise water 300 ft. high to saturate and nourish its body and the branches! Sir J. C. Bose at last discovered with great perseverance the solution of this mystery, and this is undoubtedly the result of his power of concentration. And this is only possible for the Yoga practice.

The motor cars, trams, electric lamps, etc., were invented as a result of the power of Yoga. Just think about the Aeroplane! The English people, for the first time, tried to fly in the air. Thousands of people died for taking attempt to fly with the help of crude form of Aeroplane. But for repeated efforts and perseverance they were successful to invent the best kind of Aeroplane. As if the invention of men surpassed the creation-cum-invention of God. But you know that God is not excluded from the human world, rather He shines in the cave of the hearts of everyone and everything in the form of Divine consciousness. Man is intelligent, because consciousness shines in him, otherwise man would appear as lifeless stone. Consciousness and intelligence shine in every living being. A genius is not an uncommon or accidental one, but a genius only discovers or invents some new and novel things in this world by dint of his mental power and life-long sincere effort and investigation. A genius is regarded as great because he manifests his powers that lie hidden in the treasure-house of his mind. He who studies or cultures the mind, comes to know the secret of all the psychic powers. In fact, man is the epitome of the universe, and whatever exists in the macrocosm, exists also in the micro-

cosm. All the forces that are manifested in nature, or in universe, are the powers of the mind. Or it can be said that the gigantic forces of nature, such as attraction, gravitation, electricity, heat, light, and various other kinds of forces are to be found in the microcosmic world of the human body. As on the physical plane, so it is on the mental or psychic plane. The powers like hypnotism, telepathy, thought-transference, clairvoyance, clairaudience, and thought-reading, etc., are the powers of the mind. There are eight powers of the Yogis, which have been described by Patanjali in his *Yogasutras*. These are known as *vibhutis* or *siddhais*. But the psychic powers, or the powers of the mind, are inferior to spiritual ones, because they are the source of greater bondage to us than our ordinary powers. Some people may develop these psychic powers without knowing what result they will bring unto them. For this reason it is better not to develop, or not to possess, the unnatural powers of the mind. But bear in mind that the source of all natural and supernatural powers in this universe is the mind, and without the help of these powers, nothing can be done or be accomplished. Therefore, the powers should be developed only by doing good for himself and for the rest of the universe. But the culture of occult powers should be avoided, and all the mental powers should be directed towards the *Atman*, and then those powers will help us to realize the *summun bonum* of the human life.

The works of discovery, invention, etc., are to be considered as the result of Yoga. The scientists, physicians, philosophers, psychologists, botanists, and others, who invent or discover new things for the good of humanity at large, should be considered as the result of Yoga, because concentration and meditation which are the essential parts of Yoga, are necessary to unfold the mysteries that lie buried in the depth of the Nature or *Prakriti*. *Prakriti* is the primordial Energy, in the womb of which thousands of mysteries are hidden. It is not the fact that the great scientists are inventing things which are not in the womb of the Nature, but everything discovered and to be discovered lie in the womb of the primordial cosmic Energy. And, for this reason, it will be correct to say that they are not inventing, but are

discovering those which exist already in the cosmic Nature or *Prakriti.*

As for example, Thomas Eddison discovered the electric light, gramophone, electric fan, etc., by dint of his *sadhana.* On October 12, 1897 morning, Mrs. Wheeler took Swami Saradananda and me to Ampere Electrical Works of Mr. Thomas Edison, the inventor of electric light, electric machine for tramway, electric heater, electric foam, and gramophone, etc., I met Mr. Edison, and had a talk with him on Hindu philosophy, in which he was deeply interested. I saw his private study room where Mr. Edison used to spend most of his time in solving the problems connected with his electrical inventions. He would sit up at his desk for hours deeply absorbed in concentration like a great Indian Yogi. Sometimes he would sit up all night without sleeping, or eating his meals. His breakfast, luncheon and dinner would be brought in and placed on a table at the corner of his study-room. Mr. Edison would not move from his seat until he found solution of his problems. Nobody would call him to his meals which when got cold, would be taken away leaving him undisturbed at his desk. By his marvellous power of concentration he succeeded in becoming the world-renowned inventor of the most useful electrical machines.

Again on 11th July, 1898, Mrs. Wheeler drove me with her uncle Mr. Morian to see Mr. Thomas Edison, the great inventor and electrician, and his laboratory in the town of Orange. That time also I had a long talk with Mr. Edison, who was stone-deaf, but was deeply interested in the Hindu philosophy, especially in Vedanta. Mr. Edison showed me his wonderful inventions of electrical machines, gramophones, electric bulbs, machine for running Tram car by electricity which was then unknown in the world. I was surprised to know how he worked assiduously sitting at his desk day after day and night after night, with the concentrated mind of a Hindu Yogi until he had solved his problem denying himself of his meals and sleep in his bed. In scientific lines Mr. Thomas Edison may be regarded as a real Yogi. However, when I met him, he was a little free, and as I have been hailed from India, he eagerly greeted me, and received me very cordially. He was altogether deaf in his ear,

so he also discovered a machine for the ears, which is found to this day in a more developed form. He talked with me very friendly, and was very much glad to know that I came from India to preach the gospel of truth and Vedanta in that country (New York, U.S.A.). In low voice, he requested me to say, something about India and also about the Vedantic principles. I explained to him slowly some important problems of India and also about the Vedantic teachings. He listened to me with rapt attention and with reverential attitude, and was very pleased to learn. I stayed in his Laboratory for nearly two hours, and all the time the learned savant greeted me with joy and deep gratitude. When I was talking to him, I noticed all the time his bright and sweet look. True to say, I met no such a loving-hearted amiable man before.

The wireless telegraph is also a product of the power of Yoga. Now, attempt is made to talk over the telephone and the pictures of both who sends the message and who receive the message, will be reflected in a glass attached to the telephone. The name of this kind of telephonic instrument is television. This television-operation has recently[2] been successful in America, and with the help of it men are benefited to get the vision of distant objects or incidents sitting at their home. So nothing seems wonderful today for the culture of power of concentration or of one-pointedness of the mind. Owing to this Yoga-power, Rakhaldas Banerji discovered the prehistoric remains of an iron-blade, broken pots, and bricks. Then after continual investigation and research he determined that the age of those prehistoric remains were over 5000 years. So it is true that all kinds of power are no other than the power of concentration. Your mind is not concentrated, and so you have no desire to know anything, but everything of this universe will seem to you as new and wonderful, when you will contact your individual will with the cosmic Will.

So steadiness of mind is necessary. If you do not practice concentration and meditation, you will not acquire the

[1] At present television has been introduced to all over India, and especially to All India Radio and to all other important offices of the world.

powers of the mind. It seems wonderful that for passing the examinations of B.A. and M.A. you spend thousands and thousands of rupees, whereas for gaining the unnatural psychic powers, you will neither strive, nor spend a penny! It is not easy to acquire the Yogic powers. A player who produces clear *bols* on *tabal* by his hands, has to sincerely practise for a long time, and he has to take great pains for it. Only for his unceasing effort and perseverance he has owned the reputation of a *tabalia.* In the *Gita* (VI.45), it has been said : 'अनेकजन्मसंसिद्धिस्ततो याति परां गतिम्' i.e., 'after many an incarnation a man reaches the perfection or ultimate goal'. The word 'perfection' or ultimate goal means the attainment of knowledge of the *Atman.* Now, it is sure that without the attainment of Self-knowledge men cannot go beyond the cycle of births and deaths, which is no other than nescience. The highest achievement of the human life is the realization of the *Atman.* But it takes many incarnations for this highest achievement. At present, men live not more than fifty or seventy-five years.[2] Now, in case of seventy-five years of age, a man spends thirty years in sleeping, and among the remaining forty-five years, he perhaps spends twenty years in study and twenty-five years in service and maintenance of his family, so how will he get time for concentration and meditation, if you even leave aside the question of attainment of Self-knowledge! Sri Krishna said in the *Gita,*

बहूनां जन्मनामन्ते ज्ञानबान मां प्रपद्यते ।
बासुदेबः सर्वमिति स महात्मा सुदुर्लभः ॥ ७।१९

That is, 'after many incarnations, the wise one attains to Me, and then he realizes that Vasudeva (Sri Krishna) pervades the whole universe by His divine presence. But that kind of Mahatman or great soul is very rare'. This kind of great soul is rare, because,

मनुष्यानां सहस्रषु किश्चद् यतति सिद्धये ।
यततामपि सिद्धानां कश्चिन्मां बेत्ति तत्त्वतः ॥ ७।३

That is, among thousands of people, only a few strives to practise, and among thousands of people who sincerely prac-

[2] But the longivity of men has been prolonged in the present-day of science and research.

tise spiritual *sadhana*, a few know Me in reality'. So, those who are true Yogis and are absorbed in disciplined spiritual practice, attain Self-knowledge. The *Gita* (VI.19) further said : 'ईक्षते योगयुक्तात्मा * *', i.e., 'the Yogis who attend to Me all the time * *, they realize Me'.

If you wish to practise Yoga, you must be a Yogi. So those who aspire highest knowledge of the *Atman*, should preserve the extract or essence of blood (*virya*) to energise their body and mind. Conservation of the essence of blood, i.e. energy also brings concentration of mind, and it enables a man to make his intellect, sharp and shining. In the Vedic period, the students used to live with the *Gurus* for at least twenty-five years, studied *shastras*, and used to serve the *Gurus*, and after that if they desired, they would live the life of the *brahmachari* all through their life, or would come back home, would marry and would give the life of an ideal householder. Then up to forty-nine years they would live as the householder (*grihastha*), and then at the age of fifty, they would live in the forest as the *vanaprasthi*, and then if they would desire, they would take the life of renunciation (*sannyasa*) and would devote their life in meditation (*dhyana*) or Vedantic *nididhyasana*. In the *Javal Upanishad* (4), it has been said : 'ब्रह्मचर्यं परिसमाप्य गृही भवेत्, वनी भुत्वा प्रव्रजेत्' i.e. after *brahmacharya*, students would enter into the *grihastha*, i.e. *asharama*, then after *vani* or *vanaprasthashrama*, they would take the life of *sannyasa*'. These *shastric* dictions were not also strictly followed. In the state of acute desirelessness or detachment to worldly objects, the Brahmacharis themselves used to take the vow of *sannyasa* or renunciation. The *Javal Upanishad* (4) further said : 'यदि वेतरथा ब्रह्मचर्यादेव वा सस्नातको वा उत्सन्नाग्निको वा यदहरेव विरजेत्तदरेवप्र व्रजेत्' i.e., there were alternative paths; but when real state of renunciation was found, the Brahmacharis, or the Vanaprasthis, would adopt the vow of *sannyasa*. Desirelessness or detachment of desires is known as *vairagya* or *sannyasa*. The orchard dress and other things are no other than the sign or indication of the state of *sannyasa*. These are only the outward signs, and the inward sign is real renunciation or detachment to senses and to contingent worldly objects. The signs are the symbols which indicate a real thing behind. As for example, the sacred thread indicates

the class of the Brahmin. Similarly orchard dress, rosary, sacred ash, etc., are the outward signs that indicate the real person or object behind. Really absolute detachment from the senses and worldly objects brings the state of *sannyasa.* Detachment means desirelessness, and Sri Krishna called it the state of *niskama.* The man who is possessed of real detachment, is known as a Yogi. He is never attached to any *karma* that reaps fruit or result, and so he who lives in this world as one who has controlled the senses and has subdued or restrained desires and passions, is impartial and pure in heart. In the *Gita,* it has been said,

योगयुक्तो बिशुद्धात्मा बिजितात्मा जितेन्द्रियः ।
सर्वभूतात्मभूतात्मा कुर्वन्नपि न लिप्यते ॥ ५।७

That is, 'he who is equipped with Yoga, whose mind is quite pure, by whom the self (or mind) has been conquered, whose senses have been subdued, whose Self has become the Self of all beings,—though doing, he is not tainted'. The mind is known as *sattva,* and when this *sattva* is purified, then inner consciousness manifest and makes a man restrained and balanced. Then that well-balanced man is never bound by any actions, i.e., he never wants the results or fruits of works, rather he performs everything in the spirit of worship and sacred service. Then that man lives in this world of *karmas,* but is not attached to anything. Then he lives disinterested and unattached as the water in a lotus leaf— 'पद्मपत्र-मिबाम्भसा' i.e. he lives and moves like a real *sannyasi.* He lives in this phenomenal world, but the attractions of the sense objects of the world cannot bind him. Living in worldliness (*samsara*), he moves as an *a-samsari* (*sannyasi*) living the body (*sharira*), he thinks him as bodiless (*a-sharira*). This is really the state of a *tyagi* or *sannyasi.* This state should be an ideal and attainable for all men. The *Kaivalyapanishad* (I.3) said : 'न कर्मना न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः' i.e., by *karmas* like sacrifice and rites, by begetting children, by observing the duties of the changing world (*samsara*), or by hoarding immense riches and wealth, a man cannot attain Self-knowledge or knowledge of the Brahman, but immortal blissful life is attained only by sacrifice or 'renunciation'. So desirelessness is the pre-condition of the attainment of the

Brahman-knowledge. *Mukti* or God-realization is not attained by one who has not sacrificed his selfish motive -and attachment for the frail and unreal sense or worldly objects. But, if you say that you are bound to repay the debts of the Fathers (*Pitris*) and the *Rishis*, etc., then I would like to tell you that those debts are meant only for the householders or worldly men, and not for the Yogis, Tyagis, and Sannyasins. The Sannyasins are involved only in the debt of duty to unfasten the chain of *samsara* or delusion (*maya*).

Sri Ramakrishna used to say that when the Brahman is realized, all desires are replaced by desirelessness, because all delusive desires at that time die out, i.e. are purified, and though desires remain even after the realization of the *Atman* for the maintenance of the instrument of the physical body and senses, yet they cannot bind the realized souls, as the burnt rope does not surve the purpose of binding. Then works in the spirit of God, or of doing good for the mankind at large, are not recognized as work (of bondage). Then it appears like *himche* (*himcheshaka*) or sugar-candy (*michri*) which being vegetable or sweet, cures the cold (*sardi*). In fact, the unselfish works of the Jivanmuktas (realized living souls) are meant only for the good of the people of the world.

A Sannyasin does work not only for himself, but also for the mankind. He really dedicates his individual Self to the altar of the universal Self. His life is then meant not only for the well-being of himself but also for others : 'आत्ममोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च'। He not only seeks freedom from the chain of delusion for himself, but tries also to inspire others to unfasten their chain of delusion. So, do everything in this world of duties selflessly, otherwise you will be entangled in the trap of *karma*. Think always that you are not the agent and actor, but your life is dedicated and you are only the instrument or medium, through which God plays His sportive play. Whenever you will work, you will work by fixing your eyes and mind upon God who is really Mover and Master of the world-plays. Sri Ramakrishna used to say that all the time—नाहं नाहं तुंहु तुंहु i.e., 'I am not (the agent), but you are'. This self-abnigation brings detachment as well as self-confidence in one's mind. A desireless unselfish soul has already

reached the temple of God, because detachment to desires brings purification of heart or mind, and purification is the precondition of attaining to God-realization.

Sri Krishna explained the Karma Yoga in the *Gita*,

न कर्मणामनारम्भन्नैष्कर्म्यं पुरुषोऽश्नुते ।
न च संन्तसनादेब सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति ॥ ३।४

That is, 'not by abstaining from action does a man win actionlessness, nor by mere renunciation does he attain perfection', but he attains perfection through the medium of selfless action. Sankara explained this verse very beautifully. He said that action refers to the act of worship (*yajna*) which, performed in this birth, or in previous birth, conduce to the destruction of sins or demerits commited in the past, and cause purity of the mind (*sattva, antahkarana*); and by this purifying of the mind, they cause knowledge to spring up and lead to the path of devotion to knowledge (*jnananistha*)'. The *Mahabharata, shantiparvan*, 204.8) also used.

ज्ञानमुत्पद्यते पुंसां क्षयात् पापस्य कर्मणः ।
यथादर्शतलप्रख्ये पश्यत्यात्मानमात्मनि ॥

That is, 'knowledge springs in men on the destruction of sinful *karma*, when the Self or *Atman* is seen in Self as in a clean mirror'. Really performance of (desireless) action is a means to attaining freedom from activity. Otherwise, if you do not work, and wilfully abstain from work, you will be known as a hypocrit, because you wrongly or mistakenly think that abstaining from work brings freedom from work. But this is not true, because selfless work which is done in the spirit of worship of God, brings freedom from all actions and *maya*. So purify your heart or mind by doing works without asking the fruits (of works), and that purification will reduce or transform the mind into pure consciousness (*chit*), and that consciousness will merge into Brahman-consciousness, which is absolutely beyond time, space and causation, and which is only real. Sri Ramakrishna advised to bring out a thorn by the help of another thorn. He says : "Take one thorn to bring out another thorn and then throw away both the thorns". Really you will have to go beyond actions by the help of actions. Therefore, do selfless work, and that selfless work will make you free from bondage by

purifying your mind. The actions are not the direct cause of bringing freedom of the soul, nor freedom of the soul happens as a result of the actions, but freedom is already there in the soul, and only nescience (*avidya* or *ajnana*) has covered the self-revealing freedom which is no other than the Brahman-knowledge, and when by dint of discrimination (*vichara* or *viveka*) nescience is replaced or removed, then freedom or Brahman-knowledge shines forth in itself. So the *Gita* said : "तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर" i.e., 'therefore, perform actions being detached from the results of actions'. The desireless actions brings supreme knowledge, and there is no doubt about it. While working, the Sannyasins or Yogis always bear this ideal or spirit in their mind. The ideal householders also do actions in the same way. In olden times, most of the householders used to follow this ideal of Karma Yoga, so they realized the Brahman, even living in the ties of the family. The ideal householders would make themselves free from the bondages of desires and passions. At present there is no division of four Ashramas, the house-holder-life, the student-life, the Vanaprastha-life, and and Sannyasa-life. Further there is no clear division of four Varnas, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra. Now there exist only two Ashramas and two Varnas.

Everyone knows that nowadays there exist only two Varnas, Brahmin and Sudra. Previously the division of Varna or caste was according to colour or complexion. Now, it appears quite opposite. In ancient time, the Brahmins were of white complexion, the Kshatriyas, of yellow, the Vaishyas, of pink, and the Sudras were of black complexion. Now, in this day, if we consider the castes, Brahmin, etc., from the viewpoint of complexion, then the Englishmen or Westerners will be recognized as the Brahmin, the Japanese, as Kshatriya, the Arab peoples, as Vaishya, and all the lower caste Hindu will be recognised as Sudra, the dark-skinned. But this method should not be taken as correct. In the Epic age, the castes were divided according to their qualities and occupations. The qualities are known as *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* and *karmas* were the occupations. In the *Gita* (4.13), Sri Krishna said : "चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः" i.e., 'I divided the caste into four classes, according to the

qualities and occupations of the people (of the society)'. In the commentary, Sankara elaborately explained the reason of that division. Sankara said : "The actions of a Brahmin (priest), in whom sattva predominates, are, serenity, self. restraint, austerity, etc. The actions of a Kshatriya (warrior), in whom *rajas* predominates, and *sattva* is subordinate to *rajas*, are prowess, daring, etc. The actions of a Vaishya (merchant) in whom *rajas* predominates and *tamas* is subordinate to *rajas*, are agriculture, etc., and the action of a Sudra (servant), in whom *tamas* predominates and *rajas* is subordinate to *tamas*, is only servitude. 'Thus have been created by *Isvara*, the four castes according to distribution of energies and actions'. These four-fold division of caste is meant only for the human world, where there prevail phenomenal order and law. An objection has been raised here as to how is this division possible for *Isvara*, who shines as a witness (*Saksi*) and is above all qualities. To this, Sankara explained that *Isvara* is recognized as the author or agent of all acts, when viewed from the standpoint of *maya* or nescience, but, in reality, He is not the agent nor the doer of any action, and, therefore, He is not subject to *samsara* and *ajnana*. And it is also to be remembered that action without attachment does not bind any soul to the chain of *samsara*. So, in the next verses (4.14), Sri Krishna said,

न मां कर्माणि लिम्पन्ति न मे कर्मफले स्पृहा ।
इति मां योऽभिजानाति कर्मभिर्न स बध्यते ॥

That is, 'actions pollute Me not, nor have I a desire for the fruit of actions. He who knows Me thus, is not bound by actions'. Egoism (*ahamkara*) is the cause of idea of agency, so those actions which are not performed out of egoistic idea, do not bind men in the den of delusion. Like *Isvara* (or Sri Krishna), those who are not attached to desires and perform actions in this world of actions without attachment, live as free and peaceful.

In the *Patanjaladarshana*, a vow for controlling the senses (*brahmacharya*) has been prescribed for a student of spiritual practice. This vow is very essential for preserving sound health, and is helpful for religious practices. (The method of controlling the senses (*brahmacharya*) makes the mind

strong and peaceful, and the strong and resolute mind is easily concentrated on some object. Otherwise, if our body and mind are full of diseases, then they are not competent for observing the religious or spiritual practices. The *Katha-Upanishad* said that the weak persons are not fit for achieving the knowledge of the *Atman* 'नायमात्मा बलहीनेन लभ्यः।' By 'strength' I mean physical as well as mental strength. There is close connection between the physical body and the mind, i.e., between physique and psyche. So the *Yogo-shastra* has laid stress upon both of them. It said that if the body remains diseaseless and sound, then mind also remains perfect, and vice versa. I have already discussed that in the Vedic time, the parents used to send their boys to the house of the preceptor, so as to strictly observe penance and discipline, and after taking proper education from the teachers, if they would desire, they would come back to their paternal houses, and would lead the life of a householder. Then they would lead an ideal life. But now the condition is quite opposite. Now, most of the parents give education to their children, which does not impart them proper knowledge, and the result is that they are entangled in the bindings of their household duties, and suffer throughout their life.

So the parents should be educated first before imparting education to their children. They should be resolute and strong in their mind. If the parents be uneducated and uncontrolled, then the children will automatically be deprived of proper education and strength. So I advise the parents to recall the sacred ideals of the parents and children of the Vedic times, and then they should educate their children so as to build their character and also to rectify their life. The fathers should hold in their mind that marriage means a divine link between the husband and the wife. The sense pleasures are not the be-all and end-al of human life, so the senses must be controlled, and be concentrated to the lofty ideas and ideals, so as to properly build the character of the nation and also to ennoble the ideas and atmosphere of the human society. In the Vedic society, wives were known as the *sahadharmini* or co-performer of action like sacrifice, so the husbands used to perform in those days the

holy rites and sacrifices being accompanied by their holy half-mates, the wives. The wives were also known as *sahadharmini* because the wives of the olden days used to perform all kinds of work staying by the side of the husbands. In every walk of life, material and spiritual, the husbands and the wives used to do all actions with a spirit of amity and co-operation. This spirit of amity and oneness we find in the idea of *Ardha-narishvara,* described in the Rig Veda. Now, that ideal is gone. In the Asvamedha, Rajasuya, and other sacrifices, we find that the wives used to sit by the side of the husbands to partake the portion of the fruits of the sacrifices (*yajnabhaga*). In the *Ramayana,* Valmiki did not miss to mention the fact that while performing the Rajasuya sacrifice, Ramachandra constructed a golden image of Sita in absence of her. So remember the idea of *Ardha-narishvara,* depicted in the Rig Veda. The *Upanishads* are not also silent about it. The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* 1.4.1) said : "आत्मैवेदमग्र आसीत् पुरूषविधः" i.e., 'before the evolution of the universe, there exists only the *Atman,* the Divine Life-Principle" : 'स वै नैव रेमे, तस्मादेकाकी न रमते, स द्वितीयमैच्छत्। स हैत बानास यथा स्त्रीपुमांसौ संपरिषक्तौ, स इममेबात्मां द्वेधपातयत्। ततः पतिश्च पत्नी चाभयताम्' i.e., 'the primordial *Purusha* felt unhapy living alone. So he desired to get a help-mate (*sahachari*). He, therefore, divided his body into two, male and female, *Purusha* and *Prakriti.* Both of them lived together— 'तस्मादिदमर्धबृगलमिब' i.e., lived like *Ardha-narishvara,* and that female principle evolved from the male principle, and all living beings were born of them— 'मनुष्या अजायन्त'। The biologists and psycho-analysts also admit that in the beginning, the prime-life-principle or *libido* remained as undiffereniated and bisexual one, and this was followed by differentiation into a male and a female components.

At present we are absolutely deprived of our sacred by-gone heritage, and we ourselves are responsible for it. Now, to regain that idea, we should practise Yoga, and self-restraint. We should try our best to build our character, our body, and mind. We should learn also the method of controlling the senses and mind, and should concentrate them upon the force-centre, the *Atman.* Control and concentration bring restoration or conservation of energy and peace, whereas divergence

and unrestraint bring dissipation of energy and spirit. So practise Yoga so as to restore consciousness and also to accumulate energy which will help you to progress in all the fields, physical or material, moral or ethical, religious or spiritual. The limitless energy is stored up in the basic plexus (*muladhara*) of the spinal column, and *Yogashastra* calls it *Kamakala* or *Kundalini,* i.e., concentrated coiling energy. By practice of Yoga, that basic coiling or unmanifested energy will be awakened and will be transformed into Divine consciousness. Then union of the individual soul (*jivatman*) with the higher transcendental Soul (*Paramatman*) will be possible, and that union is known as an immediate awareness (*aparoksambhuti*) of the transcendental *Atman* or Brahman which is one without the second.

BHAGAVAD GITA

सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
अहं त्वां सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥
—गीता १८।६६

'Abandoning all righteous deed, seek Me as thy sole refuge;
I will liberate thee from all sins; do thou not grieve.'

CHAPTER IV

BHAGAVAD GITA

(15th February, 1924, Friday at 5-30 p.m.)

After *shanti-vachana,* Swami Abhedananda began his discussion on the *Bhagavad Gita* from the second chapter. He explained,

अविनाशि तु तद्विद्धि येन सर्वमिदं ततम् ।
विनाशमव्ययस्यास्य न कश्चित् कर्तुमर्हति ॥ २।१७

That is, 'but know that to be imperishable by which all this is pervaded. None can cause the destruction of that *Atman,* the Inexhaustible.' The *Atman* or Brahman is known as *Sat,* the Real, by which all this universe, including *akasha,* is pervaded or saturated, just as pots and other objects are pervaded by *akasha* or space. The *Atman* does not undergo the changes of increase or decrease, and is, therefore, inexhaustible.

The *Atman* in the form of vital energy (*pranasakti*) pervades everything of the universe 'ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वम्' । 'आकाशवत् सर्वगतश्च नित्यः' । All materials, senses, mind, and intellect draw force or energy from the *pranasakti,* and the expansion of this energy is known as evolution or *sristi.*

The scientists have noticed that the vast universe is covered by atoms and molecules, i.e., by electrons, and even an inch-space is not devoid of atoms and molecules. The *pranasakti* saturates and animates all the atoms and molecules, and there is vibration in them. The *pranasakti* or *Prana* is non-different from *Prajna* and *Atman.* The *Atman* is the Brahman. In the *Upanishad,* we find 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म' i.e., the whole universe is pervaded by the Brahman. The Brahman assumes through *maya* the forms of the individual souls, world, God, and others. This idea of non-difference is knowledge or *jnana,* and idea of difference is non-knowledge or *ajnana.* Unreality or *ajnana* is known as false knowledge. In the *Adhyasa-bhasya,* Sankara defined *ajnana* or *adhyasa* as : 'अतस्मिंस्तद् बुद्धिः' i.e., we consider unreality as reality for superimposition. As for example, we mistakenly take an oister as a silver, or a rope as a snake, and this

mistaken knowledge is non-knowledge or *ajnana*. We see or take the unreal world as real, but, in truth, the world being ever-changing, is unreal (*mithya* or *asat*). In reality, the existence of the gross universe is meaningless, if we do not consider that existence belongs to the undying immortal *Atman* or Brahman. When divine realization (*pratyakshanubhuti*) happens, we feel that the existence of the universe is non-different from the existence of the *Atman*, or the Brahman.[1] The Brahman is known as *sat-chit-ananda* or existence-consciousness-bliss. In the *Upanishad*, the Brahman has been called as *Sat*, i.e., pure Existence. So, if we realize that the universe is pervaded by the existence of the Brahman, then we will also realize that the Brahman only exists, and all things of the universe being pervaded by the existence of the Brahman (including the universe) are non-different from the Brahman. A realized soul sees, i.e. feels the universe as the Brahman, as a scientist feels that all material objects are the product of spirit or energy. The direct realists may not admit it, but the idealists, or the spiritualists, see everything as manifestation of spirit or energy. It should be remembered that in this world of experience, we mainly admit two methods or theories, *realism* and *idealism*. *Realism* maintains the realistic attitude of mind, which is the instinctive belief or vision of man, it is, therefore, as old as man. *Realism* maintains the external existence of the objects independent of the mind or percepient subject, whereas *idealism* maintains that the existence of the external objects

[1] In the *Upanishad*, we find both the names, *Atman* and Brahman as the supreme Principle. The *Atman* is generally taken as the universal Principle lying in the heart of the *individual* (*vyasti*) souls, whereas the Brahman is considered as the prime-Principle that shines as the universal (*samasti*) One. However, Dr. A. K. Sarkar said : "The expressions, *Atman* and Brahman, are not concepts but meditative conditions to be accepted for understanding the apparent aspect or orders of experience. To illustrate, the *Atman*, as transcendent pure consciousness, is that meditative condition or unchanging persistent non-reflective background, which renders manifest distinctive feature of the waking, dream end deep states. Similarly, the term, Brahman, as transcendent pure existence, is that subtle meditative basis which controls and makes manifest the apparent processes, material, vital, mental, intellectual, and blissful.....

"Between the meditative processes of the *Atman* and Brahman, there is non-duality : this kind of meditative experience is developed by the *upanishadic thinkers in general.*"—Vide *Changing Phases of Buddhist Thought* (1968). pp. 2-3.

absolutely depends on the knowing or perceiving mind or subject. These two methods of knowledge or experience are quite different from each other. Realistic attitude is common to majority of people, while idealistic attitude can be said to be a reactionary one. *Idealism,* in the metaphysical sense, is the theory that ultimate reality is spiritual, and it is thus opposed to realism or materialism and even to neutralism. But, in its epistemological sense, *idealism* is the view that objects of knowledge or experience are not independent of the knower, and it is thus opposed to epistemological realism. Metaphysical idealism is very often based on epistemological idealism, as in Berkeley, but it should be remembered that epistemological idealism logically leads up to the metaphysical idealism, though metaphysical idealism is not incompatible with epistemological realism. One may believe that the object of knowledge or experience is independent of the mind or knower, and yet he comes to the conclusion on other grounds that the knower and the object known are all spiritual at bottom. *Realism* is revived in modern times among the Western thinkers through a reaction against absolute idealism, and it is also true that modern realism draws its sustenance from different forms of ancient realism. Modern realism has flourished most in Great Britain and America, and their influence crossed the Atlantic, and helped also the foundation of American realism. The British thinkers themselves were also influenced by some German realists. However, these two theories of knowledge, *realism* and *idealism* again admit of various types and degrees, based mainly on two trends of thoughts that the objects may be held to be wholly independent of and distinct from the mind and wholly dependent and non-distinct from the mind.[2] But when we

[2] Regarding the nature of knowledge or experience, there are different schools, *realistic* and *idealistic.* The realistic schools are : *Naive* or *popular realism* believes in the reality of the external objects and their qualities, colour, sound, taste, smell, etc. (2) *Scientific* or *critical realism* believes in the reality of the external material objects with their primary qualities, extesinon, size, etc. (3) *New realism* or *neo-realism* is a reaction against idealism, subjective and objective. New realism believes in the reality of the external objects independently of the perceiving minds, finite and infinite. Its primary, secondary and tertiary qualities, beauty and ugliness are real and independent of the minds.

know the universe as gross and lifeless and also as non-different from the Spirit or Brahman, then these theories or methods of knowledge or experience seem defective and unreal. Sankara called the defective unreal knowledge or experience as *bhrama* or false mistaken knowledge. Because, an essence, all things or objects in this universe are non-different from the all-intelligence and all-consciousness Brahman. The *Mandukya Upanishad* said : 'सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्म' 'अयमात्मा ब्रह्म' i.e., 'verily all things are the Brahman ; the individual soul is the Brahman'.

You do not know the real essence of the universe, and as you do not know, so you think that the universe is dying and decaying. And for that reason you consider matter as different from spirit. But, in truth, matter or material world is no other than spirit or *Atman*. I have discussed it in my *Self-Knowledge* (vide the chapter I, 'Spirit and Matter') that spirit and matter have always been subjects for discussion in science, philosophy, and religion. The conclusions of differ-

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The idealistic schools are : (1) *Subjective idealism* denies the existence of matter and its primary and secondary qualities, and regards them as mere sensations of the perceiving mind. It is called mentalism, or subjectivism.. (2) *Phenomenalistic* or *critical idealism* believes in the reality of the unknown and unknowable thing-in-themselves or noumens, and confines knowledge to phenomena or appearances only. (3) *Objective idealism* believes in the reality of the external world, which is evolved by the Absolute Mind according to the same categories as are applied by the finite minds to it. It regards the finite souls as finite reproductions of the Absolute Spirit. Thus objective idealism believes in the reality and ideality of the external world. Sankara and Kant maintain this school of subjective idealism, whereas the Yogachari Buddhists maintain the subjective idealistic school. But generally it is believed that Kant maintains the *phenomenalistic idealism*, whereas *Fichte* in *absolute idealism*. Schelling believes in *transcendental, idealism*, whereas Hegel maintains *objective idealism*. Besides, there are *personal idealism* maintained by Rashdall, Ward, Howison, and others. Schopenhauer believes in *voluntaristic idealism*, which affirms the 'primacy of the will' over the intellect and converted Hegel's Absolute into the Absolute Will. The *new realism* (neo-realism) school is maintained by Holt, Marvin, Montague, Perry, Pitkin and Spaulding. whereas *new critical realism* is maintained by Strong, Rogers, Santayana, Sellers, Pratt, Drake and others. Besides, William James, Schiller and Dewey are the exponents of *prgmatism*. When Swami Abhedananda was in America, there was a historical discussion on philosophy, on the subject, *Unity in Variety between* Swami Abhedananda and Prof. William James for three and half hours. Prof. Royce, Prof. Howison, Prof. Jackson and others were present there. Prof. James also met Swami Vivekananda, and Prof. James has mentioned the name of Swami Vivekananda in his book, *Pragmatism*.

ent thinkers of different schools maintaining different viewpoints have given foundation to the various explanations of the universe, which can be classified under three heads, the *spiritualistic or idealistic,* the *materialistic,* and the *monistic* theories. The *spiritualistic* or *idealistic theory* claims that spirit or mind is the creator of matter and energy, hence of all material objects, and it denies the existence of matter as distinct or separate from the mode or condition of spirit or mind. The *materialistic theory* of the universe is maintained by a large majority of the scientists, physicists, chemists, medical practitioners, and the evolutionists of the present time. They try to deduce everything from matter, and claim spirit is the outcome or product of matter.

But what is matter? Have anybody ever seen matter? Really we do not see matter, but we see only colour. Is colour the same as matter? No, colour is quality or attribute (*guna*). Now, where does this colour exist? You will say that it exists in a flower, or in an object. But the physiologists explain that colour which is perceived, does not exist as such in the flower, but that is a *sensation* caused by a certain order of vibrations coming in contact with our consciousness through the medium of the optic nerve. In fact, the perception of colour is compound effect produced by vibrations of ether, which, entering through the eyes, create another set of vibrations in the brain-cells, and these vibrations when translated by the conscious entity, are called *sensations.* Colour, therefore, is the result of the blending of the objective and subjective elements. Thus we can conclude that colour does not rest in the flower, but it depends upon the retina, optic nerves, and brain-cells as well, so it cannot be the same as matter. Again it can be remembered that quality or category or attribute being an adjunct, always creates a division between it and the object, to which it belongs. So if we wish to see the matter as non-different from the spirit, we will have to change our views or viewpoints.

From the psychological viewpoint as well as from common sense, we know that spirit is the perceiver and and knower, while matter is that which is perceived, sensed, and and known. The one is the subject and the other is the object, and, therefore, two, subject and object, exist in

relation to each other. The objective world or matter forms only one-half, while the other half is the subjective world or spirit; one-half is the universe and the other half is the Brahman. Therefore, the naive materialistic theory which admits the existence of the object only and denies the existence of the subject or spirit, is one-sided and imperfect. So is the spiritualistic or idealistic theory of the universe, which denies the existence of the object or matter, and says that everything is the subject or spirit.

Now, consider the subject and the object,—ego and non-ego, as the two modes or extremities of one eternal substance, the Brahman, which is not apperceived by ordinary senses, but by intuitional knowledge or divine realization. This eternal and universal substance is not many, but is one. All varieties of phenomena have come out of this one source, the Brahman, and into it they will be reduced to causal state at the time of final dissolution. This is monism or non-dualism. We should bear in mind that the ultimate analysis of spirit and matter—subject and object—shows that both are uncreatable, indestructive, and eternal. If the one pole of a magnet be eternal, the other pole must necessarily be eternal. Furthermore, the neutral point, where both the ends meet, must also be eternal. This universe is like a gigantic magnet, one pole of which is matter, or object, and another pole is spirit, or subject, while the neutral point is neither the matter, nor the spirit: neither the object nor the subject, while the neutral point is the absolute Brahman. For this reason, these three, matter, spirit, and Brahman are eternal. And from the monistic viewpoint, the one and the same Brahman is known as matter or spirit—subject or object. Vedanta says that the individual soul (*jiva*) is no other than the Brahman (*Siva*). The Brahman *appears* as the individual souls through the veil or magic power of *maya*. This *maya* can be compared with the covering of darkness. As clouds cover the sun in the sky, so *maya* as if covers the Brahman, and when the cover is removed, the self-shining and self-revealing sun is seen. So, when the veil of ignorance or nescience is removed, the Brahman will shine itself. *Sadhana* or spiritual practice is necessary for the removal of ignorance or nescience, and the Brahman is an established fact, and is already attained.

The *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* says : * * 'द्वितीयाद्भयम्' i.e. 'fear arises from duality'. The Brahman is one without the second, so there is no fear in the Brahman, and the Brahman is called *abhayam* (fearlessness). Really the idea of duality or multiplicity creates a difference, and that difference is the cause of fear. So duality is not recognized as a reality. Reality has no rival. The idea of difference or duality is recognized by Vedanta as false or unreal, as it has no separate existence of its own other than unity or one. Again duality or multiplicity has its ground on unity or one, so other than unity or one, duality or multiplicity has no status and value. The universe is not real, because it creates duality or multiplicity. When transcendental realization dawns, then you will feel that the Brahman is only real, and all other things or objects are manifestations of it. Manifestation brings the idea of duality, so it is not permanent and real. The realization of the Brahman or *Atman* brings simultaneously the idea of unreality of the phenomenal universe and the idea of reality of the Brahman, which is the cause (*karana*) and ground (*adhisthana*) of everything, and at the same time is causeless and groundless in essence. Vedanta says that we imagine the adjuncts of cause and ground only to justify the possibility of a logical explanation in favour of creation or projection of the world, from the prime-principle, the Brahman, and the followers of the Vivarana School also admit the Brahman as the substratum of *maya* or nescience, on the ground that the Brahman must be the only cause or background of everything phenomenal.

The Brahman is imperishable because of its undecaying and permanent nature. And it is also a logic that what dies or decays, is unreal and false. The *Atman* is real, because it is not subject to origin and decay. No one can destroy or kill the *Atman*. It is eternal, all-pervasive, immute, changeless and eternal : 'नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थानुरचलोऽयं सनातनः'। As there exists no other one than the *Atman*, then how it will be killed or destroyed by an other? I have already said before that 'द्वितीयाद्वैभयम्' i.e., 'where there are two, there arises the idea of fear? From duality creeps the idea of fear or terror and also the idea of difference. Where there are existences of two, there prevails fear of destruction or decay, and,

where there remain no two, but shines only one without the second, there, for whom one will fear or whom one will destroy. There exists only the unique *Atman*, and so the *Atman* never slays anyone, and it is never slain by any other. But as there exists or we assume creation or projection (*sristi*), so there must be a creator or projector, and so there prevail the ideas of cause and ground. Now, as there prevails the idea of creation or projection (*sristi*), so the *Katha-Upanishad* says : 'महद्भयम' i.e., 'the *Atman* or the secondless Brahman, the cause of the phenomena, is greatly terrifying. But the *Katha-Upanishad* (II.3.3) has further said that as the *Atman* is alone, or is one without the second, so it never gets fear from anyone, but all others fear it' :

भयादस्याग्निस्तपति भयात् तपति सूर्यः ।
भयादिन्द्रश्च वायुश्च मृत्युर्धावति पञ्चमः ॥

That is, 'from fear of Him fire burns, from fear shines the sun, from fear run Indra and Air, and Death, the fifth'. Sankara said in the commentary of this verse : "For unless there was a ruler, like one with an uplifted thunderbolt in hand, over these protectors of the world who themselves are powerful, there would not have been any regulated activity as that of the servants trembling out of fear for their master." The *Katha-Upanishad* (III.3.2) said in connection with origin of fear—

यदिदं किं च जगत् सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।
महद्भयं वज्रमुद्यतं य एतद्विदुरमृतास्ते भवन्ति ॥

That is, all this universe, that there is, emerges and moves, because there is the supreme Brahman that is a great terror like an uplifted thunderbolt. Those who know this, become immortal'.

The *Atman* is, therefore, subordinate to none. It is alone, secondless, and independent, and as everything depends upon the *Atman*, it is changing and unreal. Sankara also argued that though the *Atman* is not cause of the universe, yet from the standpoint of creation or projection (*sristi*) it is considered as both the material cause (*upad-*

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[3] एजृ कम्पणे ; 'एजति'—कम्पते i.e., vibrates.

ana-karana) and efficient cause *(mimitta-karana)*. The *Atman* cannot be regarded as a cause of creation or projection, because if we consider it so, it will be related and also be limited to the act of creation or projection, and consequently, be related to the changing and unreal universe, which is the product of *maya* or nescience. But the Brahman, we know, is absolutely above all actions, attributes, and adjuncts. To this Advaita Vedanta said that there is no harm if we consider the Brahman as the cause of the world-manifestation. *Maya* ,or nescience is the direct cause of the world and *Isvara* being associated with the causal nescience, *maya*, is known as the *Mayavin*, and, therefore, He is indirectly known as the cause of the world. The commentary *Subodhini* on the *Vedantasara* by Sadananda Yati said to this point : 'जड़ाकाशादिकार्यं प्रति मायायाः साक्षात् उपादानत्वेन मायाबिनः ईश्वरस्यापि परम्परय उपाचारात् उपादानत्वं न बिरुध्यते इत्यर्थः' i.e. Advaita Vedanta admits that the determinate *(saguna)* Brahman, the *Isvara-chaitanya*, is indirectly the material cause of the world, whereas "यथा अयस्कान्तसन्निधाने जड़मयं लोहं चेष्टते, तथा चैतन्य-सन्निधाने जड़मयं अज्ञानं चेष्टते इति अज्ञानविकारं प्रति चैनन्यस्य निमित्तत्वम् i.e., 'as before an *ayaskanta-mani* an iron-rod appears as active, being reflected in the *mani* or stone, so near the pure consciousness, the inert nescience is seen active, and so the Brahman as the pure consciousness is *assumed* as the cause of the change or transformation of nescience *(ajnana)*. Sadananda Yati further said in this connection : 'शक्तिद्वयं अज्ञानोप-हितं चैत्यन्यं 'स्वप्रधानतया' निमित्तं, 'स्वोपाधिप्रधानतया' उपादानं भबति i.e., 'the pure consciousness as attributed by the two powers of covering and representing *(avarana-sakti* and *vikshepa-sakti)* is *assumed* as the instrumental cause *(nimitta-karana)* when consciousness predominates, and it is *assumed* as the material cause *(upadana-karana)* when the attribute, nescience or *ajnana* predominates 'चैतन्य प्राधान्यन (ईश्वरस्य) निमित्तं स्वाज्ञानप्राधान्येन उपादान्तम्'। Now, the world-appearance is the change or transformed one of the Brahman itself : 'प्रपञ्चस्य ब्रह्मबिबर्तत्वात्', and this change or transformation *(vivartana)* is this that the Brahman is changed or transformed without leaving its real form of pure consciousness : बिबर्तत च स्वस्वरुपापरित्यागेन स्वरुपान्तरप्रदर्शकत्वम् i.e. the rope is mistakenly taken as the snake, without leaving its real form of the rope, though it is superimposed on

nescience which is associated with consciousness : 'यथा रज्जु-बच्छिन्नचैतन्यनिष्ठाज्ञानस्य रज्जुस्वरूपापरित्यागेन सर्पादिस्वरूपान्तरप्रदर्शकत्वम् ।' Similarly, the Brahman, i.e., determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, *Isvara-chaitanya*, assumes the form of cause (both *nimitta-karana* and *upadana-karana*) without leaving its own pure and shining nature, though it is *apparently* associated with, or comes in contact with, the causal nescience (*karana-ajnana*), *maya*.

In truth, the *Atman* or Brahman is the transcending fourth principle, which is eternal, indestructible, and immortal. The *Gita* said,

अन्तवन्त इमे देहा नित्यस्योक्ता शरीरिणः ।
अनाशिनोऽप्रमेयस्य तस्माद् युध्यस्व भारत ॥ २।१८

'That is, "these bodies of the disembodied Self (*Atman*), who is eternal, indestructible, and unknowable, are said to have an end. Do fight, therefore, O descendant of Bharata, Arjuna". Now, the body is known as *deha*, and who dwells in the body, is known as *dehi*.' The *Gita* said that only the *dehi*, the dweller of the house of the body, is indestructible and eternal, and *deha* or body is perishable or destructible. Some raise objection as to why the *Atman* is *aprameya*, and why it is not determinable by the senses (*pratyaksha*), or any other means of knowledge other than realization. To this it can be said that the objection is untenable, as the Self or *Atman* is self-determined (*svatas-siddha*) and self-complete. One. We generally apply superimposition (*adhyaropana*), or super-impose some action or quality on the Self, which is alien to it, but not as revealing what has been altogether unknown. The *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad* (II.4.1) also said about the *Atman* : 'यत् साक्षादपरोक्षात् ब्रह्म य आत्मा सर्वान्तरः' · i.e., 'that which is immediate, the unremote, the Brahman, which is the Self which is within all'. So no *pramana* or valid knowledge other than immediate awareness of the Self will be able to reveal the Self or *Atman*. So, Sri Krishna said to Arjuna that because the Self or *Atman* is thus eternal (*nitya*) and immutable (*avikriya* and *kutastha*), do thou fight and do not abstain from fighting of right and justice'.

It has already been said that the dweller of the body, the *Atman*, is known as *dehi* or *shariri*. The body has a value,

because the *Atman*, the ocean of pure consciousness, lives there, otherwise the body, the cage of five elements, bears no value. The householder of the body, the *Atman*, shines in all the bodies of the living beings, in the form of pure consciousness. Consciousness again manifests in the forms of mind, intellect, thoughts, and egoism. The faculty of discrimination is also the reflection of pure consciousness. Reflection means the reflected consciousness or modification. The same consciousness takes different form : 'रूपं रूपं प्रतिरूपो बभूव'

* * * i.e., 'the *Atman* shines in different forms with different names'. The same *Atman-chaitanya* shines in different bodies, so the living beings think themselves as possessed of body (*shariri*). But it should be remembered that the material body and the intelligent possesser of the body are not one and the same, though the divine consciousness shines in everything as one without the second. So the individual egoistic consciousness (*aham-jnana*) and pure consciousness (*shuddha-jnana*) are different, though the underlying basic or prime consciousness is one and the same. The *shariri* or *Atman* is not liable to birth and death, as it is immortal and indestructible, but the material body will die. The body is unreal and destructible, because it is different from the *Atman*, but men take the unreal body as the immortal *Atman*. This identification of the material body with the *Atman* occurs due to ignorance or nescience, and this is in other words called *adhyasa* or superimposition. Sankara, the greatest expounder of the theory of non-dualism or monism (*advaitavada*), elaborately discussed about the doctrine of superimposition (*adhyasa*) along with his remarkable commentary on the entire *Brahmasutras* of Badarayana. Sankara said that this idea of superimposition is removed with the rise of realization of the *Atman* or Brahman. Until and unless the flash of divine realization comes to the heart of a man, so long he remains as deluded, and that delusion (*maya*), or idea of superimposition, is removed with the immediate awareness of the Brahman even if the material body exists. This kind of realization is called *jivamukti*, i.e. realization even in one's life time. Some of the philosophers admit Brahman-realization after the dissolution of the material body (*videhamukti*). In the *Gita*, you will find the ideas of

both *jicanmukti* and *videhamukti.*

In the *Gita,* Sri Krishna said: 'ज्ञानाग्नि सर्वकर्माणि भस्मस्मात् कुरुतेऽर्जन' i.e., 'the fire of divine Brahman-knowledge burns into ashes all the actions of the realized man. Now, if we admit that after realization of the Brahman, the material body of the realized soul exists, then the dictum or pronouncement of the *Gita* becomes useless. But that is not the fact. To this Sankara said : 'शरीरे पतितेऽशरीरत्वं स्यान्न जीबत इति चेत् न सशीरत्वस्य मिंथ्या-ज्ञाननिमित्तत्वात्। न हि ह्यात्मनः शरीरात्माभिसानलक्षणः मिथ्याज्ञानं मुक्त्वा अन्यतः सशरीरत्व शक्यं कल्पयितुम् **' i.e. 'if you say that the disembodied state comes when the physical body dies, so it is not possible when the body exists. To this it can be said that it is not true, because the idea or sense of the body originates from false-knowledge, and when false-knowledge is removed or corrected by right knowledge, the disembodied state may be felt. False-knowledge arises when we consider the unreal body as the real *Atman* through ignorance or egoistic idea, but when our error is corrected, then false-knowledge does not arise'. Further Sankara said in this connection: 'तस्मान्मिथ्याप्रत्ययनिमित्तत्वात् ससारीरत्वस्य, सिद्धं जीबतोऽपि बिदुोऽ-ऽशरीरत्वम्' i.e. 'we take body as real due to our false-knowledge, and when this false-knowledge is removed, the enlightened souls can realize the Brahman in spite of existence of the body which is regarded as the product of nescience': 'तस्मान्न अवगतब्रह्मात्मभावस्य यथापूर्वं संसारित्वम्' i.e. 'the realized souls are not entangled in the trap of worldliness (*samsara*) as before'. So, from this it is proved that a man can attain to God-realization, or the realization of the Brahman, even when his physical body exists in this phenomenal world. The *Upanishad* also said that the realized enlightened soul remains unattached to both good and bad, both pleasure and pain, because he knows and feels that the *Atman* is above all kinds of duality. In the *Gita,* we find that Sri Krishna was a man of divine realization, nay, he was an Incarnation of God, so he transcends all kinds of dual feeling, whereas Arjuna was a worldly man, so he was aggrieved for the situation that his near and dear ones will die in the battlefield of Kurukshetra. So, to console him, Sri Krishna said,

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उभौ तौ न बिजानीते नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥ २।९

That is, 'whoever looks upon Him as the slayer, and whoever looks upon Him as the slain, both these know not aright. He slays not, nor is He slain'. Sri Krishna said that those who think 'I slay' or 'I am slain' when the body is slain, and thus identify the Self with the object of knowledge of 'I', the ego (*aham*), do not understand the real nature of the Self. Being immutable, the Self is neither an agent, nor the object of act of slaying. This wrong idea arises in the mind of an ignorant man. An ordinary man is ignorant, because he is enchanted by delusion, so he cannot discrminaate the real from the unreal. But when he unfastens the chain of delusion or *maya*, he realizses his sublime *Atman* and also realizes that his body may be cut into pieces or be burnt, but his *Atman* is immortal and eternal.

The *Atman* is above all dualities : 'निर्द्वन्द्वो नित्यसत्त्वस्थः' The *Atman* is pure *chit* and *sat* (consciousness and existence). We identify the *Atman* with the body due to wrong knowledge, but body is not the *Atman*, and this right knowledge dawns upon a man when he realizes the *Atman*.

The natural tendency of a man is to think everything as qualified. He cannot think an object which is devoid of quality or attribute, because he knows, sees, or appreciates everything phenomenal through the medium of his mind which is known as the 'many-coloured glass'. The mind and intellect cannot go beyond the limit of time, space, and causation. God is, in essence, extra-cosmic and transcendent, but a man thinks Him as intra-cosmic and immanent. Thought or mind is a limiting adjunct, so when the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman comes under the limit of thought, or when we think the transcending Brahman through the medium of thought or mind, we make the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman as determinate (*saguna*). The nature of attribute as well as of action is to limit, so when we ascribe any quality or attribute and also action to an object, we automatically limit the object. Similarly when we add some qualities or categories to the *Atman*, we limit the *Atman* and also make it related to the phenomenal universe. But the *Atman* absolutely transcendents the categories and actions of origin and decay and it is immortal and eternal 'अजोनित्य शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो'। * * Something which has origin, is subject

to death and decay. Has anyone seen the origin of the eternal *Atman* ? No, because it never comes under any limitation, and nothing physical and mental can limit it. Limitation means time, space, and causation. These categories are the limiting adjuncts. Kant called them the *forms of intuition,* and he said that intuition are always sensuous. The senses, and even mind, intellect, and reasoning, cannot reach the *Atman.* The *Atman* is the supra-mental transcendental pure consciousness. It is not the sensual or phenomenal knowledge which takes the tripartite (*triputi*) form of knower, knowledge, and knowable (*jnata, jnana,* and *jneya*). The *Atman* knows everything of the universe, because it is all-knowledge and all-consciousness. It underlies the forms of knower, knowledge, and knowable, as the thread interlinks all the gems of a garland, and at the same time the thread underlies all the gems: 'सूत्रे मणिगणा इव'।

The wrong knowledge is *ajnana,* and right knowledge is *jnana. Ajnana* or nescience creates the limiting adjuncts (*upadhis*) of time, space, and causation, and *jnana* removes them. *Ajnana, maya,* and *avidya* are one and the same thing. Some philosophers differentiate *maya* from *avidya,* and say that when *ajnana* or nescience is used in collective sense, being a limiting adjunct of God, then it is known as *maya,* and when it is used as a limiting adjunct or attribute of the individual souls (*jivas*), it is known as *avidya.* The names may vary or differ, but their limiting or binding capacities are the same. *Maya* or *avidya* (or *ajnana*) is not a non-existent thing or void, but the philosophers define it to be *something* which cannot be explained : 'यत्किञ्चिदिति वदन्ति'। Some say that it is a *statement of fact.* Some say it is absolutely relative, or can be said to be the relativity, as the modern scientists say. As for example, India stands or is situated in relation to the world, Bengal stands or is situated in relation to India, Calcutta stands or is situated in relation to Bengal, Baghbazar stands or is situated in relation to Calcutta, the Udbodhan Office stands or is situated in relation to Baghbazar, and so on. So things that stand in relation to other things, are relative and depended and are, therefore, not constant. The nature of *maya* or *ajnana* is always changeable or shifting. Vedanta defines *maya* as indefinable

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Advaita Vedanta admits the relative existence or empirical reality of *maya*, because wrong knowledge of the snake is temporarily perceived and in consequence of wrong knowledge a terror and trembling of the body happens. So *maya* is relatively admitted with its apparent or phenomenal existence which is also relative, and so the wrong knowledge is contradicted and sublated by the right knowledge, and *maya* is removed or sublated by the uncontradicted and unrival Brahman-knowledge. *Maya* may be taken as a mistaken knowledge, i.e., it is a knowledge, but is mistakenly taken or felt. I have already said before that Sankara called it in his *Adyasabhasya*, false-knowledge: 'मिथ्याप्रत्यवत्वात्'। So, in the relative sense (*vyavaharikatah*), *maya* as well as the world are real, whereas in the transcendental sense (*paramarthikatah*), they are unreal, being subject to correction, or being replaceable. In fact, we admit *maya*,

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because its effect, the creation or projection (*sristi* or world), exists. One presupposes the other. So it can be said that from the viewpoint of the phenomenal universe, delusion, projection, manifestation, and evolution, seem real though in a *relative sense,* and from the viewpoint of the non-dual Brahman, everything other than the Brahman is unreal, false, and valueless. As for example, dream. As long as we dream, so long it is true and real, but when we awake, the dream appears as unreal. Similarly with the dawning of the supersensible divine Brahman-knowledge, unreal *maya* does not exist, and *maya* does not exist means it does not hold its separate existence other than the Brahman. So, as long as *ajnana* exists, so long *maya* or world or projection (*sristi*) exists. Therefore, all things are relative. So *ajnana* is said to be the relative reality, and *jnana,* the absolute reality. After dawning of the Brahman-realization, the world, together with all worldly materials, exist, and exist as unreal, or as a dream. As the objects, seen in dream, appear unreal while waking, so after realization, the world and worldly things exist, but exist as changeable and unreal, and the reality of the Brahman is felt or experienced as only genuine. Sankara said in the commentary on the *Brahmasutra* : 'सर्वव्याहाराणाबामेब प्राग्ब्रह्मात्मताबिद्मानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः । स्वप्नव्यबहारस्येब प्राक्प्रबोधात्' (II.1.14, vide also the *Gita-bhasya* II.28), i.e. 'everything of the world seems as (relatively) real so long as the divine realization does not come, but after realization, all things other than the Brahman, seem as unreal.' In fact, *maya* or *ajnana* does not exist in the all-shining Brahman, and nor even a bit of nescience can be imagined in the Brahman. The Brahman or *Atman* is birthless and deathless, and no change or transformation of the Brahman can be imagined in respect of its immute unchangeable nature.

So the *Gita* said,

न जायते म्रियते वा कदाचित्
नायं भूत्वाऽभबिता बा न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणं
न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥ २।२०

That is, 'the *Atman* is not born, nor does it ever die; after having been, it again ceases not to be; nor the reverse.

Unborn, eternal, unchangeable, and premeval, it is not slain when the material body is slain.' No change of conditions as birth and death takes place in the *Atman.* It is above all changes. As it is devoid of all qualities, it is undivided and whole. Sankhya and Vedanta say that manifestation is said to be an origin, and the unmanifested state is called death. But the states, manifested (*vyakta*) and unmanifested (*avyakta*),, presuppose the idea that a thing or an object, to be manifested or unmanifested, exists already in its causal form. It can be called the theory of *satkarya,* i.e. the effect exists before the origin as a cause. The Naiyayikas admit quite the opposite theory, which is known as *asatkaryavada,* i.e., before origin of an object, object is newly created. The *Atman* is not involved in any of the theories, *satkarya* and *asatkarya,* as it is above the changes of birth and death,—origin and decay. The word *aja* means birthless, and *nitya* means deathless and eternal, and *avinshvara* means immortal. So Vedanta and *Gita* said that if the body is destroyed, the dweller of the body, the *dehi* or *Atman,* is not destroyed, because it is not material or mental,—not gross, nor subtle, nor causal, but it transcends all kinds of form and manifestation. The Hindu philosophers admit that existence never comes into being from non-existence. The *Gita* said it in a different way : 'नासतो बिद्यते भावो नाभावो बिद्यते सतः' (II.16). Similarly the Sankhya said : 'न असतः सज्जायते'। The Charvakas advocate quite different thing. They admit only perception (*pratyaksha*), and do not admit any other valid knowledge (*pramana*). According to them, the gross physical body is the *Atman,* so if the body suffers from any pain or distress, the *Atman* is afflicted. As the body is identified with the *Atman,* so, according to the Charvakas, the *Atman* has origin and decay, and after death the existence of the *Atman* is changed into a void. Some of the Western direct realists also admit the similar theory.

Many of the philosophers accuse the Charvakas as agnostic and as the naive realist. But, to my mind, the Charvakas are very reactionary people. They revolted against a steriotyped doctrine of faith, so they tried to bring some reformation in the stagnant society. This kind of revolt and reaction are not rare in the history. Independent views or

opinions prevail in the changing society in all ages. You may not accept their views, but you cannot condemn them who hold the opposite views. Be tolerant, be patient and be liberal, and listen to all kinds of views, but intelligently choose or select the view or opinion which suits you, and will be beneficial to you. Just borne in the mind that the society becomes stagnant and steriotyped, if any original or new and novel idea, thought and work do not prevail. So reactionary views or opinions for movements are necessary for rectification and reformation of the society. The mind should always be kept wide open to receive new and novel things, and power of analysis as well as faculty of discrimination, should be cultured and developed, so as to rectify and modify,—to adjust and readjust—the ideas and activities of the human society. I believe that will bring unity and strength among the people. Rise and fall are the nature of the human world, and this ever-flowing current or tide really brings out the new shape in the society. It also strengthens the nerve of the people.

The scriptures (*shastras*) of India are mainly divided into *Shruti, Smriti,* and *Nyaya.* The *Shrutis* are known as the Vedas and Upanishads, which give us revealed truths. The *Smritis* are the religious, mytho-historical, and spiritual teachings, such as the *Bhagavad Gita*; and the *Nyayas* are the logical and analytical discussions on philosophy, such as the *Vedantasutra* and their commentaries. These three principal divisions are known as the *tantras* or the mystical, religious and mytho-historical scriptures. However, the scriptures are the collections of views of different schools. They are written according to the necessities of the people, so as to direct them, and to reform their views of social, ethical, philosophical, religious, and spiritual lives. Some of the *Shastras* are written according to the social and religious conditions of the society, and their laws and principles are liable to alter or change from time to time. As for example, the codes of Manu, Yajnavalkya, Narada, Harita, Medhatithi, Raghunandana, and others. Now it can be asked as to what is the real necessity of the people of the society. To this it can be said that necessity of the people is mainly of two kinds, social and religious or spiritual. *Smritis,*

Dharmasutra, Samhitas, etc., are meant for social welfare. These *Shastras* determine the social customs and behaviours, and the works which ought to be observed or to be rejected. The *Upanishad, Gita, Samkhya, Patanjala, Nyaya, Vaishesika, Vedanta,* etc., are meant for spiritual training and discipline. These are known as *darshana* or philosophy. *Darshanas* are the *Shastras* that teach the direct realization of the *Atman. Darshana* means to see God face to face, or an immediate awareness of the Absolute. The English name or term of *darshana* is 'philosophy' which means *philos,* to love, and *sophia,* the knowledge or wisdom, therefore, philosophy conveys the idea of love for knowledge or wisdom'. But the Indian name of term, *darshana,* conveys not only love for wisdom, but a method of getting into the heart of wisdom, and to be one with wisdom. In India, *darshana* or religio-philosophical scriptures give a direct touch with the absolute Reality, and also inspires to realize the Reality as non-different from the soul of man. *Darshana* with their speculative and spiritual thoughts may be different for their independent views, but the attainment of Godconsciousness is the prime-goal of all *darshanas.*

Again it should be remembered that the only reading of the *darshanas* or *Shastras* will not bring divine realization. Some of the Western philosophers hold that intellectual pursuit and pleasure are the supreme goal of the philosophies, but Sri Ramakrishna said that in the almanac *(panji)* there is mention that there will be showers of 20 inches. but it is a fact that if you squeeze the pages of the almanac, you will not get even a drop of water. So *darshana* or philosophy only supplies the raw materials of moral, religious, and spiritual laws and principles, and also the methods of spiritual practices *(sadhanas)*, but you will have to call those laws and methods into action. Philosophy shows the path, but you will have to proceed through that path and will have to progress until and unless you reach the goal. There are many who are addicted only to scholastic studies and intellectual pleasures, and do not try to find the real pleasure which is undying, eternal, and divine. Sri Krishna said in the *Bhagavad Gita* two verses III.6-7, which will be applicable to the lovers of only non-essential intellectual pleasures,

leaving aside the essential portion of the study of the *Shastras*. He said,

कर्मेन्द्रियानि संयम्य स आस्ते मनसा स्मरन् ।
इन्द्रियार्थान् बिमूढ़ात्मा मिथ्याचारः स उच्यते ॥
यस्तिन्द्रियाणि मनसा नियम्यारभतेऽर्जुन ।
कर्मेन्द्रियैः कर्मयोगमसक्तः स बिशिष्यते ॥ ३।६-७

that is, 'he who, restraining the organs of action, sits thinking in his mind of the objects of the senses, self-deluded, he is said to be one of false conduct or a hypocrite (III.6). But who so restraining the senses by mind, O Arjuna, engages in Karma Yoga, unattached, with organs of action, he is esteemed, i.e., he is more worthy than the other, who is a hypocrite (III.7)' Similarly the lover of knowledge or wisdom, who studies *Shastras* for getting means to attaining the Brahman-knowledge so as to dive deep into the ocean of the supreme Soul, but forgets the real aim and object, and is addicted to study only the raw materials of logic and scholastic discussions for enjoying intellectual pleasure, is to be known as a follower of false conduct, i.e. as a hypocrite. But he is better than the other, who studies *Shastras* and at the same time controls his mind, and keeps himself away from enjoying of the sense pleasures. Attachment to the intellectual pursuit and pleasure diverts a man from the attainment of divine wisdom, or the Brahman-knowledge. Just keep in mind that *Shastras* are the paths, and the goal is different from the path. So study *Shastras* only to get the real clue and inspiration, but you will have to knock at the door of the innermost chamber where the *Atman* shines. It will be your goal to commune with the *Atman*, and to realize it. The *Upanishad* also said 'ज्ञापकं हि शास्त्रम् (न तू सिद्धिः) i.e. 'the *Shastras* only show the path, but you will have to proceed and get success. You will hawe to struggle hard for the highest achievement, and this is the real aim of *sadhana*. Patanjali said : 'अभ्यासबैराग्याभ्यां तन्निरोधः' (1.12) and 'तत्र स्थितौ यत्नोऽभ्यासः' (I.13) The *Bhagavad Gita* also said : (VI.35) (VI.35), or 'अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृह्यते' (VIII.8).'अभ्यास योयुक्तेन' । That is, "suppress the functions of the mind by practice and 'dispassion or renunciation'; 'the repeated efforts create habit and practice and those bring functionless state'; 'O Kaunteya,

control the distraction of the mind by repeated practice and of the mind through *abhyasa-yoga*'. Spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is necessary for realizing the *Atman,* so only steriotyped study of *Shastras* to quench the thirst of intellect and scholasticism is useless in life. Those who have already taken the vow of renunciation, should remember that attainment of the divine knowledge of the *Atman* is the be-all and end-all of human life, and all other things are only means to living the life. The past masters of the spiritual practice have left their footprints on the shore of the ocean of the world, and the seekers after Truth must follow those foot-prints, to reach the goal, the *sumun bonum* of life :

'यत् यदाचरति श्रेष्ठः लोकाः तदनुबर्तन्ते ।'

So spiritual practice (*sadhana*) is necessary for realizing the *Atman,* and you will have to allot time for concentration and meditation. The Reality is one and the same, and its names only vary. Sri Ramakrishna said that if anyone tastes the bread of sugar from different sides, he will taste the same sweetness. Similarly one and the same God may be approached through any path, and you will attain to Him. Sri Ramakrishna said : 'यत मत तत पथ' i.e. 'there are as many faiths, so many paths, but the goal is one and the same'. Sri Krishna also said in the *Gita,*

ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तां स्तथैब भजाम्यहम् ।
मम बर्त्मानुबर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥ ४।११

That is, 'howsoever men approach Me, even I reward them, My path do men follow in all things, O son of Pritha'. The real contention of this verse is : 'I reward men by granting them the things they desire, in accordance with the way in which they seek Me, for they do not seek for *moksha*'. So do not quarrel for different faiths and doctrines which are the husk, but the carnel is the attainment of God. Avoid all quarrels, and think that the pond is one and the paths towards the pond are different. Men and women quench their thirst proceeding through those different paths and flights of steps (*ghats*) leading down to water, so God, or the *Atman,* is one and the same, the faiths and religious practices (*sadhanas*) only vary. Therefore, be liberal and

open-minded, otherwise narrowness of the mind will bring unto you failure in life.

I have already discussed the theory of projection (*sristi*) or that of evolution (*abhivyaktivada*). The Nyaya-Vaishesika School admits creation of something which did not exist before. It says that a jar did not exist before its creation, and the potter gives a new shape to a jar out of the clay. The potter (*kumbhakara*) is the remote cause, whereas the clay is the real or direct cause, and the jar (*ghata*) is the effect. The effect, jar, is, therefore, different from the cause, clay. This theory is known as *asatkaryavada*. I have already mentioned it before. The Nyaiyikas and Vaishesikas argue that effect (*karya*) did not exist before, and it came into being through the will of God. The effect (*karya*) is the universe, and God created them out of His free will. Therefore, according to them, the will-to-create of God is the instrumental cause (*nimitta-karana*), and the atoms and molecules of the clay are the material cause (*upadana* or *samavayi-karana*). The theory of *asatkarya* makes the cause separate from the effect, and, according to them, God is quite different from the world and also from the individual souls. So the Nyaiyaikas admit existence that originates from non-existence. This theory is somewhat similar to the theory of nothingness or void.

Kapila, the expounder of the Sankhya philosophy, does not admit the theories of the Nyaiyaikas and the Vaishesikas. Kapila said : 'नाबस्तुनोबस्तु सिद्धिः' * * i.e. 'something cannot come out of nothing', and it is not correct that the universe and its beings and materials accidentally came out from God. This aphorism of the Sankhya echoes the same conclusion as that of the *Gita* : 'नासतो बिद्यतेभाबो नाभाबो बिद्यते सतः'। Vedanta also accepts this conclusion of both Sankhya and the *Gita*, and it says that something cannot come out of nothing, so existence (*sat*) manifests from existence (*sat*). The word 'manifest' connotes the idea of projection of that which already existed before coming into being. This theory is known as *satkaryavada*, i.e., *karya* or effect existed in causal form in the womb of the Divine Energy (*Prakriti*). The upholders of the Sankhya and Vedanta are the *satkaryavadi*. The *satkaryavada* says that cause and effect are non-different, and they *appear* as different only in name and form. The

Sankhya said that a cause manifests itself as an effect, and destruction (*nasha*) of the effect means effect goes back to its original form : 'नाशः कारणल्यः' (1.119); and 'कार्यदर्शनात्तदुपलब्धिः' (1.708), i.e. 'we infer a cause from an effect, and, therefore, the Sankhya said that no effect is devoid of cause.

Now, if we think about creation or projection, we automatically think of a creator, or a projector, because it is impossible to think of an effect without a cause. The commentary, *Muktavali* on the *Bhashapariocheda* by Visvanath Nyaya-panchanan said that 'as actions of shaping a jar and other earthen pots depend upon a potter, so we infer God as the Creator of the universe and its objects. And it is quite true that without an actor, no action is accomplished : 'यथा घठादिकार्यं कर्तृजन्यं तथा क्षित्यङ्कुरादिकमपि। न च तत् कर्तृत्वमस्मदादीनां सम्भवतोत्यतस्तत्कर्तृत्वेनेश्वरसिद्धिः'। (*Muktavali*, p. 18). The Vaishesika also says that two atoms (*anus*) make a molecule (*dyanuka*) and two molecules make one *trasarenu*, and from the combination of the *trasarenus* along with the will of God, this universe is created. So the Nyaiyayikas and the Vaishesikas have admitted the existence of God (*Isvara*). But Kapila has not admitted the existence of God ईश्वरासिद्धे * * other than the cohesion or contact of the *Prakriti* with the *Purusha*. Kapila said that as the purpose of manifestation (*sristi*) is served by the contact of the two prime principles, *Prakriti* and *Purusha*, so why shall I admit an extra-principle, God. But Patanjali for many reasons admitted God as a bestower of eternal peace and freedom. Patanjali said:

(1) क्लेशकर्मविपाकाशयैरपरामृष्टः
पुरुषविशेष ईश्वरः (१।२४);
(2) ईश्वरप्रणिधानाद्वा (१।२३)।

Jamini admitted an invisible power which is known as *Apurva*, evolved out of the sacrifices, and as the miraculous power *apurva* grants heavens (*svargas*) and divine peace as the goal of human life, so an extra-principle, God, cannot necessarily be accepted. But Vedanta admitted God as the prime-giver of eternal happiness and peace. Advaita Vedanta said that God plays the sportive play (*lila*) for manifestation of the universe, and men through the realization of God (*Isvara*) will reach perfection and will realize the non-dual

Brahman which transcends all attributes and adjuncts. According to Advaita Vedanta, God is no other than the Brahman, the transcending pure consciousness, but it (the non-dual Brahman) *assumes* the name and form of *Isvara,* only for the projection (*sristi*) of ,the phenomenal world which is the product of *maya* or nescience. *Maya* or causal nescience (*karana-ajnana*) which co-exists with *Isvara,* but does not bind *Isvara,* is the seed of creation or projection (*sristi*), and *Isvara* projects the universe with the help of *maya.* The *Upanishad* said that *Isvara* assumes the name and form of *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara* who is commonly known as Prajapati Brahmā. This *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara* is known as the *karya-Brahman,* whereas *Isvara* or *Prajna* or *Avyakta* is known as the *karana-Brahman.* The former is the manifested supreme consciousness (*vyakta-chaitanya*), and the later is the unmanifested supreme consciousnes (*avyakta-chaitanya*). The forms *vyakta* and *avyakt*a only differ in names and forms, but the underlying prime principle or supreme consciousness in them is one and the same.

There we find a difference between the doctrine of Sankhya and that of Advaita-Vedanta, though Advaita Vedanta accepted the theory of cosmology, as forwarded by the Sankhya. The main difference between Sankhya and Vedanta, lies in the fact that Sankhya upholds the theory of transformation (*parinamavada*), whereas Advaita Vedanta, the theory of superimposition (*vivartavada*) which is reduced to the theory of identity of non-difference (*advaita*). In the theory of transformation, effect is the manifestation of the universe and its objects which are different from cause (*Prakriti* and *Purusha* combined).

As, for example, though curd is the product of milk yet the forms and the inherent qualities of them are different from each other, and for this reasons, the doctrine of Sankhya is reduced to duality. But Advaita Vedanta upholds a quite different view. Advaita Vedanta says that effect is non-different from cause, and, consequently, the universe and its objects are, in essence, not different from the Brahman. The projection (*sristi*) or manifestation (*abhivyakti*) happens due to inscrutable *maya* or nescience, and the phenomenal universe is superimposed (*adhyasta*) on

the Brahman, as the snake is superimposed on the rope. There the rope is real, whereas the snake being superimposed, is unreal. Similarly, the Brahman, the universal Ground (or the groundless Ground) is real, whereas the superimposed manifestation of the universe is unreal. Now it can be asked as to what do we mean by unreality. Is it nothingness or void, or a constant changelessness - To this it can be said that unreality or *maya* is something which has a constant change and which cannot be explicable, so it is known as *anirvachaniya.* Further it can be asked as to if Advaita Vedanta upholds the theory of identity and if effect is non-different from cause, then how it is justified that cause, the Brahman, is real and effect, the manifestation of the universe and its object, is unreal ? To this it can be said that the (*shuddha*) Brahman never becomes cause of the universe, but the universe is only superimposed on the Brahman due to inexplicable *maya,* and, therefore, *maya* is the cause of the universe, or of the manifold manifestation. *Maya* being changeful and unreal, its effect, the universe, is also unreal.[1]

Here we find that the *Upanishad* and Vedanta said : 'तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत्' i.e. 'it (the Brahman) entered into the universe (*sristi*) after projecting it from within and 'रुपं रुपं प्रतिरुपो बभूव' * * i.e. 'being One, took the manifold form'. So we find that the manifold universe is no other than the non-dual Brahman. The *Katha-Upanishad* (1.2.12) further said : एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा, एकं रुपं बहुधा यः करोति' i.e. 'being one, it (the *Atman*) divided itself into manifold forms'. So naturally we conclude that the creator and the created objects are different from each other. But Advaita Vedanta said that the creator and creation are one and the same thing, because the Brahman (the determinate or *sa-kala* Brahman) became itself the creation or manifestation. Sankara said that the real purport (*tatparya*) of the teachings of the *Upanishad* or Vedanta lies not in creation or manifestation, but lies in the Brahman. In truth, the Brahman is neither one, nor many, but transcends the categories of one and many.

[1] Vartikakara Suresvaracharya further informed that the Sankhya conception of *Prakriti* differs from Vedantic conception of *Avyakta.*

The *Chhandogya-Upanishad* said : 'वाचारम्भणं विकारो नामधेयं मृत्तिकेत्येव सत्यम्' * * i.e. 'when the potter creates some pots of different kinds and names, then that manyness or manifoldness of one and the same clay is unreal, being subject to transformation or change, and the changeless clay is only real'. Similarly those which evolve from the non-dual Brahman with different names and forms, are unreal being transformed or changed, whereas the Brahman is real and unchangeable. The one immute (*kutastha*) Brahman is known as the manifold universe in the reign of delusion or *maya*. Gaudapada said in the *Mandukya-karika* : 'अजायमानो बहुधा मायया जायते तु सः' * * i.e. 'the Brahman *assumes* many forms being influenced by *maya* or nescience'. Sri Ramakrishna also said that no ornament is made or designed from pure gold, so some mixture of other elements in gold is required. This mixture (*khad*) means *maya* or delusion, and when the Brahman comes in contact with *maya*, there originates or evolves the phenomenal universe. I have already explained before the assuming states of Isvara, the second Principle, with whom the causal nescience (*karana-ajnana*) or *maya* coexists, and this Isvara is known as the undifferentiated consciousness (*avyakta* or *prajna*). In Isvara, the causal nescience which is the receptacle of all the impressions (*samskaras*) of all beings and objects remains as unmanifested, so manifestation or creation does not properly begin from Isvara, but manifestation begins from the third Principle, the Hiranyagarbha or the Golden Womb. The Hiranyagarbha is under the sway of nescience, as manifestation begins from Him. In the Epics (*Puranas*), Hiranyagarbha has been described as the Prajapati-Brahma, the Creator with golden hue, and He evolves from the navel-lotus of Narayana, who lies on the surface of the causal water (*karana-salila*) of the ocean of deluge, and Lakshmi, His divine consort and the *Prakriti* or *maya*, is serving His holy feet. This idea has also been depicted in the *Sri Sri Chandi*, while describing the sacred doctrine of Mahamaya or Yogamaya. The description of serving the holy feet by Lakshmi expresses the idea that Narayana, Isvara or second prime-Principle, is the Lord of *maya* (*mayadhisha*), whereas Hiranyagarbha-Brahma is under the sway of *maya*. Regarding Isvara, the Lord of

maya, Sri Ramakrishna has said that venom of the serpent kills men, but cannot kill the serpent itself. Similarly *maya* co-exists with Isvara, but *maya* cannot delude Isvara. In the same way, the realized soul lives in the world of *maya,* but *maya* cannot exert its influence upon him. Now, considering from the existence of *maya* and non-existence of *maya* in the Brahman, the Brahman is known as determinate (*saguna* or *sa-kala*) and indeterminate (*nirguna* or *niskala*). Both determinateness and indeterminates are the attributes (*gunas*) or adjuncts (*upadhis*). The existence and absence of attributes or adjuncts make the Brahman with form (*sakara*) and formless (*nirakara*). But the pure indeterminate Brahman is to be realized for absolute freedom from bondage of *samsara,* because it is itself the experience or divine realization. Vedanta further said : 'The supersensible experience of the Brahman is approached only for immediate experience,' i.e. 'बोधे बोध' and 'प्रतिबोधविदितम्' * * which means 'experience by experience' which does not know any process of the related and the relation. There is no relative process between the known and the knower, as the Divine knowledge itself is devoid of any process.

Now, process or relation presupposes an act or attribute, and I have explained before that attribute or quality is a limiting adjunct or property, which limits the wholeness or all-pervasiveness of the Brahman. If you add adjectives to a noun, the noun will gradually be limited. So Sankara and other non-dualist Vedantist discarded all qualities or attributes from the pure Brahman. Plotinus gave the name of the Absolute 'Alone' which suffers no barrier of duality or multiplicity. But Ramanuja ascribed infinite qualities to the Brahman : 'समस्तकल्याणगुणात्मकोऽसौ * * तेजोबलैश्वर्य-महवबोध, सुबीर्यादिगुणैकराशिः' (vide the *Sri-bhasya* III.2.11). Ramanuja was the upholder of the qualified-non-dualism (*vishistadvaita*), so he ascribed qualities or attributes to his all-beloved Brahman. According to him, God, world and individual soul—these three principles constitute the body of the infinite Brahman. According to him the individual soul is atomic in size (*anu*), the world is inert (*jada* or *achit*), and God is *chit.* Ramanuja believed in the theory of grace (*kripa*), and he says that through the grace of God, who is the deter-

minate Brahman (*saguna* Brahman) the individual soul attains salvation. But Sankara never reduced the individual souls into matter (*jada*), rather he said that : 'जीवो ब्रह्मैव नापरः' * * i.e. 'the individual soul is no other than the Brahman'. Ramanuja made difference between God and the individual soul, and said that God possesses limitless power, whereas the individual soul possesses very limited power. Ramanuja indirectly admitted the theory of transformation (*parinamavada*), that reduces his theory to duality, whereas Sankara believed in the theory of superimposition (*vicartavada*), which reduces to non-duality. So there is a great difference between them.

Now, what is the world (*jagat*) ? The nature of the world is to change— 'गच्छतीति जगत्'। As, in the current (of water), water passes all the time and does not stop, so is the world. The Greek philosopher Heraclitus said that no man can bathe twice in the same water, because current of water is passing like a flux, so it is unreal. The world is like a walking will-o-wasp (*aleya*), as it does not stand for a while, but it flows and flows. Vedanta called it unreal.

The *Upanishad* called this world the combination of name and form (*nama-rupa*). The *Brihadaranyka Upanishad* said : 'तदेदं तर्हि अव्याकृतमासीत्, तन्नामरुपाभ्यामेव व्याक्रियते' i.e. 'before creation or manifestation, it (the Brahman) was in an unmanifested form. There was neither existence (*sat*) nor non-existence (*asat*). Then it was manifested with name and form. It manifested itself through its own power or energy'. This power or energy is Mahamaya, the primordial Energy, or Mother. When the superior quality of *sattva* predominates, it is called *maya* (*vishuddha-sattva-pradhana maya*), and when inferior qaulity of *sattva* predominates, then it is called *avidya* (*malina-sattva-pradhana avidya*). In the *Vivekachudamani*, Sankara said,

अविद्यानाम्नी परमेशशक्ति-
रणाद्यविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा।
कार्यानुमेया सुधीयैव मायया
यया जगत् सर्वमिदं प्रसूयते।
* * महाद्भुतालिंवचनीयारुपा॥

That is '*avidya* (or *maya*) is the power of the supreme Lord,

and this power or energy is composed of, or comprises with, three qualities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The enlightened ones determine it by observing its effect or work, and from this power everything of the universe evolves. * *. This power or energy is a great wonder, and it is inexplicable'. I have explained before why nescience (*ajnana*) has been divided into *maya* and *avidya*. Nescience that co-exists with Isvara, is known as *maya*, and nescience that resides in and deludes the individual soul (*jiva*), is known as *avidya*. Vedanta again divided *avidya* into *tulavidya* and *mulavidya*. *Tulavidya* resides in the *jiva*, and *mulavidya* exists in Isvara. So, some of the Vedantists, or the Schools of Vedanta, differentiate *maya* from *avidya*, or *mulavidya* from *tulavidya*. But Sankara himself and his follower Padmapada and the Vivarana School do not admit that *maya* is different from *avidya*. Vachaspati Mishra and his School admit the division of *maya* and *avidya*.

To Sri Ramakrishna, *maya* and *avidya* are one and the same, because the binding capacity of the two are the same. He called *maya* as Divine Energy or Sakti or Kali. As the power of fire is non-different from the fire, or as the rays of the sun is inseparable from the sun, or as the waves of the ocean are non-different from the ocean, so Energy or Sakti is non-different from the Brahman (or Siva). Sankara also admitted Sakti, and composed many contemplated compositions (*dhyanas*) of Durga, Kali, Bhuvaneswari, and other male and female deities. Some are of the opinion that he composed the *Prapanchasara-tantra*, and there is a comentary on it, composed by his direct disciple, Padmapada. Some scholars do not admit it, but most of them are in favour of the composition of the *Prapanchasara-tantra* by Sankara. It is said that in some of the Maths, established by him, and especially in Kashmere, he established in the temple, the *Sri-yantra* (*Srichakra*) which represents the Sakti Herself. This *Sri-yantra* suggests the Tantric rites which he (Sankaracharya) choosed for the Sakti-worship. Whatever be the controversy regarding it, it is a fact that he did not deny Sakti or Divine power, which is the cause of evolution of the universe.

Regarding *Prakriti* or Sakti, Jiva-Goswami said that Sakti has two powers or capacities, unthinkableness (*achintyatva*)

and naturality (*savabhavikatva*). (1) The unthinkable power or energy (*achintyasakti*) is essential (*anivarya*), and mind and intellect cannot grasp it, i.e. 'man cannot solve the mystery of Sakti by means of logic and augmentation, and this Sakti makes possible what is impossible—*durghata-ghatakatva*', which can be said in the language of Sankara as '*aghatanaghatana-patiyasi*'. The unthinkable Sakti, as devised by Jiva Goswami (and also by Baladeva Vidyabhusana) is interconnected with the *Paramatman* (Sri Krishna) in relation to *achintyabhedabheda*, i.e. 'difference-non-difference which cannot be thought of. (2) 'The natural Sakti (*svabhavikasakti*) is that which is naturally possesed by Isvara or *Paramatman*, and makes His greatness sublime. But Isvara, said Jiva Goswami, is similar to Isvara, the second supreme Principle of Advaita Vedanta, who is the Lord of *maya* or *mayasakti*.

The *Bhagavata* mentioned about three kinds of *saktis*, and they are *svarupa-sakti*, *tatastha-sakti*, and *vahiranga-sakti*. These three *saktis* or energies are again called as *parasakti*, *jivasakti*, and *mayasakti*. The *Vishnupurana* called them *padma*, *kshetrajna*, and *avidya*. This *Purana* again called *svarupasakti* as *samvandhini*, *samvit*, and *hladini*, which are known in Vedanta, as *sat*, *chit*, and *ananda*. The *hladini-sakti* is the *anandasakti* of the *Paramatman*. He also admitted another *sakti* which is known as *sandhinisakti*. The *hladini-sakti* is the supreme principle, and it is known as Radha or Radhika. She is the primordial Energy. Radha and Krishna may be conceived as the *Ardhanarisvara* of the Rig Veda. The Vaishnavas admit the Brahman as the possessor of *sakati* (*Saktiman*) and says that He is the determinate Brahman. Ramanuja, Madhva, Nimvarka, Ballabha and other savants conceived this determinate Brahman as the all-powerful and all-merciful Narayana, and by His divine grace, the individual soul can reach the highest region, Vaikuntha. They say that in Vaikuntha, there is an eternal relation between Paramatman (Narayana) and Sakti (Lakshmi). Jiva Goswami and Baladeva Vidyabhusan admitted a relation between the two prime-Principles, which cannot be conceived and determined, and so they believed in the doctrine of *achintya-bhedabheda*. Like Sankara, they also admitted a mysterious power which can do and undo everything

(*aghatana-ghatana-patiyasi-maya*), and they called this inscrutable *sakti* or energy as *achintya*, while the non-dualist Vedantists called *sakti* or *maya* as *anirvachaniya*. The Gaudiya Vaishnavas admitted transcendental difference (*paramarithika bheda*) between *Sakti* and *Saktiman* as well as between Isvara and Jiva, but the Advaita Vedantists did not admit any difference between the Brahman and the Jiva.

Arjuna was confounded with the theory of immortality of the soul, and he sometimes identified the mortal frame with the immortal *Atman* out of ignorance. Sri Krishna was compassionate to his friend and disciple, Arjuna. So to remove his wrong idea, Sri Krishna said that the Soul or Self neither takes birth, nor is subject to death, because it absolutely transcends the changes of birth and death,—origin and decay. What takes birth or originates is matter or mortal living being. Birth or origin, death or decay, development or growth, coming into being, transformation, and destruction (*janma, kshaya, vriddhi, astitva, parinama,* and *vinasha*)—these six kinds of change are the nature of the mortal beings and objects, but the all-consciousness *Atman* is not subject to these changes. We cannot determine the immortal Soul by any nature, action, or quality. Arjuna was deluded, so he lost his power of discrimination (*viveka*). Sri Krishna understood it, so he advanced the truth 'न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे' * * etc., i.e., 'the physical body dies, but the *Atman* never dies'. So he spoke to Arjuna scoldingly and at the same time affectionately, and tried to restore his power of discrimination. Sri Krishna said, 'being a sensed and intelligent warrior, you are talking nonsense, which is not worthy of you. So listen to Me':

वेदाविनाशिनं नित्यं य एनमजव्ययम्।
कथं स पुरुषपर्थ कं घातयति हन्ति कम्॥ २।२१

Now, having started the propositon that the *Atman* is neither the agent, nor the object of action of slaying, and having stated in the next verse the immutability of the Self as the reason for that statement, Sri Krishna concluded the proposition as follows : 'Who so knows Him as indestructible, eternal, unborn and inexhaustible, how, son of Bitha, and whom, does such a man cause to slay and whom does he

slay?' Sankara raised many for and against questions, and questions as to this important verse of the *Gita*. The main solutions are (1) works are meant for the unenlightened souls, (2) knowledge of the immutable soul is possible, and (3) the enlightened ones should resort to Jnana Yoga. Now, the *Bhagavad Gita* teaches that he who has acquired the knowledge of the Self, should resort to renunciation only, and not to works. And if he takes resort to work, he should remember that his work or action will be out and out selfless. He will perform work without asking the result in the spirit of worship. He should think that he is not the agent of work, but Self that shines always in the cave of the heart, directs and regulates him, so as to do good for the humanity at large.

It should be borne in mind that the actions, he slays, and he is to be slain, are performed from the sense of 'I' (*aham-bodha*), or from the sense of agency (*aham-karta*). Now, how does this sense of 'I' or igocentric idea evolve? It evolves when we forget the immortal *Atman* and at the same time identify our true Self with the mortal body. Someone imposes personality on him, and this imposition is the source of sense of 'I'. But the Self or *Atman* is above egoism and vanity, and being self-satisfied and self-complete all the time, the *Atman* never asks anything from any one, rather He bestows everlasting peace and happiness on him who surrender unto Him. The *Atman* is one and alone, and it has no rival and contest, and has no friend or foe.

Where there is demand, there is supply. Desire is at the root of this unavoidable natural law. Desire is the cause of creation or projection which means expansion. In the *Taittiriya Upanishad*, it has been said : 'सोऽकामयः। बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति। स तपोऽतप्यत। स तपस्तप्त्वा इदंसर्वमसृजत * *।' There we find desire which was transformed into energy, and that energy divided the One into many. We find also the idea of half man and half woman combined into one known as *Ardhanarishvara*. This is the Vedic idea, and it is said that Tantric idea evolved from it. Because, in Tantra, we find that, in the final analysis, Siva and Sakti shine in an undivided form like a pea (*chanaka*), composed of positive and negative parts. The positive part is Siva, which is the

concentrated static Principle, and the negative one is the playful dynamic Principle. According to Tantra, these two shine before bifurcation as undivided one, and Tantra advocates the theory of non-duality which is known as *sakti-vishista-advaita vada*. In this theory, Sakti or Divine Energy is no other than Siva, the pure consciousness. Or it can be said that Siva becomes Sakti for the sportive play (*lila*), and after the play is over, Sakti shines again as Siva. There is no difference-cum-duality between them, because duality brings the ideas of relativity as well as of difference. Relativity is the plane of *maya* or nescience, which creates discripency and duality, and also brings decay or death, whereas pure consciousness transcends the relativity and brings immortality and peace.

Maya is the plane of duality, which creates the dual sense of 'I' and 'you', attraction and repulsion, and love and hate. In the Sankhya, we find that *Prakriti* or *Mula-prakriti* plays her role of dynamicity with the help of attraction and repulsion, and the acts of attraction and repulsion originate from the unbalanced state of the qualities (*gunakshobha*) of the *Prakriti*. Vedanta says that *maya* creates the sense of duality, and also brings a division between the *Atman* and the individual soul. But those who go beyond the limitation of *maya*, correct their error of duality, and find that the *Atman* is one without the second, and it has no rival, and has no field for contest. Any kind of desire for doing good or bad does not arise in the *Atman*. But erroneously we ascribe all actions and attributes on the *Atman*, and that error is the false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya* or *ajnana*), which deludes all the living beings. But the thing is this, that they who are the realized souls even in this body, are not deluded, because *ajnana* and its actions are dead to them. When a rope is burnt and changed into ashes, it maintains its (black) form, but that form does not bear the binding capacity. As for example, they who know the deluding or enchanting nature of the mirage, are not deluded, even if they see false water in the desert. The enlightened ones live in this world of actions or *ajnana*, but actions or *ajnana* cannot bind or delude them, because though they live like ordinary men, yet their outlooks are entirely changed or trans-

formed.

This is the idea of some nations that the *Atman* is the almighty God, who creates everything in this phenomenal world. They think that God is the extra-cosmic personal One. He sits on a throne on the clouds, with a golden rod in His hand, and in the day of judgement when clarions are blown, He performs the act of judgement, and punishes the sinners, and rewards the virtuous. The Christians believe in Satan, and this Satan is conceived as an evil spirit. In the Hindu and Buddhist religion, you will also get this Satan. Gautama Buddha faced Mara, the personified evil thoughts. It is said that the unholy ideas of Buddha's mind was personified as evil spirits, who tried their best to create obstacles in the path of the attainment of Nirvana, the final emancipation. But Buddha overcame the Mara, and got Nirvana. In the *Puranas* and other Hindu epic-mythologies, we find the mention of sin and hell. In the Bible, there are the mention of Adam and Eve, the first man and first woman. Adam and Eve lived in heaven, but when being deluded or enchanted by Satan they ate the fruits of knowledge, they fell down on earth out of sin, and were known as the sinners. The Christians believe that women are the cause of creating sin and hell on earth. The Hindu scripture do not believe in this false theory, but when we look into the pages of the Indian history, we find that in the Brahmanic period, the sectarian and short-sighted Brahmins wrote the *Smritis* which taught that 'नरकस्य द्वारं नारी' i.e. 'women are the gateway of hell'. The Brahmins also prohibited for the women the reading of the Vedas and the Upanishads, and even the women were deprived of the right of uttering the sacred *mantram. OM*, which pervades all the letters (*varnas*) as well as the world. With the rise of rationalism or rationalistic ideas, the Indian women regained gradually their olden prestine glory and regard in the society. Manu and other Smartas gave high estimation to the women, and said : 'नार्यन्तु यत्र पूज्यन्ते नन्दन्ते तत्र देबताः' i.e. "where the women are worshipped with proper estimation, there appear the Devas". However, the ebbs and tides of good and evil ideas flow from time to time in the society. The social reformations are made by the liberal-minded leaders of the

society, and then the social circumstances are changed with healthy atmosphere.

The ideas of sin and evil are seen among every nation of the world. In the *Puranas*, as I have said before, we find the descriptions of heaven and hell. Like the Christians, some of the Hindu communities believe that the virtuous go to heaven, whereas the sinners go to hell. The Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, and the Parsees also believe in a river *vaitarani* or *chinnat* bridge, which are believed to be crossed by the departed spirits in the afterworld. This river or bridge is situated between the nether-world and the after-world. It can be said to be the borderland or no man's land, and the crossing of the river or bridge figuratively suggests that when men and women go out of this physical world after death, they enter into the mental world, and the departed souls with their subtle bodies (*suksma-deha*) cross the border of the phenomenal region, and enter into the mental plane with all their experiences and knowledge, gathered from the gross phenomenal universe. And we know that when the *jivatman* or soul goes out of the physical body, it draws out all the experiences and impressions (*samaskaras*) from the body, and carries them to the mental world, which is known as the region of the departed spirits (*pretaloka*). There, in the other world, they stay for some indefinite period, and afterwards by dint of their intense desire for taking new birth in this phenomenal universe, they come down, and again take birth according to their results of the previous acts, good and bad. In this way, the souls revolve in the cycle of birth and death until and unless they go beyond the limitation of their ignorance or nescience (*ajnana*), and realize the immortal *Atman*.

The Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains believe in the results of actions (*karmaphala*). They say that men and women enjoy or suffer for the results they reap for their actions in previous incarnations. So God, Satan and Eve are not responsible for one's good and evil, virtue and vice, but they are responsible for their own works. Sri Krishna elaborately explained this doctrine in the *Bhagavad Gita* : 'नादत्ते कस्यचित् पापं न चैव सुकृतं बिभूः' (V.15). From this we know that men and women themselves reap fruits or results according to

their own actions, good or bad, and God is not responsible for them'. Sri Ramakrishna has given an illustration of a lamp under which one man was forging a document, and the other one was reading the *Bhagavad*. Now, it is the universal and inevitable law that the man who was forging the document for depriving someone, will get sin as the consequence of his evil motive and action, whereas the man who was reading the *Bhagavad* for purifying his heart, will get virtue. Will you say that the lamp is the bestower of evil or good? No. men, who use the lamp, reap their results according to their actions they perform. Similar is the case of the sun in the sky, says Ramakrishna Paramahansa. The sun impartially throws light upon the virtuous and the sinner alike, and in this respect the sun has no partiality. God, in this way, is impartial and just. He is like a witness, and is never attached to any desire or action.

In this connection, Sri Krishna said in the *Gita* (V.14.15),

न कर्तृत्वं न कर्माणि लोकस्य सृजति प्रभुः ।
न कर्मफलसंयोगं स्वभावस्तु प्रवर्तते ॥
नादत्ते कस्यचित पापं न चैब सुकृतं बिभुः ।
अज्ञानेनावृतं ज्ञानं तेन मुह्यन्ति जन्तबः ॥ ५।१४-१५

That is, 'neither agency, nor objects, does the Lord create for the world, nor union with the fruits of actions. But it is the nature that acts (V.14). The Lord takes neither the evil, nor even the good deed of any, wisdom is enveloped by unwisdom; thereby mortals are deluded (V.15). Now, what is the nature of actions? Actions (*karmas*) are divided into four main classes : (a) actions which are of obligatory duties (*nitya*); (b) actions arising on the occurrence of some special events (*naimittika*); (c) actions on those intended for securing some special ends, and which are only optional (*kamya*); and (d) actions which are forbidden (*nishiddha*). Sadananda Yogindra also described in the *Vedantasara* these actions :

(1) काम्यानि स्वर्गादीष्टसाधनानि ज्योतिष्टोमादीनि,
(2) नरकादानिष्टसाधनानि ब्रह्मणहननादीनि,
(3) अकरणे प्रत्यबायमाधनानि सन्ध्याबन्दनादीनि,
(4) नैमित्तिकानि—पुत्रजन्मादानुबन्धीनि, जातेष्ट्रादीनि ।

Sri Krishna further said :

सर्वकर्माणि मनसा संन्यस्यास्ते सुखं वशी ।
नवद्वारे पुरे देही नैव कुर्वन्न कारयन् ॥ ५।१३

That is 'renouncing all actions by thought (i.e. in the mind), and self-controlled, the embodied one rests happily in the naive-gated city, neither all acting, nor causing to act'. Not only the self-controlled one, but also the God-intoxicated man living in this world of senses, subdues the senses, and renounces all actions in speech, thought and deed, and by discrimination (*viveka-vichara*) and renunciation (*vairagya* or *sannyasa*) and seeing inaction in action, he rests happily. To this it can be asked as to that it is true that a realized soul renounces all actions of the physical body and of the senses attributed falsely to the *Atman* through *ajnana*, but, yet, the power of acting and of causing to act may be inherent in the *Atman*, and may remain in him who has renounced actions. But Sri Krishna said that he (the self-controlled and self-realized man) neither acts himself, nor causes the body and senses to act The power of acting or of causing to act, is not inherent in the *Atman*, because the *Atman* is unchangeable and transcends all desires of actions and though seated in the body, it acts not, nor is he tainted. But, out of ignorance, we think that the *Atman* does everything through its inherent desires'.

Similarly we think that the Brahman is the agent of the act of creation or projection of the world-appearance. But that is not correct, because the cause and ground of the world-appearance are *maya* or nescience, and we erroneously impose agency of this act of projection on the Brahman who is absolutely above nescience. In connection with the *Brahmasutra* : 'लोकवत्तुलीलाकैवल्यम्' (II.1.33), Sankara said that as the in-going and out-going breaths flow without any effort and definite motive of a man, so the sportive-play of the Brahman is normally accomplished without any necessity and desire : 'यथा चोच्छ्वासप्रश्वासादयोऽनाभिसन्धाय बाह्यं किञ्चित् प्रयोजनान्तरं स्वभावादेव भवन्ति । एवमीश्वरस्याप्यनपेक्ष्य किञ्चित् प्रयोजनान्तरं स्वभादेव केवलं लीलां रुपा प्रवृत्तिर्भविष्यति ।'

Further Sankara said that though we find the reference of creation or evolution in the *Shrutis* or *Upanishads*, yet those

references are meant only for establishing the *Brahmabhava*, and not for accepting the savings of the *Upanishad* as given : 'न चेयं पारमार्थिकबिषया सृष्टिश्रुतिः अबिद्याकल्पितनामरुपव्यबहारगोचरत्वात्।' In fact, men and women naturally ascribe their impressions of activities upon the Brahman which is, in reality, actionless and immute. The author of the commentary, *Kalpataru* said in this respect : 'प्रतिबिम्बगताः पश्यन्नृजुबक्रादिबिक्रियाः। पुमान् क्रीड़ेद्यथा-ब्रह्म तथा जीबस्थबिक्रिया।"

In the glossary, Krishnananda Tirtha also said : 'एष ह्येव-साधुकर्म कारयति य आत्मानमन्तरो यमयति, ईश्वरप्रेरितो गच्छेत् स्वर्गं बा। यथा लोके कश्चित् पुरुषः सप्रतिबिम्बगताः ऋजुबक्रादि बिक्रिया बिम्भभूतस्वप्रयुक्ताः पश्यन्-क्रीड़ति, तथा ब्रह्मापि जीबस्थबिक्रियाः प्राणिकर्मानुसारेण स्वप्रयुक्ताः पश्यन् क्रीड़तीति योजना * * ईश्वरस्य सृष्ट्यादिव्यापारेषु प्रवृत्तिनं सम्भबतीति। * * ईश्वरस्य सृष्ट्यादिप्रवृत्तिलक्षणाक्रिया केबलं प्रयोजनोद्देशं विनैव लीला।' That is, the Brahman, which completely transcends *maya* or nescience, *as if* creates or projects, and that is effortless and motiveless. Besides the transcending Brahman, Vedanta also admitted the existence of God who is the Lord of *maya*, and is the witness and is changeless. The Brahman is one without the second and is the Soul of souls. In the *Upanishad*, we find : 'सूर्यो यथा सर्वं लोकस्य चक्षुः, न लिप्यते चक्षुषैर्बाह्यदोषैः, एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा, न लिप्यते' etc., i.e., as the sun being the director of the eyes of all, as the eyes are the luminous objects ('तैजसपदार्थाः' above all the defects of the eyes, so the *Atman* or Brahman, shining in the hearts of all and controlling all beings, remains unaffected by all pains and sufferings of them. It is pure, stainless, and changeless. The *Katha Upanishad* (II.5.11) also said that though the existence of God (*Isvara*) has been admitted for the manifestation of the world-appearance, yet the *Atman* manifests Itself as God, Creator, and creation, and though the *Atman* saturates and is interlinked with all the atoms and molecules of the universe, yet it is unattached and unaffected, and though this state seems to the ignorant

[1] When spoken of as external, or transcendent, or collective (*samasthi*), the supreme Reality is known as the Brahman, and when spoken of as internal, or immanent, or individual (*vyasthi*) the Reality is called the *Atman*. But, in truth, the Brahman and the *Atman* are one and the same supreme Essence, and this Brahman-Atman supreme principle is also known as *sat-chit-ananda*. This has already been said before in a different way.

and the deluded as a wonder, yet the Self-realized ones realise it. Again in the verses (II.2.3, 12) of the *Katha-Upanishad*, this state of the *Atman* or Brahman has beautifully been stated. The *Upanishad* said,

अग्निर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो
रुपं रुपं प्रतिरुपो वभुव ।
एकस्तथा सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा,
रुपं रुपं प्रतिरुपो वहिश्च ॥
वायुर्यथैको भुवनं प्रविष्टो * * वहिश्च ॥

* * *

एको वशी सर्वभूतान्तरात्मा
एकं रुपं बहुधा यः करोति ।
तमात्मस्थं येऽनुपश्यन्ति धीरा-
स्तेषां सुखं शाश्वतं नेतरेषाम् ॥

That is, 'just as fire, though one, having entered the universe, assumes manifold forms in respect of different shapes similarly, the Self inside all beings, though one, assumes a form in respect of each form or shape; and (yet) it is outside. As air, though one * *. Just as the sun, which is the eye of the whole world, is not tainted by the ocular and external defects, similarly the self * * is not tainted by the sorrows of the world, being transcendental. Eternal peace is for those—and not for others—who are discriminating and who realize in their hearts Him who being one, the controller, and the inner Self of all—makes a single from multifarious'. The *Brihadaranyka Upanishad* also said : 'विज्ञानादन्तरो यं विज्ञानं न बेद यस्य विज्ञानं शरीरं से विज्ञानतन्मरो यमयति' । Appaya Dikshit followed the theory as advanced by the followers of the *Vivarana*, and said that the individual soul (*jiva*) is like a reflection (*prativimba*) being covered by the internal organ (*antahkarana*), and God is the real object (*vimba*). So, as the reflection is the representation of the object (*vimba*), so the object-consciousnes, *Isvara*, is nearer, and shines as the *Antarayami* in the heart of all beings :'यो बिज्ञाने तिष्ठन् इत्यादि श्रुत्या ईश्वरस्यैव जीवसन्निधानेन तदन्तर्यामिभावेन विकारान्तरावस्थानश्रवणादिति ।'

Sri Krishna said in the similar way (vide the *Gita*, XVIII.61) :

ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानां हृद्देशेऽर्जुन तिष्ठति ।
भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढ़ानि मायया ॥

Now, if you compare the line 'भ्रामयन् सर्वभूतानि यन्त्रारूढ़ानि मायया' with 'प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणैः कर्मानि सर्वशः' (III.27), then you find that the former one say that God directs everyone like a machine through *maya* or *avidya*, whereas the latter one says that *Prakriti* composed of three *gunas*, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*, does everything by the help of the *gunas*. Both the lines sing on the same string of the harp that *maya* or nescience is the prime-mover of everything, and everything of the universe evolves and dies for the magic-play of *maya*, which can do or undo everything in the universe. The *Atman* or Brahman is above all attributes and actions, and we ascribe attributes and actions upon the *Atman* through our ignorance or non-knowledge of the *Atman*. So the *Atman* or God has no agency of any action, but men and animals reap their fruit or result, good or bad, as they perform good or bad actions, and, therefore, the *Atman* or God is not responsible for anyone's pleasure or pain,—wealth or poverty, but men and women themselves are responsible for fruits or results of their actions they perform.

Now, from the viewpoint of devotion, or considering from Bhakti Yoga, we admit the existence of a supreme one, whom we call God, or God the Father or God the Mother. We call him Krishna, Vishnu, Siva, Narayana, Kali, Sakti, Durga, Jagaddhatri, and other deities, and get consolation in our mind amidst the world of struggles and efforts—of pleasures and pains. Duality is the abiding nature of the phenomenal world, and whenever we think or conceive anything or any object, we think and conceive it through the sense of duality. Living in this world of conflicts and changes, we think ourselves as the subjects (*praja*) of the change, and at the same time we think that there is a supreme Ruler and Director, who rules and regulates everything of the universe as well as everything of the solar system. We think that He is all-powerful and merciful, and if we do any injustice and evil works, He punishes us, and rewards us if we do justice and good works, and if we surrender to Him and pray to Him, He forgives all our defects, demerits, and

sins, and takes us to His holy feet, so as to confer peace and eternal happiness upon us. This is the nature or attitude of the dualists who think themselves different from God, the Ruler. Madhva, Nimvarka, Ballabha, Srikantha, and all the Vaishnava and Gaudiya-Vaishnava savants believe in this dualistic faith, and though Yamunacharya and his disciple Ramanuja uphold the doctrine of qualified-non-dualism (*vishista-dvaita*), yet their philosophy ultimately subscribes to the doctrine of dualism (*dvaitavada*).

But Sankara defined God and Brahman and the world in a quite different way. He said through his intuitive realization that God or God the Absolute or Brahman are one and the same Essence, and we divide them only from the viewpoint that there is no difference between them. The universe is the creation or manifestation of the changing nature of *maya*, and we, the individual souls, think ourselves different from the *Atman* or Brahman for *maya* or ignorance. So when *maya* or nescience is removed, or sublated by the *Atman* or Brahman-knowledge, we realize that the world and we are non-different from the *Atman* or Brahman. The world bears no status or existence other than the Brahman, which is existent (*sat*) only, and which is one without the second.

Sri Krishna explained this truth similarly in the *Gita* (vide the *Gita*, II.22-24 :

वासांसि जर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णा—
न्यन्यानि संयाति नवानि देहि ॥
नैनं छिन्दन्ति शस्त्राणि नैनं दहति पावकः ।
च चैनं क्लेदयन्त्यापो न शोषयति मारुतः ॥
अच्छेद्योऽमदाह्योऽयमक्लेदोऽशोष्य एव च ।
नित्यः सर्वगतः स्थानुरचल्योऽयं सनातनः ॥

That is, 'just as a man casts off worn-out clothes and puts on others which are new, so the embodied (self) casts off worn-out old bodies and enters others which are new (II.22). Him, weapons do not cut, Him, fire does not burn, and Him, water does not wet, and Him, wind does not dry (II.23).' He cannot be cut, nor burnt, nor wetted, nor dried up. He

is everlasting, all-pervading, stable, firm, and eternal (II.24). The divine and immortal nature of the *Atman* has again been described by the *Kaushitaki-Upanishad* (3.9) : 'न साधुना कर्मना भूयान्नो एवासाधुना कनीयान्, एष ह्येवैनं साधुकर्म कारयति तं यमेभ्यो लोकेभ्यो उन्निनीयते' * * * i.e., 'no fair or unfair action and no sinful or virtuous work can attach the *Atman* . those actions can neither pollute or brighten the *Atman*, because it is raised above all defects and demerits. And as the *Atman* is self-complete and self-satisfied, so no desire can exist in it 'देवसैष स्वभावोऽयमाप्तमामस्य का स्पृहा' (*Mandhkhya*).

The gross physical body is like a coat, and we use this coat for the comfort of the soul. It has already been said that we mistakenly identify the gross body with the Self, so it is our effort to protect the Self and to give it comfort. The coat in time becomes old and is torn, and then we use a new coat. Similarly, we take some body while come to this phenomenal world from the mental or psychic world, and the soul takes shelter in those bodies after its birth. Gradually when the bodies are worn-out and die, we leave again the old bodies and go to the spirit-world, and when we intensely desire to be born again in this world, we take some new bodies, and thus create the cycle of births and deaths, until and unless we realize the immortal nature of the *Atman*. Now, it is a fact that where there is birth, there is death; where there is light, there is darkness, because this world is the plane of relativity, and all things are related to one another. But it can be asked as to who is subject to birth and death? To this it can be said that the mortal frame only borns and dies, whereas the immortal Self has no birth and death, because the Self or *Atman* is the Spirit which transcends matter. The Self is the pure consciousness (*shuddha-chaitanya*) that illumines and inspires matter. The matter itself is dead, and consciousness infuses life or energy into matter. Or it can be said from the spiritual viewpoint that there nothing exists other than the Spirit or consciousness, and matter which we look as different from the Spirit or consciousness, is, in reality, the Spirit itself. Ignorance or nescience deludes and misleads us to ascertain the reality, so we take the unreality as the reality, or think that matter is different from the Spirit, or the individual *jiva*

is separate from the Brahman. But when the light of divine realization dawns, we restore our consciousness and come to know that matter is not different from the Spirit in essence, and the *jiva* is non-different from the self-shining Brahman.

Now, those who consider the body as the *Atman*, admit the cycle of origin and decay. I have already mentioned about the Christian's faith about the last day of judgement. The ancient Persians also believed in the last day of judgement and a general resurrection when the victory of good over evil is secured. The ancient Egyptians, like the modern spiritualists, believed in the departed and disembodied spirits. Their idea was that within the physical body of man there was a soul, having the shape of the gross body in every respect and with similar hands, feet, and other limbs. It was like the 'double' or counterpart of the physical man. When the physical man died, his counterpart or 'double' went out of the body, and lived somewhere. The life of the 'double, according to the Egyptian belief, depended upon the condition of the material body, i.e., so long as the gross form remained intact, the form of the 'double' would remain perfect. But, if any part of the dead body was mutilated or injured, the similar part of the 'double' would also be injured or destroyed. It is for this reason that they cared so much to preserve the dead bodies by making mummies and building pyramids. And you will find that even in these days hundreds and thousands of pyramids are scattered here and there in Egypt. This belief was the fundamental principle of the spiritualism and ancestor-worship of the ancient Egyptians.

The ancient Babylonians had a similar belief in a little different way from that of the Egyptians. They preserved the dead bodies, embalmed them, and built tombs over them, putting flowers, wreaths, and flags over the graves. The Egyptians used to put all kinds of materials, water-pots and jars, and foods in the graves.

Now, according to the Hindus, the souls of ordinary mortals remain earthbound for sometime after death, and expect help from their relatives and friends who are left behind. The realm of the ancestors is called *pitriloka* : 'पितृसदनं त्व लोकं अवसतृनामि', 'पितृसदनेत्व लोकं सदयामि' It is believed

that the departed spirits of the ancestors enjoy heavenly life and celestial pleasures in the *pitriloka*. In the *Katha-Upanishad*, you will find that young Nachiketa[1] went to the *pitriloka*, and returned from there after getting illumination. The Vedantic sages and seers of Truth have discovered that the *pitrilokas* or heavens are the highest abode of eternal Truth, but it is phenomenal, and is subject to the laws which govern the phenomenal universe. Vedanta says that the inhabitants of the heaven of the fathers thereof are bound by the law of *karma*, or the laws of cause and effect or of action and reaction, and they stay on that plane is temporary, although it may last for thousands of years.

The knowledge of the Brahman is eternal and brings immortality. The *Atman* is very subtle. It is also causal, though it carries materials after getting out of the bodies of the living beings. As for example, ether exists, but it is not perceived by any senses. Similarly the *Atman* is minuter than ether, and it is the supersensual spiritual thing. But do not think that as it is not perceived or touched by the senses, so it has no existence. Rather it is the basic existence upon which all things of the universe exist. The wind is not perceived by the eyes, but it can be touched. The Neptune is not seen through the open eyes, but yet you cannot say that the Neptune does not exist, as it is seen through a powerful telescope. Now, those objects, which are not perceived through the senses, will be known afterwards with the advancement of science.

In 1897, when I was in London, I met Sri J. C. Bose. At that time he was demonstrating his discoveries of X-ray, through which subtle things are seen through the rays of the light of X-ray. Through X-ray objects are even seen, which are covered by darkness, or which are beyond the walls.. Nowadays X-ray is used in the medical treatment. As it you ate a pin with your food, and that can be traced by the help of the X-ray. We must not be astonished with these wonderful discoveries, because there are many things which have not yet been discovered. But we know that there

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[1] तस्य ह नचिकेता नाम पुत्र आस ।१। * * तं होवाच मृत्येव त्वा ददामीति ।४

are hundreds of thousands of mysteries yet to be discovered. The Divine *Prakriti* is the storehouse of energies and objects which have been discovered uptil now, but they were stored-up in the womb of the primordial *Prakriti.* And it is a fact that things which will also be discovered in future, are in the *Prakriti.* This *Prakriti* is known as Sakti or Kali in Tantra. Sakti is the embodiment of knowledge, will, and action (*jnana-iccha-kriyamayi*). She is the dynamic energy which saturates and elevates all the objects of the world. She is active in Tantra, and is inactive in Sankhya, and it appears as changing and unreal in Vedanta. The scientists have discovered and are discovering more mysteries from energy, but they have not yet been able to reach the core of the primordial Energy or *Prakriti,* which is the prime source and cause of the phenomenal beings and objects.

When I was in America, in one evening (April 14, 1888), I went with Mr. Miner, a member of our Vedanta Society, to the Natural History Museum, to see the annual exhibition of the Academy of Science. There I saw the most wonderful demonstration of Liquid Air then discovered. The air of the atmosphere was liquified like water under the high pressure of 14 tons to a square inch with a low temperature of 300 degrees below zero. The liquid air was thrown on a table cloth like water and instantly a cloud of vapour went up without wetting the cloth. An egg when dipped in liquid air became as hard as a steel hammer and it could drive a nail on the table or wall without breaking or cracking. A piece of thick bar of steel when kept for a few seconds in liquid air, becomes so brittle that it could be broken to pieces with fingers. Liquid air was put in a kettle which was placed on a block of ice. Instantly it began to boil, and came out in the form of vapour. If a drop of liquid air is kept on the palm of a hand, it will burn the skin, and will produce a wound which will not be easily healed. Extreme cold and extreme heat will produce same effects. These experiments opened my eyes to the secret laws of nature, and made a deep impression on my mind.

Now, what is discovery? Discovery means to find out a thing, or things, which is or are already in the mysterious womb of the divine Energy or *Prakriti.* In the

subconscious or unconscious level of our mind, thousands of thousands experiences are submerged, or are sleeping, in the form of impression (*samskara*), and we meditate means, we concentrate our mind upon those impressions to bring out them in the level of the conscious mind, and when an exeperience, or some experiences, come upon the surface of the mind; we say that a thing has been, or some things have been, discovered. The work of discovery proves that we experience thing which already existed in unmanifested form, and it came out, means it appeared in the manifested form. This work of discovery reminds us of the theory of *satkaryavada* of the Naiyakikas and the Vedantists.

Men work, think, discriminate, discover something, and all these works are the result of energy or Sakti. Now, where does the energy exist? Energy does not exist neither in the sky, nor in the brain. The brain is an instrument only, and it works being instigated by the energy that remains in the form of will-power (*iccha-sakti*). In truth, energy exists in the *Atman,* or it can be said that the *Atman* is the storehouse of all energies, and the will-power unfolds the energies. Mind is also an instrument. In Vedanta, it is known as an internal organ (*antariniriya*). Some of the schools of Vedanta do not consider it as an internal organ. Whatever may be the controversies, mind as a stuff, is the sum total of impressions. Sri Ramakrishna calls it a bundle of impressions (*samskarer putuli*). These impressions rise or float on the surface of mind in the form of modifications (*vrittis*). The modifications are the distractions or activities like the waves of the ocean. When the mind is disturbed or agitated by something, it takes the form of modifications (*vritti*). So modification mean the activity of the mind. It may be called a vibration. This vibration of mind must be stopped by the practice of Yoga, or you can stop it if you follow the Vedantic *shravana, manana,* and *nidhyasana.* The word *shravana* does not mean mere hearing of the mahavakya, but the hearing of the *mahavakyas* along with discrimination (*vichara*). *Manana* is the act of thinking of the real meaning or significance of the *mahavakya,* along with concentration, and *nididhyasana* means concentrative thoughts and deep absorption into the meaning or essence of the *mahavakya.* It can be said to be the Yogic

meditation (*dhyana*), but *nididhyasana* differs from the method of Yogic meditation, to some extent. *Dhyana* or meditation is one of the processes of Yoga, which is the method of suppressing (*norodha*) the modifications of the mind. Patanjali prescribed *dhyana* or meditation after *shama, dama, uparati,* etc., whereas *nididhyasana* is absolutely a state of deep absorption into the supreme Reality, which is determined by discrimination between the reality and the unreality (*sadasat*). But the uncontradicted and uninterrupted flow of thought is one and the same in both the Yogic and Vedantic processes of *dhyana* and *nididhyasana,* but the objects of achievement or goals somewhat differ in them.[1] But our aim and object are to com-

[1] Regarding Vedantic *shravana, manana* and *nididhyasana,* Prof. Hiriyanna said that the need for *shravana* implies that ultimate truth to be learnt is revealed and is to be realized only from the *Upanishads* which traditionally preserve that truth for us. *Shravana* casts off the doubt that it may be baseless (*pramansambhavana*). *Manana* is intended to dispel such doubt. It consists of long and continued reflection upon the unity of Being, drawing to its support facts from experience such for instance as how the advance of knowledge and the growth of human institutions more and more point to unity as the likely end, *Manana* secures intellectual conviction. But there may be obstacles in the way of self-satisfaction. For, despite such conviction, there may be now and again as unconscious reassertion of old habits of thought (*viparita-bhavana*) incompatible with the truth since learnt. *Nididhyasana* is meant to overcome this kind of obstacles. It consists in long and uninterrupted meditation on the Upanishadic truth and has to be persisted in, till intuitive knowledge (*sakshatkara*) arises and the Truth is revealed in a flash of vision (compare *Panchapadika,* p. 99).

There is also an *astangayoga-sadhana* according to Patanjali, which leads to *dhyana* and *samadhi* (meditation and superconsciousness), but there seems to be a point of distinction between the Vedantic intuition (*aparokshanubhuti*) and Yogic *nirvikalpaka samadhi.* The difference between the two lies in the fact that the discriminative knowledge (*viveka-khyati*) is the highest form of knowledge, according to the Samkhya and Yoga. The *samadhi* state, even in its *nirvikalpaka* form, is at least a withdrawal and a merging into the self. The universe remains as a real not-self which the self can withdraw from but cannot resolve into itself. This *laya-samadhi* (absorption) is distinct from the *badha-samadhi* (transcendence) of Vedanta. Again in Yoga-*samadhi,* the aloofness and withdrawal of the self from the not-self become the source of liberation (*kaivalya*), and, as such, *moksha* (liberation) and *viveka-jnana* (discrimination) become dependent upon the process, but the Vedantic *jnana* is eternal (*nitya*) and is not dependent upon any process or condition. The Vedantic *jnana* is not produced (*utpadya*) or generated, but it eternally *is.* Further, it can be said that intuition of Patanjali begins to appear at a certain stage of *samadhi,* while Vedantic intuition has no beginning at all. The Yoga-*samadhi* depends on a particular change that the

mune with the desired object (*istha*), the Brahman, or complete calmness. Our prime aim is to sublate the phenomenal knowledge by the Brahman-knowledge, so as to get into the core of the supreme Truth. So in any way, we will have to reduce the number of modifications (*vrittis*) of mind into its simplest form, which is known as consciousness. It has already been explained that modifications (*vrittis*) are the manifested or awakened state of the mental impressions (*samskaras*), and the impressions lie dormant in the core of the *antahkarana*. The psychologists say that the stored-up psychic impressions are known as the subconscious or unconscious mind. Hundreds and thousands of impressions of the past incarnations lie buried in the subconscious level in unmanifested form, and when they get favourable condition, some of them manifest themselves, and float on the surface of the conscious mind. In Vedanta, this subconscious mind is known as *avyakta*, or undifferentiated consciousness or *susupti*. It is the vast field or an unfathomed ocean. It contains the germs of different incarnations. I have explained it before, and I hope that you will remember it.

I have also explained that will-power is a form of modification (*vritti*) of mind. Mind is the reservoir of all energies. Mind, in truth, is inert, but it works when illumined and instigated by the consciousness which shines behind it. The consciousness is the *prajna*. This *prajna* or pure consciousness inspires mind, and mind acts. The *Katha-Upanishad* said : 'केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मन, केन प्राणः' * * etc., i.e., mind, vital breath, speeches, and eyes—all these are directed by the *Atman*-consciousness. The *Atman* is 'श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनोयत्' i.e. 'the *Atman* is the centre or source of hearing and thinking". But, yet mind cannot appreciate the super or sensible *Atman* : 'यन्मसा न मनुते' (*Kena* 1.5), because mind is inert (*jada*), and the *Atman* is the pure consciousness. So until and unless mind is transformed into pure consciousness through spiritual

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mind (*chitta*) undergoes, although this change consists of the relatively *aparokshanubhuti* is entirely unconditional (*svayamprakasha*). So *nirodha* and *ekagrata* which lead to *dhyana* of Yoga are not the same as *tadakarakarita* of the *vritti* in *nididhyasana* that leads to *aparokshanubhuti* in non-dualistic Vedanta (vide Dr. N. K. Brahma : *Philosophy of Hindu Sadhana*, pp. 164, 166).

practice, it cannot apprehend the *Atman*. We know that the vibrations of mind substance produces perceptions and sensations, and the vibrations of the finer particles of the ethereal substance are called in Sanskrit *sattva*, or the object which is shinning. So when mind shines after leaving all impurities of distructions and disturbances, it communes with the ever-shining *Atman*.

After death, all the impressions of mind goes with the *jivatman* or subtle body (*sukshma-deha*). The subtle body exists after death. At the time of death, the *Atman*, i.e., *jivatman* draws out all the subtle elements, along with the impressions, from the body of the living beings, and stays in the mental sphere. That state is known as the disembodied spirit (*preta-deha*). Then after some times being drived by the intense desire-to-born, the subtle body comes again to the gross phenomenal universe to enjoy and to work for emancipation from the bondage of the cycle of births and deaths. The *Kaushiki Upanishad* elaborately described this matter.

Now, what is death ? The *Gita* said that death is like the change of old garments and to put up new ones. Death only destroys the body, composed of subtle elements. All the atoms and molecules that compose the gross body, are changing all the time, but one thing that resides in the body, the *Atman*, the pure consciousness, never changes. Every seven years, you will see, the atoms and molecules of the body change, and so the condition of the body also changes, but you do not know the change. Now, this change is death. The glands and muscles of the body gradually grow old, and at last they die for taking a new form, and this taking a new form suggests new birth to the soul. The life-force or *prana*, i.e. *mukhya-prana*, as has been called by the *Kaushitaki* and *Birhadaranyaka Upanishads*, is, in truth, the *prajna* or consciousness 'ये वै प्राण,: सा, प्रज्ञाया प्रज्ञा, स प्राणः' (I.3.3). Again this life-force or *prana* is inseparable from shining intelligence. It is said that in time of death, the *mukhya-prana* draws out all the elemental objects from the body and those objects mix with the *prajna*. The *Kaushitaki Upanishad* (III.4), said : 'स यदा अस्मात् शरीरात उत्क्रामति * * यथा प्रज्ञायां सर्बाणि भूताणि एकीभबन्ति'। The *Gita* also said : 'यदा संहरते चायं कूर्मङ्गानीव सर्वशः' i.e. 'as the tortoise

draws out all limbs inside the body, so the *mukhya-prana* or *Atman* draws out all the subtle elements from the body. The source and cause of the subtle body (*sukshma-sharira*) are the causal body (*karanna-sharira*), where the causal nescience and pure consciousness co-exists. This state is known as *susupti* in the *Mundakhya* and other *Upanishads.* Vedanta said that in the deep sleep state (*susupti*) every living being communes with the supreme Brahman-consciousness. The Yogic superconscious state (*samadhi*) is almost similar to the state of deep sleep. The difference between the two lies in the fact that in the deep sleep state (*susupti*) you go down to your subconscious plane, where the mind or intelligence (*manas* or *buddhi*) is fully covered over by *tamas* quality. This quality is like a deep darkness. But this kind of darkness (ignorance) does not prevail in the superconscious state or *samadhi.* It exists in the deep sleep state (*susupti*). In deep sleep, the consciousness or intelligence, is fully covered by nescience (*avidya*), and distinguishing or discriminating faculty remains unmanifested or dull. The superconscious state is quite different, because, though consciousness or pure intelligence is overpowered by the causal nescience (*karana-ajnana*) or *maya,* yet self-efflulgent light of the pure consciousness reings supreme in the superconscious state, and so the power of discrimination and knowledge are not lost there. Therefore, if you enter once into the state of *samadhi,* then you will be changed into quite a new man, possessed of divine knowledge. And there lies the difference between the state of deep sleep (*susupti*) and the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*). Another difference is noticed between them that when a man of ignorance awakes from *susupti,* he remains as ignorant as before, no change is found in his experience or knowledge, but when he comes down (*vyuthana*) from the highest state of *samadhi,* he lives as an entirely changed or transformed man, and becomes a man of realization.

Another point will make you realize the difference that when a man goes to sleep and when the same man wakes up,

[1] According to strict logic of Vedanta, *vyuthana* is not admitted (in Advaita Vedanta), but Sankara and other non-dualist Vedantists used the word *vyuthana,* adopting the doctrine of Yoga, for the clarification of the immanent state of a Jivanmukta.

then there is seen no change between the waking state and the sleeping state. For instance, if one goes to sleep as an idiot, he comes out as an idiot when he wakes up, but when one goes to *samadhi,* he becomes a wise man, because in *samadhi,* he has communed with the Godconsciousness. Appaya Dikshit said about it in the *Siddhantalesha-samgraha* in some different way : 'बिभेदजनकोऽज्ञाने नाशमात्यन्तिकं गते। आत्मनो ब्रह्मनो भेदमसन्तं कः करिष्यति।' In the Glossary, Krishnananda-tirtha also raised a question : 'स्वापप्रलयादौ अज्ञानकार्यनाशेन तत्कारणाज्ञानस्यापि नाशोऽस्ति। परिणामपरिणामिनोरभेदात्। स चाज्ञाननाशो नात्यन्तिकः। पुनरुत्थानात्। मुक्तौ तु तत्त्वज्ञाने स्वरुपेणापि नाशोऽस्ति। स चात्यन्तिकः। पुनरुत्थानाभावादिति मत्वा अज्ञाननाशस्यात्यन्तकत्वं बिशेषणं दत्तम्।'

A man reaps fruit according to his action. Things which are predominant in the life-time and at the same time are not enjoyed, after death, desires of them become acute and predominant. In the *Upanishad,* it is mentioned that the dissatisfied souls live in different regions (*lokas*) for enjoying those unfulfilled objects of desires. But the spirit-world is like a mental sphere, so it is subtle, and no gross object is enjoyed there. Therefore, to fulfil desires, they will have to be born again in this phenomenal plane of enjoyment. In the spirit-world, the disembodied spirits enjoy everything through the medium of the mind. Sankara has described this state in a different way : 'प्राणान् गृहीत्वा जागरितस्थानेभ्य उपसंहृत्य स्वे शरीरे एव देहे—न बहि यथाकामं परिवर्तते—कामकर्माभ्यामुद्भासिताः पूर्वानुभूतबस्तुसदृशीर्वासना अनुभवतीत्यर्थः' The spiritualists divide the spirit-world into seven planes, and in those planes, the disembodied spirits enjoy or suffer, according to their imaginations.

The mental or psychic plane is known as the *pretaloka,* or the region of the departed spirits. The *Upanishad* mentioned about a nerve, *hita* or *puritat,* and when a man goes to sleep, he rests in that nerve. The *Kaushitaki Upanishad* (I.4.19) said : * * 'यैत्रतदभूद्यत एतदाग्यद्धिता नाम हृदयस्य नाड्यो हृदयात् पुरीततमभि प्रतन्वन्ति'। Similarly the *Brihadaranyaka* (II.1.19) said : 'अथ यदा सुषुप्तो भवति, यदान कस्यचन वेद हिता, नाम नाभ्यो द्वासप्ततिः सहस्त्राणि हृदयात् पुरीतति शेते**' The *Upanishad* said that 72,000 nerves have been spread towards the *puritat* or *hita nadi,* and the *jivatman* comes out from that *hita nadi* in the form of vital air (*prana*), and afterwards remain all over the body in the sleeping state. Sankara

and Anandagiri also explained this state. In sleep and also in death, the sun, moon, stars, and other planets do not exist with their physical body, but everything remains at that time in the form of impression (*samskara*). So the state of sleep or deep sleep can be compared with the state after death. I have already discussed before that nothing is totally lost in this universe. As for example, in death, only the physical forms are changed, and the *Atman*, the dweller of the forms or bodies, shines as it is, and the forms are only changed or transformed into their causal elements, i.e., into five elements. Maharashi Kapila said in the Saukhya, we remember: 'नाशः कारण लयः' (1.119), i.e. 'the effect goes back to its causal state'. Vedanta said that cause and effect are non-different. I have already explained in my lectures on *True Psychology* that cause and effect are like the waves. If we count the first wave, which is preceded by another wave (call this first wave as an effect), then the wave that preceded it, is the cause, and the wave that follows it, will be another effect. So this wave that I have already called an effect, will be the cause of the next wave. So that which is the cause of a future wave, will be the effect of the previous wave. In this way, you can understand that cause and effect are the same, only we are looking at it from the two different viewpoints. From the viewpoint of the previous cause, it is an effect, and from the viewpoint of a future effect, it is a cause (vide discussion on *consciousness*).

If you ask whether the soul decays or dies after death of the body, I will say, no, the soul does not die with the death of the body. In the *Kaushitaki Upanishad* (1.3) it has been said that while the soul after death of the body goes by the path of the gods (*devayana*), it passes through the regions (*lokas*) of Agni, Vayu, Varuna, Indra, Prajapati and Brahma "स एतं देवयानं पन्थानमासाद्याग्निलोकमागच्छति, स वायुलोकं, स वरुणलोकं, स आदित्यलोकं, स प्रजापतिलोकं, स ब्रह्मलोकम्।" And if the soul (*jivatman*) passes through the region of the fathers (*pitriloka*), he goes through the *chandraloka*, i.e. region of the moon. There is a *loka* like *Vaikuntha* or *aparajita* (vide *Kaushitaki* 4.8). The Vaishnavas described *Vaikuntha* as the supreme *loka* where there are no hunger, thirst, pain, suffering, etc., but there remains only eternal peace. The *Gita* (8.16) mentioned about the souls of the

performers of actions like sacrifices (*yajna*), who are known as the *karmamargis*. They go to the heavens as the result of their works, but come back again to this phenomenal world after expiration of merit : 'आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन' ; 'क्षीणे पुन्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति'। *The Prasna, Chhandogya,* and *Brihadaaranyaka Upanishads* (1.9 ; 5.10.'-6, 6.2.15) as well as the Rig Veda (16.19.1) and *Shankhyana-Brahmana* (3.1-7) have mentioned about the *lokas* after death, but those *lokas* are not permanent.

It should be remembered that different regions (*lokas*) are no other than different grades of progress of evolution of the soul, and they are not real from the Vedantic standpoint. They are rather different conceptions or conceptual representations. They have been mentioned in the scriptures, so as to direct men and women to the path of perfect freedom of the souls. And it is also a fact that the *lokas* presuppose the existence of theory of reincarnation or life after death.

The naive realists or materialists like the Charvakas or Lokayatas do not believe in the theory of reincarnation. I have elaborately discussed this theory of reincarnation in my book, *Reincarnation*. From different viewpoints and with different arguments I have discussed and proved that the soul exists after death, and it comes back again in this phenomenal universe to perform actions and also to go beyond all actions, so as to realize its own immortal essence. The soul is indestructible. It is the *Atman*, the pure eternal consciousness. Regarding the phenomenal world, the scientists say that it is not lost or destroyed after a cycle, but it remains in other form. To this I say that after the dissolution of the universe, the universe with its objects remain in thought-form in the cosmic mind, or the Divine Energy or *Prakriti*. Plato calls this thought-form an Idea, or eternal Type, the Christian theologians call it Logos or Word, and Indian grammarians call it Sphota, or the immortal Word or Sound. Patanjali, Bhatrihari, Mandana Mishra, and others call it the Sabda-Brahman. The impressions (*samaskaras*) of all the animate and inanimate objects exist as Ideas, or in seed forms (*vijas*), and in time of evolution those Ideas or thought-forms come out again in gross forms. Different sounds (words) and names of the causal forms of the beings

and object give rise to gross forms of them.

Let us remember that will or desire is the cause of distress or affliction, and desirelessness is the cause of happiness : 'जाशा हि परमं दुःखं, नैराश्यं परमं सुखम् ।' As for example, you desire to get something, but you do not get it, so disappointment comes, and you are afflicted, but if you do not expect anything from anyone, you will not be disappointed and pained. Again, things like good and evil do not exist in anything and anywhere. The ideas or feelings of good and evil are relative, as one depends on the other. As for example, you are the meat-eater in some place and there eating of meat is neither condemned, nor criticised, but in another place, where meat-eating is prohibited, if you take meat there, you will be criticised and be blamed. So the practice of meat-eating is relative ; it is praised in some place and is blamed in another place, whereas meat itself is not subject to good or evil. So the wise men keep balance between good and evil, and please and pain, and they consider them as mere vibrations of air, Sri Krishna said in the *Gita* (II.38),

सुखे दुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभ्यौ जयाजयौ ।
तत युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैब पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

'Then, treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and defeat, prepare for the battle, and thus wilt thou not incur sin'. Here arises the question of treating alike of liking and disliking. Generally men like pleasure and avoid pain, but the wise ones look upon pleasure and pain as the conditional or relative ones, because they know that the conditional or relative objects are unreal, so they aspire only for the permanent eternal object which is no other than the *Atman* or Brahman.

Now, I will tell you some facts which happened when I was in America. One day I found a face of a man floating before me in the air. The face was very gay, and was very much afflicted with pain and agony. The eyes of the man was eagerly fixed on me. I was very curious. I asked him, who are you ? What happened to you ? He told, 'I have committed suicide. Help me, help me'. I blessed him, and said, 'Well, if you believe that my blessing will help you, I am wholeheartedly blessing you, be in rest and peace'.

Then I found his face was glowed and was radiant with gratitude, and disappeared at once. This is my personal lustre. With smiling face he showed me an expression of experience, and I witnesed it, and it is not heard from anyone.

Similar incident occurred in another day in America. I met with another disembodied spirit, and that was the spirit of a sailor. He was drowned in the sea by the ship-wreck. I found one night in the darkness that someone was groping. I was astonished, and asked, 'Who are you'? The spirit answered, 'I am a sailor. I was drowned in the sea. Now I remember nothing. Help me'. I guessed that while drowning, he went senseless, so he forgot everything. I blessed him, and saw him gradually fading away in the air with luminous gaseous body. In a similar way, I saw Sri Ma (Sarada Devi), Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda), Balaram Babu, Yogin Swami (Swami Yogananda), Latu Maharaj (Swami Adbhutananda), Sister Nivedita and G.C. (Girish Chandra Ghose, the dramatist) just after the moment of their passing away.

Again I remember that one night when I was meditating, someone called me by name with a heavy voice, 'Kali, Kali'. The voice appeared to rise from the naval base. I looked around, but found no one. Then again I heard the same heavy voice, 'I am Latu, have come to see you'. The words were full of love and affection. I startled, and thought that surely Latu Bhai passed away. On the next morning I got the cable of Latu Maharaj's demise.

Perhaps you know that for one year I was elected as a President of the Psychical Society of New York. I used to sit sometimes in some seances. One day, I made contact with my spiritual brother Yogin (Swami Jogananda) through a medium, and got his hand-writings in a slate. In another seance, when I wanted to see Jogen materialized, he replied that he did not like it. But I was surprised to see the spirit of Balaram Basu of 57, Ramkanta Bose Street, Calcutta, fully materialized in the seance of Mrs. Moss at Lily Dale in the turban on his head, as he used to wear it while he was in his mortal body. But now it was illumined as it were with tiny electric bulbs all around the folds of his head-dress.

My eyes were dazzled to look at that brilliant figure with glowing beard and majestic appearance. He did not speak, but answered my questions by nodding his turbaned head. He put his right hand on my head and silently blessed me. After blessing me the whole materialized figure of Balaram Babu melted away in a mist-like white substance, and disappeared. I wondered why he did not speak to me, and afterwards on questioning to someone I came to know that he did not speak because he could not speak before he passed out of this earthly life. The statement corroborated with the fact that before he died he (Balaram Basu) had suffered from double pneumonia, and could not speak for over a week.

In another seance I heard again Jogen's (Swami Jogananda's) voice in Bengali when he spoke to me through a tin trumpet. He said to me : 'Do you like this country (America)?' to which I replied : 'Yes'. Then he said : 'I do not like this place, I am going to India to see our Holy Mother'. Jogen Swami served our Holy Mother, Sarada Devi for a long time, and Holy Mother also loved him very much.

I also saw in a seance G. C. (Girish Chandra Ghose) in a very wonderful manner. Girish Babu appeared before me in a materialized body. He came before me, and began to spit here and there, and did not speak any word. Then after a minute or two, he disappeared in the air like mist. At first I did not understand the significance of his spitting, but afterwards I realized that there is no worth of this phenomenal world to G. C., so he showed that attitude to me. Similarly, just after passing away, the enlightened spirit of Sister Nivedita also appeared before me in America.

Now, those who are interested in these topics of spiritualism, will be amazed, but these are the passing phases, and the permanent thing is the knowledge of the *Atman*. The spirit-world (*preta-loka*) is under the limit of time, space, and causation, so it is futile and unreal. You should not be attracted with these amazing incidents, but try hard to strike off the fetters of false knowledge (*ajnana*), and enter into the kingdom of supreme transcendental knowledge, which is only real and permanent, and all other things other than the *Atman* is unreal.

CHAPTER V

BHAGAVAD GITA

(1st March, 1924, Friday, 5-30 p.m.)

Now, it may be asked as to whether the universe and its animate and inanimate objects are changed into nothingness after dissolution (*pralaya*) or not. To this, Kapila said that destruction or death means transformation of effect into cause, and, therefore, destruction means the unmanifested state, and creation means manifestation. The theory of manifestation proves that nothing is destroyed, or is subject to death, but everything remains in unmanifested causal form after destruction. The *Gita* has incorporated this idea of the Sankhya, and said,

अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत ।
अव्यक्तानिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना ॥ २।२८

That is, 'beings have their beginning unseen, their middle seen, and their end unseen again. Why any lamentation regarding those state?' Just before in the II.27, the *Gita* further said : 'जातस्य हि ध्रुवो मृत्यु ध्रुवं जन्म मृतस्य च' i.e. 'to that which is born, death is indeed certain, and to that which is dead, birth is certain'. It is certain that birth is preceeded by death and *vice versa*. So it is an inevitable law, and no mortal can transcend this law. But this law is transcended by them who have realized this law together with the immortal knowledge of the *Atman*, the pure consciousness. This similar idea has been expressed by Vyasa in the *Mahabharata* (shantiparva 2.1') :

अदर्शनापतितः पुनश्चादर्शनं गतः ।
नासौ तव न तस्य त्वं वृथा का परिदेवना ॥

That is, 'he has come from non-perception (the unseen) and has gone back to non-perception (the unseen). He is not thine, nor thou his. What is the vain lamentation for?' The *Gita* has further said about this idea of change or transformation in the XV.3 verse, where it is explained : 'ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम्' and the *Katha Upanishad*

(16.1) in similar way said : 'ऊर्ध्वमूलः अबाक्शाख एषोदत्थः सनातन' The word अश्वत्थः in the *Gita* means अ+श्वः+स्थ=अश्वत्थ, which exists at present, but will not last in the next moment, and it (*samsara*) is changing and unreal'. Again, in the *Mahabharata* (*ashvamedaparva*), it has been said: 'ब्रह्मवृक्षः सनातनः' i.e. the tree is not the world or *samsara,* but is the Brahman, and is, therefore, eternal'. But Sankara said about this verse : 'न रुपमस्येह अथोपलभ्यते * *' (the *Gita* XV.3) as '* * तथा न एव उपलभ्यते स्वप्नमरिच्युदकमायागन्धर्वनगरसमत्वाद् दृष्टनष्टस्वरुपो हि स इति अतएव न जन्तो न पर्यन्तो निष्ट समाप्तिर वा विद्यते' i.e. 'its form as such is perceived by nobody here: for it is very much like a dream, a mirage, a *gandharva-nagara* (an imaginary city in the sky) produced by a juggler's art; indeed, it appears and disappears'. Now, one may suppose that the tree of *samsara* (world), constantly kept up as it is by attachment, etc., has no beginning and is liable to destruction on itself, and it is not even possible for one to cut it asunder. But this idea is not correct, because the tree of *samsara,* as described in the *Gita* and *Upanishad* and also in the *Mahabharata,* though it is not perceived through our sense-organs, yet is possible for everyone to cut it asunder by means of divine knowledge. It is quite true that worldliness or *samsara* is firm-rooted, so one should put forth a very strong effort to uproot it by resorting to renunciation (*vairagya*), habit (*abhyasa*), and discrimination (*viveka* or *vichara*) : 'अभ्यासेन तु कौन्तेय वैराग्येन च गृह्यते ।'

Now, from this verse (II.28) of the *Gita,* it is evident that nothing in this world, or in the nature (*prakriti*), is destructible, but destruction means transformation of effect into cause. The modern scientists also admit this theory. Creation or manifestation conotes the idea of energy (*sakti*). The energy or *sakti* means the latent concentrated force, and when this latent causal force is manifested in gross form, it is known as a manifested energy. Or it can be said that energy is cause, whereas force is effect. But these two phases, the unmanifested and the manifested, are non-different from the primordial divine Eenergy or *Maha-prakriti.* This divine Energy is called, in Tantra, Maha-Kali or Mahamaya. The unmanifested divine Energy is Siva, and the manifested divine Energy is Sakti or Kali. One is cause, whereas the other is effect, as vapour (produced from water)

is cause, and water (produced from vapour) is effect. Both are one and the same thing, and previously I have explained with the illustration of waves and water of the ocean that therefore, cause and effect are non-different : 'कार्यकारणयोरभिन्नः' i.e. in the present, there was existence in an unmanifested form, in the middle, there is also existence, and in the end, there will be existence. Past, present and future are no other than the stuff of Time (Kala or Mahakala), which is eternal and immortal *Sat*. Past, present, and future are the passing phases of the eternal Time which is the Mahakala-Siva, the immortal consciousness-existence-bliss. These three phases are like the currents of water of the same river, which are passing and, are, therefore, unreal like a flux; whereas the ground or bed of the water of the river is motionless and permanent, and is, therefore, real. Similarly (i) *avyakta,* (ii) *vyakta,* and (iii) *avyakta* appear as three different states, but there are only two states, *avyakta* and *vyakta,* or the unmanifested and the manifested. The unmanifested is the *Prakriti* or cause, and the manifested is the world-appearance or effect. But it should be remembered that *Prakriti* is the dynamic or active state of the all-consciousness static *Purusha* or Siva or Brahman, whereas the *Purusha* or Siva or Brahman is the static or actionless state. The Sankhya and Tantra somewhat make the *Prakriti* or Sakti different from the *Purusha* or Siva, but Advaita Vedanta from the transcendental viewpoint (*paramarthika-dristi*) said that the *Prakriti* or world-appearance being in and out saturated and covered by the Brahman, is non-different from the Brahman, though from the phenomenal viewpoint (*vyavaharika-dristi*) the *Prakriti* or *maya* appears as different, and this difference is apparent. The purpose of the *Gita* is to inform that 'something cannot come out of nothing', and so there is an eternal *Sat* or Existence, which appears both as the unmanifested (*avyakta*) and the manifested (*vyakta*), and that *Sat* or Existence is the immortal *Atman* which shines all the time, past, present, and future.

Advaita Vedanta said that everything other than the Brahman, is changing, and, therefore, is unreal. The category of change is unreality, because it moves or rolls all the time. But it can be asked as to how it moves or rolls ? Who makes

it move or roll? It is itself lifeless or energyless, then who supplies it life or energy? Vedanta said that it is the *Atman* or Brahman which gives it life or energy, so as to move or roll. So the category of change is like the nature, as described in the Sankhya. It has been explained before that in the Sankhya, the *Prakriti* is inert (*jada*) and inactive in itself, and it is full of life and action when it comes in contact with the all-intelligent *Purusha*. In fact, the *Purusha* supplies the *Prakriti* life or energy, i.e. activity or force.. Similarly the category of change moves with the force (intelligence and energy), supplied by the Brahman, the fountain-head of intelligence, consciousness, and energy, and from the standpoint of Advaita Vedanta, the Brahman is the base or ground as well as the cause of change, and, therefore, the Brahman is real, and change is unreal. Change is *maya*, and *maya* being the category of time, space, and causation, is unreal. Now, if the Brahman as pure and non-related consciousness be the cause (*karana*) and the ground (*adhisthana*) of *maya*, then how *maya*, being the effect, will be unreal and be reduced to nothing? To this Advaita Vedanta said that *maya* is unreal means it has no real existence of its own other than the Brahman. But *maya* is not said to be a nothingness or void, as it is something : 'यत् किञ्चिदिति वदन्ति'। It is an inexplicable and undefinable *something* which is neither existent, nor non-existent, nor both existent and non-existent, but is indescribable. It has an inexplicable magic power by which it shows the unreality as the reality (*'atasmin-tad-buddhih'*), and men are attached to that unreality. So it is not absolutely a non-

[1] Padmapada (of *Panchapadika*) and Prakashatmayati (of *Panchapadika-vivarana*) are of the opinion that in the pure Self (*shuddha Atman*) there is possibility of superimposition (*adhyam*) which is the creation of false *avidya*, the veil of the real unity of all existence that the pure Self in its self-luminous nature is, otherwise there would be no possibility of any *adhyam* upon such a Self for the reason that distinctions of the empirical processes would be absent ultimately which shines forth in its self-luminous character without any part being unrevealed. But *avidya* makes it possible that it has non-revelation (though false) in its pure light, and hence distinct empirical processes are falsely superimposed on it.....

Prakashatmayati said that that three-fold factor is necessary for superimposition (*adhyasa*) and that three-fold factor is : the substratum (*adhisthana*), defective auxiliary condition (*dosha*) and persistence of such an auxiliary condition (*samskara*). So, in the function of *adhyasa*, we find three things or conditions, *viz.*, the Self becomes under the

existent thing, but it deludes all the living beings for the time being, and when the Brahman-knowledge dawns upon men, it disappears, and 'it disappears' means it (this *ajnana*) is corrected by knowledge (*jnana*) or pure consciousness. As for example, when a man wrongly sees a rope as a snake, he trembles in fear, but when his wrong knowledge is removed, or is corrected by right knowledge of the rope, his trembling is gone. Similarly, we are deluded by the magic power of *maya* or *avidya*, and when by the power of discrimination that delusion is removed, then we see the things or objects as they really are.

I have also explained that the nescienceless pure Brahman (*nirupadhik shuddha-Brahman*) never attached with the category of adjunct (*upadhi*) or attribute (*guna*), but the Brahman which is associated with *maya* (*mayapahita* Brahman) becomes the cause and the ground, and these categories of adjunct and attribute are mistakenly imposed upon the pure Brahman, which transcends the limitation of *maya*, and is known as the transcendent Fourth Principle (*Chaturtham* or *Turiyam*). Now, in the verse (II.28) of the *Gita* : 'अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि' * *

influence of *avidya* the substratum (*adhisthana*), *avidya* which is the *karana-dosha*, and persistance (*samskara*) of it.

Padmapada also said that the pure Self is the substratum ('*tat svarupasya anubhava-avasanam*), that there is the external persistence of it whence it also follows that *adhyasa* is with regard to the previously cognised object (*purva-drishta*) that resembles a memory-image ('*anaditvaccha purvadrishtvam smritiruptvacha*').

Prakashatmayati further said that even the internal organ (*antahkarana*) may be the conscious seat of superimposition (*adhyasa*) by the reflection of the Self upon it, and hence the I-consciousness (*ahamskara*), though belonging to the category of the not-Self (*idam*), is said to be the seat of the conscious state in *adhyasa*. As for example, the red-hot iron-ball becomes the seat of the quality of fire (i.e., burning), but fire has this quality independently of the iron-ball, the iron-ball only partakes of the quality of fire, though it has not that quality by itself. But the conscious Self is always reflected on the internal organ (*antahkarana*) for I-consciousness or ego-consciousness, and wherever any imposition on the Self takes place, the I or ego-consciousness becomes the primary means for that; thus the I or ego-consciousness (*ahamskara*) becomes the seat of all conscious states in the act of superimposition (*adhyasa*) and does not appear as mixed with the quality of the not-Self (*idam*) but rather as the conscious basis of all *adhyasa* (vide *Vivarana*, pp. 303-303). Consult here Dr. B. K. Sengupta : *A critique on the Vivarana* School (1959), pp 128-29, 132-33.

In the commentary, *Tattvadipana*, Akhandananda made this discussion more clear.

i.e. the *avyakta,* or the unmanifested one, is the *avyakrita Hiranyagarbha-Isvara,* which is known in the epic-mythology (*Purana*) as Brahmā or Prajapati. Really Prajapati Brahmā possesses the active impulse (*iccha*) of manifestation of the world-appearance (*sristi*). *Isvara* or the Second Principle. is known as the *Avyakta* or *Prajna,* because He co-exists with the causal nescience (*karana-ajnana, maya*), in whose womb all the *samaskaras* of all sentient and insentient objects lie buried. They exist in the womb of the causal nescience, *maya,* in sleeping and latent form, so the impulse to will-to-create remains in *maya,* and that is manifested in the *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara,* the Third Principle. Therefore, the transcending Brahman, devoid of a tint of *maya,* cannot be called the cause and the ground of creation or evolution. The world-appearance is changing, and the Brahman is unchanging, but yet, Sankara said in the *Adhyasa-bhasya,* out of ignorance we superimpose the material body upon intelligence, the unreality upon the reality. or the changing world-appearance upon the unchanging transcending Brahman. This ignorance is *maya* which has an immense magical power of doing or undoing everything (*aghatana-ghatana-patiyasi maya*).

We know that change is the unreality, and we also know that change is the force or *sakti.* Force is always in movement, so it is active, and for the existence of force, we see or think or feel that everything of the phenomenal universe exist. We feel that the wind blows, and we also feel that we move or walk or speak, and we do all works in the world. We know that activities or movements of the physical or material things are the work of force or energy. The force or energy is unmanifested, and its activities or works are manifested. And from the evidence of gross activity, we also guess or infer subtle or causal energy. Similarly from the material universe, we infer a gigantic force which is God. The universe itself has no power to be manifested, but someone or something helps it to be manifested, and that someone or something is the Divine Energy or God. The railway engine runs with speed, but who helps the engine to move? We will say that steam, produced from the mixture of coal and fire, supplies the engine the force or energy, and the

engine moves. So it is evident that steam exists in coal in potential form, and when coal comes in contact with fire, steam is manifested in material form. Again heat transforms water into steam and that steam helps the railway engine and all the machines of the factory to move. The steam is energy, and as this energy works behind the matter, we wrongly say that matter has energy, life, and consciousness. But matter itself is dead, and it moves or works for the energy behind it. Again from the non-dualistic viewpoint, matter in the final analysis, is consciousness, and the world of *maya* is the all-consciousness Brahman.

Sankhya and Vedanta said that before creation i.e. manifestation, everything was in the causal form in the womb of the undifferentiated *Prakriti* (or *maya* or *avyakta*). The *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* said : 'तर्हि अव्याकृत मासीत्' * * i.e. there was no *sat* or *asat*, no light or darkness, no one or many, but there existed only the *Prana*. The *Katha-Upanishad* mentioned that everything phenomenal came into being from the vibration of the *Prana* : * * 'प्राण एजति निसृतम्'। Now, who is that *Prana*? The *Prana* is the manifested and non-differentiated *Avyakrita* or *Prakriti*, which can be known as the *Hiranyagarbha-Isvara*....Vibration is the will-to-manifest, and from the vibration everything *sat* and *asat*—existent and non-existent—spirit and matter—evolved. In this connection, it should be remembered that the *Upanishad Avyakrita* is the *Prakriti* of the Sankhya.[1]

Now, from the psychological viewpoint the unmanifested energy is known as the subconscious or unconscious mind, and mind which acts in the phenomenal or physical plane, is the conscious mind. The supreme consciousness shines above these two levels, the subconscious and the conscious. Hundreds and thousands of impressions (*samskaras*) of the past incarnations lie buried in the unfathomed bed of the subconscious or unconscious mind in causal form, and some of those impressions being intensified by the will of the living beings rise above the level of the conscious mind, and begin to play or act. As a seed of a banian tree looks very tiny before coming into a large tree with its branches, leaves,

[1] Many are of the opinion that *Avyakta* or *Avyakrita* of the *Upanishad* is different from the *Prakriti* and *Mahat* of the Sankhya.

and flowers, so the causal forms of the *samaskaras* may appear as insignificant at the outset, but when they come out and float on the surface of the upper level, they appear as great or vast. Infinite powers are concentrated within us, and are made to manifest in favourable conditions. The effort to manifest those infinite powers is known as *sadhana.* Therefore, effort is necessary for calling the unmanifested seeds (*samaskaras*) into action. Patanjali said : तत्र यत्नोऽभ्यासः i.e. 'repeated efforts are changed into a practice, and practice brings with it the result of an immediate awareness of the *Atman.* So you should think all the time,

(आमि) सामान्य तो नइ राजपुत्र हइ,
पितार धने मोर पूर्ण अधिकार ।

That is, 'I am not an ordinary man; but I am the prince, so I have a full right upon my 'paternal wealth'. Now, what is the real wealth? The knowledge of the *Atman* is our eternal inheritable wealth. We have lost it, because we think ourselves as limited and very little. But that is a wrong or false knowledge. We should rather think ourselves as the sons of Immortality (अमृतस्य पुत्राः) and should come out from the dark den of forgetfulness, which is delusion, then we shall be able to recollect our real entity and shall recognize ourselves as free from the fetters of false knowledge. The false or wrong knowledge (*bhrama*) is nescience (*ajnana*). Discrimination (*vichara-buddhi*) is necessary to remove the nescience. When the cloud that covers the sun, is removed, the self-shining sun is revealed. Similarly when nescience (*avidya*) is removed, the ever-effulgent Brahman-knowledge is revealed with its fullness of lustre. Then unearthly divine happiness and peace reign over the illuminated mind.

The scientists call the energy or force Sakti. Tantra calls it Kali, Adyasakti, or Mahamaya. Vedanta calls it *maya,* and Sankhya defines it as *Prakriti.* Sakti or Kali dances Her dynamic dance means she appears as manifestation or projection (*sristi*). Siva is like a corpse, being indeterminate and inactive. Kali, the divine Energy, is the embodiment of three qualities, *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* and so She appears as active with Her sportive play. Kali creates, preserves, and

destroys all beings and objects. When She performs these actions, She seems to be the cause, and Her actions are the effect. Sakti or Kali of Tantra is all-intelligence and all-consciousness, and I have discussed before that Kapila called Sakti or *Prakriti* inert, and she is dependent on the *Purusha.* Kapila said that the balancing state of the qualities *sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* is known as the *Prakriti,* but Tantra called this state as the balancing unity of oneness (*Advaita*) of Siva and Sakti, and in this state of unity, the dual phase of Siva and Sakti is transformed into unity or oneness (*samarasya*).

Some scholars are of the opinion that the all-intelligent *Purusha* of the Sankhya philosophy is similar to the all-consciousness Brahman of Vedanta. They sometimes maintain that the *Purusha* of the Sankhya was afterwards known as the Brahman of Vedanta. But these views are not correct. Because, the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta is one without the second, whereas the *Purusha* of Sankhya is not one, but are many. There are many liberated *Purushas* who shine in the sphere of the *Prakriti* (*Prakritilina-Purushas*). Sometimes we find that the *Atman* has been called as the *Purusha* in the *Upanishad,* such as we find that the *Katha-Upanishad* (I.3.11) said : 'अव्यक्तात् पुरुषः परः, पुरुषान्न परं किञ्चित् सा काष्ठा सा परागतिः' i.e. 'the *Purusha* is superior to *Avyakta* (*Prakriti*), and there is nothing greater than the *Purusha,* because the *Purusha* is the supreme attainable object, and is the ultimate one'. In the *Chhandogya* and *Brihadaranyaka Upanishads,* the *Atman* is named after the *Purusha.*

In Vedanta we find that the Brahman assumes the manifold forms due to *maya* : 'इन्द्रः मायाभिः वहुरुप ईयते' Indra is an epithet of the Brahman. The Sankhya said that the *Purusha* is changeless, and change or transformation happens only in the *Prakriti,* which is known as *vikriti,* like the waves of the ocean. Water takes the form of the waves in both *sadrisha-parinama* (similar transformation) and *visha-drisha-parinama* (dissimilar transformation). Besides, the Sankhya also mentioned about three kinds of other transformations (*vikritis*), which are the *parinamas, dharma, lakshana,* and *avastha* : 'एतेन धर्मलक्षणाबस्था परिणामा व्याख्याता'(vide the *Patanjaladarshana,, vibhutipada*), i.e. 'transformation or change happens in

three ways, characteristically, symbolically, and pertaining to state. The similar transformations are conceived from the internal activity of the *Prakriti* in time of deluge or dissolution (*maha-pralaya*), and dissimilar transformation (*vishadrisha-parinama*) happens when gold is changed into ornaments. The similar activity is evident during evolution from the *Prakriti.* whereas dissimilar transformation is perceived by the senses. The idea of transformation (*vikriti*) is also found in the *Gita* (XIII.20-21), when the *Gita* said :

प्रकृतिं पुरुषञ्चैव बिद्धनादी उभावपि ।
बिकारांश्च गुणाञ्चैव बिद्धि प्रकृतिसम्भवान् ॥
कार्यकारणकर्तृत्वे हेतु प्रकृतिरुच्यते ।

That is, 'both *Purusha* and *Prakriti* are beginningless and eternal. Intellect, body, and sense are the transformations. The attributes of pleasure, pain, and egoism evolve from the *Prakriti.* The body and ten senses, mind, intellect, and vital force (*deha, dasha-indriya, manas, buddhi,* and *prana*) are the effect and cause is the *Prakriti,* because these materials evolve from the *Prakriti'.* According to the Sankhya, these transformations (*vikritis*) are not unreal. But Advaita Vedanta differs from this view, because, according to Advaita Vedanta, all manifestations and transformations are unreal, because of their changing forms, and only the changeless and unique Brahman is real. Besides, Advaita Vedanta does not transcendentally admit any act of creation or evolution, and the idea of creation or evolution is merely an imagination or false imposition, because the idea of duality or multiplicity suggests unreality.

God has been called as Poet (Kavi) in the *Upanishad* and the *Gita*: (a) 'कबिर्मनीषी परम्भूः स्वयम्भूः' (vide *Isha,* 8) : (b) 'कबिं पुराणमनुशासितारम्' (vide *Gita,* VIII.9). The vast universe with the different kinds of beings, trees, leaves, flowers, fruits, and creepers are God's pieces of poetry. A painter first idealizes in his mind a design of something, and then projects the mental design in the material form. Similarly God thinks of the manifold world in his cosmic mind and then gives them the material form. As we find in the एकोऽहं बहु स्याम् i.e. 'I am alone, I shall be many'. The mental image of the manifold universe exists in God's cosmic mind,

and then He projects it outside. He designes the world means He projects the images of the manifold world outside from within. From this it is understood that projection of the universe is neither an accident, nor a foreign something, to God, the Creator, but the universe or manifoldness exists within Him, and then He projects it outside. Further we know that after projection He enters into the manifold universe : 'तत् सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत्' ; 'रुपं रुपं प्रतिरुपो बभूव'। 'Therefore, we come to know that the world-appearance and its objects are not absolutely different from God, or the Brahman. In truth, the universe is pervaded (वास्यम्—व्याप्तम्) by the Brahman. Advaita Vedanta said that this projection (*sristi*) is merely an *imagination* on the part of the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, and *maya* or causal nescience plays an important roll.

The *Yogavasista-Ramayana* said that mind is the director of everything, and mind really creates the universe. As for example, when an artist or a painter draws a picture, or paints an oil-painting, the mental image of the picture or painting pre-exists in his mind, and he projects, i.e. represents it outside on the paper or canvas. The ideal picture or painting remains in the form of image in the mind of the painter. Similarly, the whole universe exists as an idea in the mind of the Creator, and during the time of evolution, that idea is translated or transformed into the material form. The Cosmic Mind or God or *Avyakta* is the reservoir of all the sleeping ideas or types of all beings and objects, and in time of evolution they are projected outside in gross forms. The Cosmic Mind is the sum total of all the individual minds of the souls, so it is the vast field. The individual minds or souls are the miniature forms of the Cosmic Mind or Universal Soul. Like God we also create individual *samsara*, wife, husband, children, wealth, house, or palace, society, and state. But it should be remembered that we cannot in any way be called as God, the Creator, because we have no capacity or power to create the trees, flowers, creepers, sun, moon, stars, other planets, and the living souls. Moreover, God creates i.e. manifests everything, sentient and insentient, being the Lord of *maya* (*mayadhisha* or *mayavin*), but we, the individual souls, create everything which are limited, being

under the sway of the magic power of *maya*, and this is the difference between God, the Cosmic Mind and man, the individual mind.

I have already explained before that where there is demand, there is supply. God shines within everyone and everything as the *Antarayamin*. He controls and directs intellect or intelligence of every being. So He is known as the *Antarayamin*. The commentary of the *Vedantasara* mentioned : 'सर्वेषां जीवानां अन्तहृदयेस्थित्वा बुद्धिनियामकत्वेन अन्तर्य्यामी उच्यते'। As He imparts the fruits of actions of all living beings, so He is known as *Isvara* : 'सर्वेषां (ईशितृत्वेन) कर्मानुरुपफलदतृत्वेन ईश्वर इति उच्यते'। As He is the witness of all beings and object of the universe, He is known as *Sarvajna* : 'सर्वस्य चराचरात्मक प्रपञ्चस्य साक्षित्वेन सर्वज्ञः इति उच्यते'। Further, as He directs the individuals, He is known as *Niyanta* : 'सर्वेषाम् जीवानांप्रेरकत्वेन निवन्ता इति उच्यते'। Again, as He is not known by any valid knowledge or *pramana*, so He is *Avyaktam* : 'प्रमाणागोचरत्बात् अव्यक्तम् इति उच्यते' and as He is the ground of superimposition, He is called the World-Cause : 'सर्वस्य चराचरात्यक प्रपञ्चस्य विवर्ताधिष्ठानत्वेन जगत्कारणं इति व्यपदिष्यते इत्यर्थः'। (vide the *Subodhini-tika* by Nrisimha Sarasvati). But we are generally confounded with the act of God, because God is known as an impartial Witness, who neither does justice, nor does injustice, and no agency of action can really be ascribed to Him, but yet we ignorantly say that God creates good and evil, and He does justice to one and does injustice to other. But, in truth, God is the Witness of all actions, and men and women enjoy good or evil, or enjoy or suffer according to the consequence of their good or evil acts, they perform. It is true that God or *Isvara* co-exists with the causal and universal nescience, but it does not mean that the causal nescience or *maya* compels Him to do all kinds of actions, good or evil. God is above *maya*, and actions which are done, are directed or instigated by *maya*, and *maya*, in reality, compels all the living beings to do actions, good or evil, and, according to the results of those actions, the individual beings enjoy or suffer.

Again the *Atman* or Brahman commonly appears as different form *Isvara* from the phenomenal viewpoint, but they appear non-different from the transcendental viewpoint.

The *Atman* or Brahman transcends all senses, intellect and sense-intuition, so it is not appreciated by them, and for this reason the *Atman* or Brahman seems to ordinary men and women as a wonder, or as something strange. The *Gita* (II.29) said,

आश्चर्यवत् पश्यति कश्चिदेन-
माश्चर्यवद् वदति तथैव चान्यः ।
आश्चर्यवच्चैनमन्यः शृणोति
श्रुत्वाप्येनं वेदन चैव कश्चित् ॥

That is, 'one sees Him as a wonder, and so also another speaks of Him as a wonder, and as a wonder another hears of Him, and though hearing, none understands Him at all'. As the *Gita* is the extract of all *Upanishads* : 'सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपासनन्दनः' so some of the verses of the *Upanishads* have been incorporated in the *Gita,* as we find the similar verses in the *Katha Upanishad* (I.2.7) :

श्रवणायापि वहुभिर्यो न लभ्यः
शृण्वन्तोऽपि बहवो यं न विद्युः ।
आश्चर्यो वक्ता कुशलोऽस्यलब्धा-
श्चर्यो ज्ञाता कुशलानुशिष्टः ॥

Sankara explained both the verses in different ways, and concluded that *Atmatattva,* or the secret of Self-knowledge, is very difficult to attain, and so this *tattva* and the possesser of *Atmatattva* both seem to the ordinary men and women as wonder. The scriptures have described the *Atman,* both as determinate and with form (*saguna* and *sakara*) and indeterminate and formless (*nirguna* and *nirakara*). The *Atman* has been called as both immanent and transcendent—very subtle and very gross. He moves, and does not move ; He is far off, and is very near ; He is inside, and outside, and so the *Atman* appears as a wonder : 'तदेजति तन्नैजति, तद्दूरे तद्वन्तिके, तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य, तदु सर्वस्यास्त बाह्यतः ।' (vide *Isha-Upanishad* 5). So there are contradictions in definitions and also in descriptions. But Vedanta said that the *Atman* or Brahman brings all contradictions into unity, so we should not be confounded. The *Isha-Upanishad* (4), further said : 'अनेजदेकं मानसो जवीयो' etc., i.e.

the *Atman* is unmoving one, and is faster than the mind. Further the *Upanishad* (8) said : 'स पर्यगाच्छुक्रमकायमव्रणमस्नविरं, शुद्धमपापविद्धम्' i.e. 'It is all-pervasive, pure, bloodless, without wound, without sineus, taintless, untouched by sin, omniscient, ruler of mind, transcendent, and self-existent', etc.

So the *Atman* seems to be a strange thing which meets all contradictions, and at the same time it brings all contradictions into a harmonious whole. The enlightened preceptors and also the Shastras help the seekers of the Self to appreciate and realize it, but most of the seekers are not competent enough to follow the directions and instructions of them, they are rather confounded. So the ardent seekers of truth should surrender to their teachers, or to the teachings of the Scriptures, so as to get right knowledge of the wonderful *Atman.*

For the seekers after knowledge and also for the deluded and distressed ones, Incarnations (*Avataras*) come from time to time for rescue and to show the right path for the intuitive appreciation of the *Atman*, but most of them cannot realize those Incarnations. Ramchandra, Krishna, Buddha, Christ, Sankara, Chaitanya, and Ramakrishna came to rescue men and women from the deluge of delusion, but only a few appreciated them in their life-times. It is said that only four Rishis recognized Sri Ramachandra as an Incarnation of *Isvara.* Sri Krishna appeared, but only Sri Radhika, the Gopis of the inner circle, Bidura, Yudhisthira, Arjuna, and some others recognized him as an Incarnation. Arjuna knew him as his friend and guide, but afterwards he came to know Sri Krishna's greatness and divinity, and he said,

सखेति मत्वा प्रसभं यदुक्तं
हे कृष्ण हे यादव हे सखेति,
अजानता महिमानं तवेदम् * *।

Arjuna took Sri Krishna as a man, but after the dawn of his divine vision he said : 'तत्क्षामये' * * i.e. 'forgive me for my non-knowledge', and 'प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास' i.e. 'be kind and compassionate—O God of gods and the refuge of the universe'.

Such also happened when Buddha, Sankara, and Chaitanya appeared as Incarnations. It is said that only Advaitacharya realized Chaitanya as an Incarnation of God. In this iron age, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna appeared in the remote corner of Bengal, but how many people came to know about his greatness and divinity! I remember in this connection a song of Dasarathi Ray,

ओरे कुशी-लव करिस कि गौरव
(आमि) धरा ना दिले कि पारिस धरिते।

That is, 'O Kushi-Lava, do not show vanity; if I do not manifest myself as the Divinity to any one, how it is possible for him to appreciate me'. The *Katha Upanishad* (I.2.23) said,

'नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न मेधया न वहुना श्रुतेन।
समेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्-
स्तस्यैष आत्मा विणणुते तणु स्वाम्॥'

That is, 'this *Atman* cannot be known through much study, or through the intellect, nor through much hearing. It can be known through the *Atman* alone. That the aspirant prays to; this *Atman* of that seeker reveals its true nature'. Some say that through the grace of the *Atman*, the *Atman* is realized. However, the self-revealing *Atman* can be known when the *maya* or nescience is removed, and this *maya* is removed by the power of discrimination, and the Self is revealed itself. Efforts and spiritual practices are necessary for the removal of the veil of ignorance or nescience, and if you say that this removal of ignorance happens due to the grace of the Lord, I have no objection. The idea of grace is not accepted in Vedanta. This grace is universal. Anyone, even the greatest sinner, who lives and acts in this way, will receive His grace. Grace is that state of relaxation, which comes under certain conditions. It is described as grace, because all our powers proceed from the Lord, or the infinite enobling anything that brings right knowledge to the soul, comes from that all-powerful infinite source, and that can be said to be grace. Sri Krishna also said in the *Gita* (18.58) : मच्चित्तः सर्वदुर्गाणि मत्प्रसादात् तरिष्यसि' i.e. 'My *prasada* or grace makes them free'. In Bhakti Yoga, if a devotee dedicates

his life to God, God, out of grace, rescues the devotee. Dedication of fruits of action to God as well as unconditional dedication of life to God—both are true act of renunciation (*tyaga* or *sannyasa*), and through this renunciation, the mind is concentrated and purified, and the devotee realizes the immortal Self.

The great souls as well as the *Avataras* are not easily appreciated by common people, because the great souls and the *Avataras* (Divine Incarnations) appear on earth like ordinary men, so common men take them as ordinary persons. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell a story of realizing the *Avataras*. He said that a great Yogi was left by the side of a road and he remained absorbed in the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*). In the last quarter of night, some thieves were passing by that road, and found that the Yogi as if is lying swooned. They were thieves, so according to their *samaskaras*, they took the great Yogi as a thief. They thought that certainly the man was tired being engaged all the night in the act of stealing, so he was taking rest, and was sleeping. 'They, therefore, left the Yogi'. Then drunkard was passing by that road, and saw the Yogi, and took him to be a great drunkard. He said, 'Yes, my friend, I have not taken so much alcohol like you, so I am not unbalanced. The drunkard laughed at the Yogi, and went away. 'Then, afterwards an enlightened soul was passing by that road, and saw the Yogi, fallen in superconscious state. As he saw the Yogi, he came to realize him, and began to nurse him, and took him to his Ashrama.

Like attracts like. So if you wish to really know a great soul (*sadhu*), you will have to be a great soul, otherwise you will not be able to do proper justice. The greatness and divine play of God are not appreciated by anyone other than a devotee (Bhakta), and others only consider them as a wonder. In the field of love and spirituality, complete resignation to God is necessary, and selfish and ego-centric idea must be absolutely negated, nay, be transformed into pure consciousness. Now, you can ask me as to what is egoism? Egoism centres round the ideas of 'I' 'me', 'thee', 'and 'thine'. Habit is conquered by counter-habit. If you are immuned with, or addicted to, a habit, just create a

counter-habit, and, by that opposite or counter-habit, subdue or correct, the previous habit. Habit is the second nature, so it is very difficult to overcome it, or to surpass it. But you have in you that power of controlling, you have to exert only that power. Create a good nature, and that good nature will help you to control, or surpass, the bad habit in which you are deepened.

Sri Ramakrishna said about two 'I's (egos), one is raw and unripened 'ego' (*kancha-ami*), and the other is ripe-ego (*pakka-ami*). The raw unripened or *kancha-ami* is ignorance or nescience, because it creates bondage with the idea of short-sightedness or narrowness, whereas the ripe or *pakka-ami* is knowledge that dispels the darkness of igoistic idea, and thus embroadens the mind. So Sri Ramakrishna used to say : 'मुक्त हवे कबे, 'आमि' याबे यबे' * * i.e. 'when shall we be free ? We shall be free from all bondage when the igosy will vanish'. This ego-centric idea is the cause of all troubles and sufferings. So, if you yourself cannot kill or remove the sense of 'I', take refuge in God. Ramaprasad sang : 'एका यदि ना पारिस मन, राम प्रसादके सङ्ग नेना' i.e. 'if you are unable alone to remove igoity or sense of 'I', then take the help of Ramaprasad'. Ramaprasad was purified or sanctified with the burning fire of divine knowledge, so it was possible for him to help everyone in the field of spiritual enlightenment. God is merciful, but who cares for asking His divine mercy! So you will have to demand, but who will supply you. You will have to sincerely knock at the door of Divine love or knowledge then help in the form of Divine flash will come. Pray to God without seeking any selfish motive, and it is sure that the Divine help will reach you. God grants prayer, if you pray with sincere heart. Sri Ramakrishna said : 'कृपा-बातास वइछे, पाल तुले दाओ' * * i.e. 'the wind of grace is always blowing, so raise the mast of your boat of life'. You yourself will have to raise the mast, and for that you do not depend on others. You require only perseverance, self-effort, and seif-resignation. It is not the duty on the part of God to take you to the heaven (*svarga*), but you will have to give up all the idleness, and to struggle for freedom. Do not be a hypocrite, but be open-hearted and frank. It requires full resignation of your individual will to the Will

of God, and let yourself be the playground of the Almighty. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to say 'नाहं नाहं तुंहु तुंहु' i.e. 'not 'I' but 'you'. These words connote the idea of self-resignation as well as that of transformation of little selfish 'I' into greater 'I'. A devotee should replace his egohood by Godhood, and should also replace the idea of world of nescience by the divine knowledge of God. Girish Chandra Ghose submitted his full resignation (*vakalma*) unto Sri Ramakrishna, and Sri Ramakrishna took the whole responsibility of him. This is the attitude of a Bhakta, but attitude and dealings of a Jnani is quite different.

The sense of the material body is nescience or *ajnana*, and knowledge or *jnana* means to forget the sense of the body. Acharya Sankara calls it superimposition (*adhyasa*). While defining *adhyasa* (superimposition), Acharya Sankar said : 'अतस्मिंस्तद्बुद्धिः' i.e. 'taking unreality as reality'. *Adhyasa* is a wrong or false knowledge (*mithya pratyaya*). We wrongly take mater as spirit—body as the Self, and mistakenly impose all the attributes and activities of the body, senses, mind, and intellect upon the attributeless and actionless *Atman*. This is superimposition which misleads or deludes us. *Adhyasa* is natural or *naisargika*. Sankara said regarding *adhyasa* : 'अध्यासः नाम अतस्मिंस्तद्बुद्धिः इति अवोचाम । तत् यथा—पुत्रभार्यादित् विकलेषु सफलेषु बा अहं एव विफलः सकलः वा इति बाह्यधर्मान् आत्मनि अध्यस्यति । तथा देहधर्मान् * * । तथा इन्द्रियधर्मान् * * । एवं अहंप्रत्यायनम् अशेषस्वप्रचारसाक्षिणि प्रत्यागात्मनि अध्यस्य तं च प्रत्यगात्मनं सर्वसाक्षिणं तद्विपर्ययेण अन्तःकरणादिषु अध्यस्यति । एवं अयम् अनादिः जनन्तः नैसर्गिकः अध्यासः मिथ्याप्रत्ययारूपः कर्तत्वभोक्तृत्वप्रवर्तकः सर्वलोकप्रत्यक्षः । अस्य अनर्थहेतोः प्रहाणाय अत्मैकत्वविद्या प्रतिपत्तये सर्वे वेदान्ताः आरभन्ते ।'

Adhyasa is natural (*naisargika*) because the common people considers gross matter (*jada*) as intelligence (*chaitanya*), or intelligence as matter (*tadatmadhyasa*). The author of the *Ratnaprabha* said :

तत्र अज्ञाने केवलात्मनः संसर्गः, मनसि अज्ञानोपहितस्य, देहादौ मन उपहितस्य इति विशेषः । * * अध्यासात् संस्कारः ततः अध्यासः इति प्रवाहितो नैसर्गिकत्वम् ।'

That is the pure *Atman* is superimposed on nescience and that superimposition is a kind of contact (*samsarga*). Now,

how does this superimposition (*adhyasa*) happen? To this it can be said that before the creeping of the idea of superimpositions there arises an impression (*samaskara*), and then that impression simultaneously gives rise to superimposition, so this practice is natural. This *adhyasa* is false-knowledge which is harmful (*anartha*), and to remove this harm and also to determine the unity of the *Atman* is the effort of Vedanta, and there is the utility of Vedanta or *Jnana-vichara*.

The body is the not-soul (*anatman*), and selfishness is nescience. So the *Upanishad* said that discrimination (*viveka* or *vichara*) is required. Now, what is *viveka*? *Viveka* means to discriminate the unchangeable immortal *Atman* from the changeable mortal body. The *Katha Upanishad* (203.17) said,

अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरूषोऽन्तरात्मा सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः ।
तत् स्वाच्छरीरात् प्रवृहेण्मुञ्जादिवेषीकां धैर्येण ।
तत् विद्याच्छुक्रममृतं तत् विद्याच्छुक्रममृतमिति ॥

That is, the inner Essence, the *Atman*, shines always in the heart of everyone in the size of thumb. One should unerringly separate the *Atman* from one's body like a stalk from the *munja* grass. One should know it as pure and immortal. When discrimination dawns, renunciation or desirelessness appears, and then everything other than the *Atman* or Brahman appears as tasteless, i.e. useless and futile. The realization of the *Atman* means the knowledge of the *Atman* (*Atmajnana*). The knowledge of the *Atman* removes ignorance, and makes our mundane life blissful.

CHAPTER VI

BHAGAVAD GITA

(14th December, 1924, Sunday, at 5-30 p.m.)

Arjuna said to Sri Krishna,

अथ केन प्रयुक्तोऽयं पापं चरति पुरूषः ।
अनिच्छन्नपि वार्ष्णेय बलादिव नियोजितः ॥३।३६

That is, 'but by what dragged on, Varshneya, does a man, though reluctant, commit sin, as if constrained by force? Before this verse, Sri Krishna replied : "Even the man of knowledge acts in conformity with his own nature * *').33) ; 'Love and hate lie towards the object of each sense * *' (3.34) ; 'Better one's own duty, though devoid of merit (*dharma*), that the duty of another well-discharged * *' (3.35). Then Arjuna asked Sri Krishna that though a man is willing to perform a work which is right and good, yet he cannot do it being dragged by some power, and this state is undoubtedly lamentable. To this Sri Krishna replied,

काम एष क्रोध एष रजोगुणसमुद्भवः ।
महाशनो महापाप्मा विद्धेनमिह वैरिणम् ॥३।३७

That is, 'it is desire or passion, born of the energy of *rajas*, all-devouring, all-sinful ; that, know thou, is the enemy or foe here'. Desire or passion is considered as the enemy, because it binds men in the den of delusion. Evil also originates from desire, because obstructed by some cause, desire is transformed into wrath. Therefore, wrath can be considered as desire, i.e. obstructed desire. Wrath and desire are born of the energy of *rajas*, or desire itself is the cause of the energy of *rajas*, because, when desire arises, it rouses the quality, *rajas*, and urges the people to action.

Now, it can be asked as to which is enemy. Desire is considered as an enemy, because it produces bondage of pain and distress. Besides, discrimination (*viveka*) or right knowledge (*yatharta-jnana*) can be known as enemy, for, it is inimical to false-knowledge, (*mithya-jnana*), or illusory knowledge (*bhrama-jnana*), which is the origin or source of attach-

ment and pain. Similarly, light is enemy to darkness, because light dispels darkness. However, here, in this verse III.37, desire (*kama* or *kamana*) has been called an enemy. Desire of any kind cannot be mitigated by enjoying, because desire of fire cannot be extinguished by offering butter on it, rather it burns more and more. So Sri Ramakrishna said that desires of trifling matters can be enjoyed, but desires for wealth, and worldly sense pleasures must be checked by *viveka* and *vichara*. He said that those desires of wealth, etc., should be wiped away. Desire to eat sweetmeats, or desire for going to the holy places, can be satisfied, but other desires must be checked by converting the causes of these desires. He further said : 'मोड़ फिरिये दे' * * i.e. 'convert them with the help of discriminative power'. Do not make any experiment of playing with the poisonous snakes, because they can bite you in any moment. Marriage is good for the peaceful family life, but marriage creates binding for them who desire to devote their lives in sacred spiritual *sadhana*. Marriage creates worldliness (*samsara*) which binds men head to foot like an octopas. But by this I do not mean that all men will flock to the forest, or to the monastry, because that practice will destroy the household life, which is also a *dharma*. In the *Manusmriti* and other law books, you will find that there are various duties for the householders; as for example, they have duty to their near and dear ones, to the countrymen, to the society, and to the distressed, and also to religion and spirituality. These duties are considered as debts on their part. But most of them do not perform those duties, rather they consciously or unconsciously neglect their duties which are the debts. But this habit cannot be appreciated. Besides, those who wish to lead a spiritual life, or who desire to dedicate their life for the cause of the multitude, should be given opportunity, and they should not at all be discouraged. But those who wish to perform household as well as religious and spiritual duties from home, are fortunate. Nag Mahasaya did set a bright example of it. In the Epic literature, we find that King Janaka was a competent and ideal Ruler, for he used to perform both the duties—household and spiritual, living in his kingdom. Janaka was a self-realized man, and was so great and

wise that even the Rishis and Brahmins went to him for taking spiritual instructions. Such an example is very rare. Nowadays this example will rather be ridiculed, because we are living at present in the iron age, when materialism predominates, and agnosticism prevails.

To lead a proper religious or spiritual life is very difficult. There are hundreds and thousands of desires in the mind of ordinary men, and they are very busy to satisfy them. If you ask them to pray to, or meditate upon, God, they will laugh at, and will say that they have no time. They have ample time to make gossip, to go to see the theatrical or other performances, to play the dices or cards, but they have no time to go to the temple and to attend any religious prayer or religious class. In this respect, the Christians and the Mohammedans are better, because they never fail to go to the churches, or to the mosques. You will see that a Mohammedan never neglects his prayer and his *namaz*, even while running by trains or cars. But most of the Hindus, who are boast of their ancient traditions of culture, religion, and spirituality, do not care to observe life with the ideal of their glorious forefathers. So Ramaprasad sang : 'ए छेलेर हाते मोया नव ये, भोगा दिये केड़े खावि' i.e. 'this (i.e. religion or spirituality, or the knowledge of the *Atman*) is not a sweetmeat in the hand of an innocent baby that you will tactfully snatch it away from him'. The knowledge of the *Atman* or Brahman, which was called by Sri Ramaprasad 'the grace of the Brahmamayee (*Kali*—'ब्रह्ममयीर कृपा' requires sincere and painstaking practice, and when your desires will be quitened, or be transformed into divine consciousness, then you will come in contact with God, or the Absolute. So the attainment of God or the Absolute is not an easy thing. It is said: 'क्षुरस्य धारा निशित दुरत्यया, दुर्गम् पथस्तत् कवयोः वदन्ति' (*Katha Upanisad*, I.3.14), i.e. 'the wise ones describe that path (method of attainment of the Brahman-knowledge) to be inaccessible as a razor's edge, which when sharpened, is difficult to tread on', but that knowledge is attained by the seers of subtle things, and it is seen through a pointed or concentrated and fine intellect : 'दृश्यते त्वग्रया बुद्धा सूक्ष्मदर्शिभिः' (*Katha*, I.3.12).

Isvara, the Ruler of the vast universe, does want your mind only. He does not expect any money or wealth from

you, because Kuvera is the keeper of His immense treasure; Lakshmi serves Him as His maid-servant, so He does not want any wealth from anyone. Bhagavan (*Isvara*) will be glad if you can dedicate your mind to Him. Mind is the storehouse of all desires and passions, so if you can dedicate your mind to the Lord, then you will offer Him everything. If you can reduce your mind to its simplest form, then your mind will shine in its own glory. So, any kind of desire that will rise or float in your mind, think that it is meant for God, for service, or for the good of the humanity, then you will see that desire will not be able to bind you. But, for doing this, you require proper discrimination. If you wish to dedicate your mind in the holy feet of God, then you need also the power of discrimination. Now and then, put questions to the mind what does it want. Does it want wealth, or name and fame, or beautiful wife, or any kingdom? If you know that it wants money, then tell it that by earning and hoarding money, will you be able to conquer death, or will you be able to go beyond decay or destruction of the body? No, you will not be able to do so, because you are a non-intelligent matter, and a lifeless matter has no power to stop decay and death of the body. In this way, you will think and discriminate all the time, then you will find that your mind will not want anything which is futile and impermanent. Because mind, in its essence, is not a non-intelligent matter but it is the *chit* or *chaitanya*, the pure consciousness. Mind is known as such because of its positive and negative (*samkalpa* and *vikalpa*) actions. These are the modifications (*vrittis*) of mind, and when these positive and negative actions or activities of mind are quitened, then mind loses its modifications and is calm, then it shines as pure consciousnes. Discrimination (*viveka* or *vichara*) is also a faculty of mind. Discrimination is the act of intellect (*buddhi*). In fact, the internal organ (*antahkarana*) is divided into four categories, *manas, buddhi, chitta,* and *ahamkara. Manas* or mind thinks either in positive way, or in negative way, *buddhi* or intellect determines everything; *chitta* or reflective thought holds the images or reflections of thoughts and actions, and *ahamkara,* the sense of 'I' thinks it as an agent. In manifestation, they appear as different, but, in essence, all these categories are

one and the same. Sadhaka Ramaprasad said in joy : 'ज्ञानेर प्रदीप ज्वेले ब्रह्ममयीर मुख देख ना' i.e. 'burning the lamp of knowledge (in the heart), see the face of the Brahmamayee. Kali'. So *jnana-vichara,* or faculty of discrimination is required, and then any kind of desire will not be able to bind you in its net. Then the desires will admit their own defeat. If you want to see the all-blissful face of the Brahmamayee, you will have to kindle the glowing lamp of knowledge and discrimination.

Desire (*kama* or *kamana*) has been called '*mahashanah*', i.e. that which cannot be mitigated. Mind remains always dissatisfied, and you will not be able to satisfy it, as by pouring butter, you cannot extinguish the flames of fire. So the *Shastrakaras* said,

न जातु कामः कामनां उपभोगेन शाम्यति ।
हविषा कृष्णवर्त्मेव भूय एवाभिवर्धते ॥

That is, 'you cannot calm down desire (*kama*) by desire (*kama*), but you need to go beyond desire. You require renunciation (*tyaga* or *sannyasa*). If you wish to extinguish fire, just pour water instead of butter. So renunciation or desirelessness is required to mitigate, or to go beyond, desire. The *Narayana-Upanishad* (12.3) said : 'न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन, त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः' i.e. 'nectar (*amrita*) *or immortality,* or Divine self-knowledge is attained not by action, not by begetting children, or not by hoarding wealth, but by renunciation'. Now, what do you mean by renunciation ? Renunciation means desirelessness. Sri Ramaprasad said : 'वासनाते दओ आगुण ज्वेले, क्षार हबे ताय परिपाटि' i.e. 'set up fire in the bulk of the plantain tree, and you will get from it ashes, which will help you to wash your clothes'. In other sense, its meaning is 'burn the desires by the fire of discrimination and then that purified desire will help you to attain to God-consciousness'. As soon as you will set up fire on desires, you will be desireless (*niskama*). But by this, you do not wrongly think that you will not possess any desire. Desire (aspiration) for freedom from the bondage of senses and worldliness (*samsara*) is deserving, and this kind of desire does not bring bondage. Desire for doing good to other, or desire for attaining to God, cannot be classed as a desire,

because this kind of desire illumines the dark chamber of the heart, and helps a man to reach the temple of God. Sri Ramakrishna used to say : 'हिंचे शाकेर मध्ये नय, मिछेरी मिष्टिर मध्ये नय (केनना तारा सर्दिकाशि नष्ट करे)' i..e. 'the *himcha* is not considered to be a vegetable, nor the sugar-candy is considered to be a sweet (because they destroy cold and cough)'. The desire for one's own emancipation and also for the well-being of the multitude ('आत्मनो मोक्षार्थं जगद्धिताय च') is not harmful. Those desires have no binding capacity, rather they help to elevate the mind and also to purify the hearts of men. But the desires which are means to pain, suffering, and entanglement in the cycle of births and deaths, should be given up by the help of discrimination. Desires are not checked so easily, rather if they are given indulgences, they flare up : २ य एवाभिवर्धते' So Sri Krishna said in the *Gita* (II.62-63),

ध्यायतो विषयान् पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषपजायते ।
सङ्गात् सञ्जायते कामः कामात् क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
क्रोधाद् भवति साम्मोहः सम्मोहात् स्मृतिबिभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद् बुद्धिनाशो बुद्धिनाशात् प्रणश्यति ॥

That is, 'when a man thinks of objects, attachment for them arises. From attachment arises desire; from desire arises wrath (II.62). From wrath arises delusion; from delusion, failure of memory ; from failure of memory, loss of conscience, from loss of conscience he is utterly ruined'. Sankara said in the commentary that from wrath arises delusion and a lack of discrimination between right and wrong. Verily, when a wrathful man gets infatuated, he is led to insult even the superiors, or the spiritual master (*Guru*), * *'. The man is considered to be a living man only so long as his internal organ (*astahkarma*) or *buddhi* is competent to discriminate between right and wrong, and when this faculty becomes dull or inactive, the man is utterly ruined. Then living in this world of duty, he is considered as dead.

Wrath is a great enemy to men. When wrath arises, the whole body begins to tremble, and he loses his power of discrimination. A physician, in America, analysed the state of a wrathful man and said that a dangerous poison is created from wrath, and a drop of that poison when mixed with food. can kill at least twenty men. Though that poison cannot kill

a man who is involved in wrath, yet his whole system of the body trembles, and he feels weakness. Wrath is not in any way a friend, but is a foe. So this wrath should be checked or controlled. The easy process of controlling it is to control mind, because a controlled mind is tranquil and peaceful, and brings life instead of death.

Impressions (*samaskaras*) are at the root of all thoughts. Impression means the subtle or seed form of desires. Innumerable impressions of all the incarnations of a man lie buried, or are submerged, under the bed of the subconscious mind. The psycho-analysis are of the opinion that the subconscious mind is also known as the unconscious mind, because when a man loses his outward consciousness in swoon, his consciousness is stored up in seed form within, and when he awakes, he restores again that consciousness. This proves that not only consciousness or knowledge, but also all thoughts and objects are not lost, but they remain in subtle or seed form in the bed of the subconscious mind. The subconscious or unconscious mind is also known as Nature or *Prakriti*, or *Avyakta*, or undifferentiated consciousness. The undifferentiated consciousness means consciousness which is not easily differentiated or determined. In Vedanta, we find that the unmanifested state of the Cosmic Mind is known as *Avyakta* or *Isvara*, i.e. the manifested causal nescience or *maya* which co-exists with the *Isvara*-consciousness, before coming into manifestation. This state is known as *Prakriti* in Sankhya philosophy, and *maya* in Vedanta, and Mahamaya or Kali in Tantra. The nature of *Prakriti* or *Avyakta* cannot be recognised easily, because *Isvara*-consciousness shines with causal nescience (*karana-ajnana*), the womb of creation (*sristi*), in such an undivided way that it cannot be easily differentiated. So this state of *Avyakta* or *Isvara* is known as the undifferentiated consciousness. The seeds of past incarnations as well as those of the present incarnation are stored up there in the bed of the unconsciousness, and they can be said to be the bundle of impressions or sensations, as David Hume called it. The word bundle reminds us of the illustration of '*putuli*' or '*nyata-kyatar hadi*', as told by Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Regarding fresh or new creation (*sristi*), Sri Ramakrishna gave

an example : 'यखन जगत् नाश हय, महाप्रलय हय, तखन मा सृष्टिर बीजसकल कुड़िये राखेन। गिन्नीर काछे येमन एकटि न्याताक्याताार हांड़ि थाके, आर सेइ हांड़िते गिन्नी पांच रकमेर जिनिस तुले राखे' ; vide *Kathamrita*), i.e., 'when dissolution happens, or in complete deluge Divine Mother collects all the seeds of creation and preserves them in an earthen pot, and in that earthen pot she keeps different kinds of things'. These different things or seeds are the impressions (*samaskaras*) of all kinds of living being and object, and they are stored up in the womb of the primordial Nature, which is the unmanifested causal Energy, and when new cycle begins, those causal or subtle impressions are manifested in gross form. In the Rig Veda, it has been said :

सूर्याचन्द्रमसो-धाता यथापूर्वमकल्पयत्।

दिवाञ्च पृथिवीञ्चान्तरिक्षमथो स्वः ॥

That is, 'the Creator created the sun, moon, stars, etc., as before, i.e., all the manifestations appeared as they appeared in the last cycle, etc.'.

Mind is like a blotting paper. As a blotting paper soaks or absorbs all the spots of ink thrown upon it, so mind soaks all the spots of impressions of all thoughts and actions, done in one's life, and in this way the blotting paper of the mind is filled up. The Western philosopher, David Hume called these spots as sensations or impressions, which themselves are isolated or loose. Hume found no connecting link to hold up the isolated sensations or impressions together, so he said that the loose sensations or impressions always fly in the sphere of the mind like the patches of the clouds in the sky.

David Hume denied the existence of a soul, or of an ego, as a separate entity other than the sensations. He said that he did not find what was further required to make him a perfect non-entity, so he carried his psychology and philosophy into an absolute nihilism or nothingness. In fact, Hume reduced the mind to the series of its impressions and ideas. He also reduced objects to a series of impressions and ideas, and said that nothing exists other than a bundle of impressions or ideas which may be held together by some

mysterious force, and there is left nothing else. It was Kant, who afterwards had made a revival of true philosophy from another viewpoint, because Hume explained that as the clouds float in the eternal void one after another, so the bundles of impressions or ideas pass like fluxes, and, therefore, there is no linking principle. Then Kant aroused Hume from his dogmatic slumber by admitting an intelligent ego as the ground of these isolated impressions or ideas. Kant said that no sensation or perception is possible until and unless we admit a linking ground as a conscious ego of the isolated flying impressions. Kant believed in both the subjective world and the objective world on the basis of the two principles, subject and object. Kant's view was that distinction between subject and object cannot be arrived at without the activity of the mind. If the mind had only one single representation given to it, it could not make out whether that representation was mental or physical, subjective or objective. We also realize the ego or self in its activity. The activity of the ego or self as contrasted with the activity of what is apprehended is in its turn the object of apprehension inasmuch as we are aware that the unity of the acts of our apprehending—from each of which the apprehended content is inseparable—is other than the order and unity which belongs to the apprehended. Kant said that it is quite true all apprehension or perception of the manifold as we consciously experience it, is already ordered synthesis. The given is then never experienced as such. We cannot be aware of a manifold as a manifold except in virtue of the mind's synthesis of those isolated elements. Therefore, this synthesis must be operative before consciousness. All mental activity of any kind then is synthesis working on *á priori* principles and is, therefore, judgement. Judgement is the unit of thought and of all mental activity. This doctrine of Kant's is so novel that is seldom understood.[1] Fichte and Schelling also admitted this theory of Kant.

[1] Empiricism logically carried out leads to sensationism and scepticism. Hume was a consistent empiricist. He showed that experience gave only discrete impressions and ideas, which were combined with one another by the laws of association, viz, resemblance, contiguity, and causation; and that it did not give the knowledge of matter, mind, and God; matter as a cluster of actual and possible sense-

Similar instance we find in the Buddhist philosophy. The *Kshanika-vijnananvidin* Buddhist who believe that everything in this universe is momentary, and there is no permanent or constant thing like an ego or *Atman*, say, that there is a stream of consciousness, in which one particular unit of consciousness or sensation, or feeling, or idea, is always in flux. Just as in a river, for instance, we see a continuous flow of water, and if we look at a point in that stream, we see water is there, but the same particle of water that we saw just a minute ago or half a second ago, is gone, and its place is taken by another quality of water. Thus we see that it is constantly changing, but a portion of it, or the unchangeable stream, is left there, which is carried on, and a portion is eliminated, but the continuity is kept up, and it is a matter of quantity. But those Buddhists did not search further to go beyond the changeable flux of the mental state, because they really deny the existence of an ego or soul as an entity, distinct from the isolated ideas or sensations, or thoughts.

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tions, mind being a series of fleeting ideas, feelings and volitions, and God being a fiction of the imagination, produced by unfulfilled wishes. Hume, therefore, denied the reality of matter, mind, and God, and advanced *scepticism* (*nastikyavada*). There is also the scepticism of the Greek Sophists.

But scepticism is an intolerable attitude of the mind, and it is not a rational method of philosophy. So Immanual Kant appeared, and proposed criticism as the method of philosophy. Kant recognized the claims of experience and rationalism, and defined the limits of knowledge. Kant said that experience gives the discrete manifold of sensations which constitute the matter of knowledge. Reason gives the forms of knowledge, which are applied to the matter, and organizes it into a system of knowledge.

Kant maintained that there are noumena or things-in-themselves. In this sense, Kant is a realist. Further he maintained that things-in-themselves exist outside and independent of the mind, and they are unknown and unknowable. They act upon the noumenal self and produce discrete impressions. The self or ego arranges them in time and space which are the categories and forms of intuition. The self, in fact, arranges the categorised sensations under the regulative ideas of reason, *viz.*, world, soul, and God, and reduces them to a unity. World, soul, and God, said Kant, are not real but merely regulative ideals or 'Ideas', which help us reduce the manifold of sensations to a unity. We know only phenomena, said Kant, by pure reason or theoretical reason, so his doctrine is called *phenomanalism* or *phenomenalistic idealism*. But Kant maintained the practical reason which gives us morality, which postulates freedom of the soul, immortality of the soul, and the existence of God as moral governor. Vide Dr. J. N. Sinha ; *Introduction to Philosophy* (1961), pp. 73, 90 ; Will Durant : *The Story of Philosophy* (1957); Prof. Patrick : *Introduction to Philosophy* (1935).

Acharya Sankara appeared and solved the problem admitting an intelligent and constant ego or *Atman* which formed the background of the isolated thoughts or ideas, like passing clouds, as advanced by the *Kshanika-vijnanavadin* Buddhists (Yogacharis).

Vedanta forwarded that mind may be known as a bundle of sensations or ideas, but it itself is an inert (*jada*) instrument, so until and unless the shining *ego* or *Atman* illumines the mind with consciousness, it cannot do any work. Again, as the mind is illumined and inspired by the *Atman*, so it exists behind the senses, and the senses becomes active. The illumined conscious mind then directs and makes active all the senses. So, if we control the mind, the senses will automatically be controlled, because cause being controlled, effect is checked or controlled. But remember that this world is a field of actions, and Sri Krishna said that no man can live without action. The nature or *Prakriti* compels them to do work through the influence of her energies (*guna*) : 'प्रकृतेः क्रियमाणानि गुणै कर्माणि सर्वशः' i.e. 'actions are wrought in all cases by the energies of Nature', but men and women, out of ignorance, think that they are the doers : 'अहङ्कारविमूढ़ात्मा कर्ताहमिति मन्यते'।

The *Gita* (II.64) said,

रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन्।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति॥

That is, 'he attains peace, who is self-controlled, approaches objects with senses devoid of love and hatred and brought under his own control'. Now, the natural activity of the senses is characterised by love and hatred. So if any man remains disinterested in love and hatred, he can control the activity of the senses, and then the senses turn around the fountainhead of peace and tranquility, which is no other than the *Atman*. Otherwise, by earning money, hoarding immense wealth, reading lots of *Shastras*, and taking pleasure only in arguments, logic, and superficial knowledge, devoid of inner intuition, not one can enjoy real peace. The real peace comes through desirelessness, and through the realization of the supreme *Atman*. The *Gita* (II.65) further said regarding it :

प्रसादे सर्वदुःखानां हानिरस्योपजायते ।
प्रसन्नचेतसो ह्याशुः बुद्धिः पर्यवतिष्ठते ॥

That is, 'in peace, there is an end of all miseries; for, the reason of the tranquil-minded soon becomes steady'. It is a fact that intellect (*buddhi*) or reason (*vichara*) of the pure-minded man becomes steady and acute, and so he soon reaches the ultimate goal. The calmness of the mind makes the mind transparent, having no distraction or modification in the mind. The Yogis control and concentrate their minds to bring calmness and peace. The Jnanis discriminate, and through discrimination they make their mental sea waveless and calm. The modifications create disturbances, and disturbances create restlessness. Rest or peace brings *amrita* or immortality, and restlessness brings death unto us. So the Yogis and Jnanis try their utmost to make their mind concentrated, tranquil, and peaceful. Concentration brings meditation, and meditation brings the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*), which is the source of infinte knowledge, existence, and bliss.

The knowledge of the *Atman* can assure us with the guarantee of permanent peace and tranquility, whereas desire cannot grant them. Desire is the cause of worldliness (*samsara*), which weaves the net of origin and decay. So the Jnanis give up their desires. The Jnanis give up desires *means* they control and calm down the plays of the desires and by that they transform the desires into pure consciousness (*chit*). Sri Krishna, the Superman, repeatedly said to perform work without seeking its fruit, as desire for fruit binds all beings. Actions should be performed in the spirit of worship of God and also for the good of the multitude. The desireless or selfless work becomes the means to purify the mind or heart, and, consequently, the purified mind leads to attain the ultimate goal of the human life. Sri Krishna said in the *Gita* (II.71),

विहाय कामान् यः सर्वान् पुमांश्चरति निःस्पृहः ।
निर्ममो निरहङ्कारः स शान्तिमधिगच्छति ॥

That is, 'that man attains peace, who, abandoning all desires, moves about without attachment, without selfishness, without vanity'. Really the man of renunciation can give up all the

attachment to the results of works, for which all miseries of the mundane world end. Now, Sri Krishna gave an essence of the state of desirelessness, in the verse II.70, where he said,

आपूर्यमाणचलप्रतिष्ठं
समुद्रमापः प्रविशन्ति यद्वत् ।
तद्वत् कामा यं प्रविशन्ति सर्वे
स शान्तिमाप्नोति न कामकामी ॥

'He attains peace, into whom all desires enter, as waters enter the ocean, which, filled from all sides, remains unaltered; but not he who desires objects'. Sankara explained in the commentary that the ocean is filled with waters flowing from all sides. Its state is unaltered though waters flow into it from all sides; it remains all the time within its bounds without change. Similarly, the self-realized man or Jivanmukta, into whom, in this manner, desires of all sorts enter from all sides without affecting the presence of objects; in whose Self they are absorbed, and whom they do not enslave; that emancipated man attains *moksha*, but not the other who has a longing for the external objects. This verse (II.70) of the *Gita* is an excellent one, as it sets an example of a *Jivanmukta*, i.e. liberated man in his lifetime, who, attaining the supreme knowledge of the objects, sentient and insentient, are saturated by the Brahman-knowledge. Knowledge of everything is revealed to him': 'एकस्मिन् बिज्ञाने सर्वबिज्ञानं भवति and everything seems to him non-different from the Brahman: 'सर्वं ब्रह्ममयं जगत्' The realized man lives in this world of duality with the feeling of oneness, being self-satisfied and self-complete.

Now, what is the feeling of oneness? It is love, nay, the Divine Love. The word 'love' (individual) signifies the

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[2] 'सर्वं बिज्ञानं भवति' connotes the idea of '*sarvajnatva*'. Generally it is mistakenly believed that after the attainment of Brahman-knowledge a man is well-versed in all branches of knowledge, but that is not correct. Madhusudana Saraswati said in the *Siddhantavindu* : 'निरवद्यस्वप्रकाशत्वे सर्वज्ञानत्वात्' i.e., 'the Brahman is *sarvajna*, because it is self-revealing'. The word 'self-revealing' suggests the idea that there remains no covering (*avarana*) or obstacle (*pratbandhaka*). So, when a man attains to Brahman-knowledge, he realizes the basic or foundational as well as underdying (*sarvanasyata*) universal supreme knowledge which covers all the knowledge, material, intellectual, and spiritual. The underlying basic knowledge is a supreme intuitional knowledge that forms the background of all knowledge, phenomenal and transcendental.

same idea. If we love a man, or a woman, we will place ourselves in the same level of the man or woman whom we love. Then there will exist no difference of thought and feeling between we and the man or woman we love. Similarly, if we really love God, we will be one with God, and there will remain no difference or distance between we and God. Vedanta also said : 'ब्रह्मविद् ब्रह्मैव भवति' i.e. 'he who knows, i.e., realizes Brahman, becomes one with Brahman'. The word 'sympathy' connotes the same idea. The Yogis, Jnanis, or true Bhaktas maintain the similar idea of love. The *Gita* (6.32) said,

आत्मोपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जन ।
सुखं वा यदि वा दुःखं स योगी परमोमतः ॥

'Whoso, by comparison with himself, sees the same everywhere, O Arjuna, be it pleasure or pain, he is deemed the highest Yogi'. Really a Yogi sees that whatever is pleasant to himself, is pleasant to all creatures, and that whatever is painful to himself, is painful to all beings. Thus seeing which is pleasure or pain to himself, that is alike pleasure or pain to all. So he causes pain to no being and is harmless. Doing no harm and devoted to right knowledge, he is regarded as the highest among all Yogis.

Yogis and Jnanis can only perform selfless works, because they know that works themselves are like the bondage, but if they are rightly understood and performed, they are again means to absolute freedom. The real lovers (*premikas*) are those who love without seeking any reason and return, and they love for only love's sake. The idea can be found among the real Vaishnava, Sufi, German, Spanish, and English mystics. Those who have read the books on *Mysticism* by Mrs. Underhill, Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Brown, and others, will realize the real nature or significance of love for God and for humanity at large. The Sufis of Arabia and other places as well as the Vaishnavas of India attained realization of the all-beloved God through the practice of selfless love. Those who have read the lives of Plotinus and Echart, will realize the real state of a mystic. Specially some of the Sufis of Arabia attained even the non-dualistic idea, when they said *Anal-Hawk*, i.e., 'not am I, but Thou'. I can tell you a story

of one of the mystics of Arabia, from which you will understand the non-dualistic conception of the real mystics. If you read about Algazl, Omar Khayam, and others, you will also get some idea of the Sufis. Now, let me relate an interesting story of the mystics. One day, in Arabia, a Sufi went to meet his Sufi friend. He approached to the house of his friend, and knocked at the door, which was then closed. Immediately a voice came from within, 'Who comes there ?' The friend who stood outside, said, 'I am'. The voice from within came, 'Go out, there's no room for two 'I's'. The friend who was waiting outside, was disappointed, and came back. He did not understand what happened to his friend, and also to him. So he went again to the house of his friend, and knocked at the door, but in a similar way a voice was heard from within, Who comes there?' As before he said, 'I am', and the reply came, 'Go out, there's no room for two 'I's'. The friend being refused in the second time, was very much pained. Then he began to think about his disappointment. However, he approached third time, and knocked as before, and, in a similar way, the voice came from within, 'Who comes there'. He then relied, 'Thou'. At once the door was opened to him, and he was received by his Sufi friend very cordially.

Now, this story is very significant, as it says, that until and unless the sense of 'I' or egohood (*aham-jnana*) is effaced from the mind, the universal friend, the all-love God, is not achieved. Sri Ramakrishna also said : 'आमि मले घुचिबे जञ्जाल * * i.e. 'when 'I' or sense of 'I' dies, all obstacles are removed'. Sri Ramakrishna used to say everyday along with his prayer to the Divine Mother : 'नाहं नाहं, तुंहु तुंहु' i.e. 'not am I, but Thee'. So when the sense of 'I' (*aham-jnana* or *ahamkara*) is dedicated to the sense of 'thou' or 'you', then purification of heart comes, and the devotee finds the solution of the mystery of his life.

I would like to remind you the life and mystic songs of the Bauls of Bengal. The Bauls are God-intoxicated men, and they dedicate their life for the attainment of their desired deity, *Sahaja*[3] or God, who is devoid of all riches and attributes. The religion of the Bauls evolved from the admixture of the doctrines of Bengal Vaishnivism, Tantricism, and

Buddhist Sahajayana, the upshoot of the Buddhist Mahayana cult. The doctrine of the Bauls are akin to Vedanta, to some extent. Their spiritual faith and practice are somewhat similar to Tantric faith and practice, but are different from the Vaishnava doctrine or cult. The practice of the Bauls is dedicated to *kaya-sadhana,* and they do not believe in distinction of caste, creed, and colour. So, like the Tantric idea, they are very liberal and open-hearted. One of the mystic songs of the Bauls will speak itself the creed and faith of them. The song runs thus,

प्रेमिक लोकेर स्वभाव स्वतन्नर ।
(ओ तार) थाके ना भाइ आत्मपर ॥
प्रेमिक एम्नि रत्न धन किछु नाइको तार मतन ।
इन्द्रपदके तुच्छ करे प्रेमिक हय येजन ।
(ओसे) हास्यमुखे सदाइ थाके हृदय जुड़े सुधाकर ॥
प्रेमिक चाय नाको जानि, चाय ना सुख्याति ।
(भावे) हृदय पूर्ण हय ना क्षुन्न रठले अख्याति ।
(ओ तार) हस्तगत सुखेर चावि थाकबे केन अन्य डर ॥
प्रेमिक चाल्टा बेयाड़ा, किछु बेद-विधि छाड़ा ।
आंधार-कोले चांद गेलेओ तार मुखे नेइ साड़ा,
(जावार) चौद्दभुवन ध्वंस हलेओ
आस्मानेते बानाय घर ॥

That is, 'the nature of a *premika* (divine lover of God) is different, because he neither thinks anyone as his own, nor anyone as different from him, but he loves everyone equally. The divine lover is such a man that he considers him (his body, the temple of God, the Sahaja) as great, and so he does not care even the state of Indra, the Ruler of the gods. He is a divine lover, who lives all the time with a smiling face, and thinks this world as an ocean of love. The divine lover does not care for any caste, nor any praising or good name, and if any blame is given to him, he lives with his heart full of divine sentiment, without being affected by anything shortcoming or defect; and the key or source of joy and happiness remains in his own hand, i.e., in his control, without depending on others. The attitude of a true lover is quite strange to others, rather it appears as antagonistic to Vedic or any scriptural system; and if light (i.e. moon) of

joy and happiness is overpowered by darkness (of pain and distress), he keps silent without being moved by them, and if the nether seven *lokas* and upper seven *lokas* (i.e., the whole creation or *sristi*) are destroyed, he (the true lover) creates his castle in the air, i.e., by the practice of *pranayama* or breathing exercise (*shvāsa-kriyā*), he controls and purifies his mind, and thus attains to his choosen God, Sahaja-Bhagavan or Sahajananda.

This is the nature of the true lovers (*premika*). They adopt spiritual *sadhana* with the help of songs composed with the philosophical doctrine of the material structure of the body, in which, they believe, the Sahaja-Bhagavan dwells. The real Bauls are the followers of Yoga, accompanied by *jnana-vichara*. But their medium of the spiritual practice appears somewhat strange and sometimes opposite to the common people. Though the ideals and doctrines of Buddhism and Tantra were enobling and sacred in earlier times, yet they were degenerated afterwards in the hands of incompetent and self-centric Sadhakas, and such were the condition of faith and doctrine of the Bauls of Bengal. Though the costumes, custom, and living conditions of the Bauls are similar to those of the Sufis of Arabia, to some extent, yet there lies difference between them in spiritual practices and ultimate goal. Gradually some undesirable atmosphere gets into the faith and practice of the Bauls, like the entry of *vamachara*[4] (undesirable practices) into the Tantra

[4] It has been said before that the word *vamachara* connotes the idea of the opposite practice, yet in Tantra, the meaning of *vamachara* is the sacred Tantric practice which brings union of Kali, the Divine Mother with Siva. The word *vama* means the Divine Energy or Mahamaya, and the *achara* is the sacred ceremonial functions according to the prescribed rules as led down by Tantra, are essential to educate and to elevate the mind so as to receive the infinite power or energy of the Divine Mother, and to realize Her real essence while uniting with the all-consciousness Siva or Paramasiva, i.e., to realize the non-dual Siva-Sakti-Principle. This sacred *vamachara* was, in later time, polluted by the worldly-minded self-seeking and commercial Tantric worshippers.

Now it should be remembered that *vamachara* signifies also the Tantras and *Tantratatva* of the *Kalikula*, which is different from *Srikula*. *Vama* and Kali are non-different. Again Kali and Kadi are not different. Kali or Vama is the embodiment of *mantras*. In Tantra, the *Kakaradi-mantras* are *Kadi-sakti* or Kalimata. The symbol of Kali or Vama is a triangle (*trikona* V), which represents the energies, *Jyestha*, *vama*, and *raudri* and they are bestowers of *Kaivalya* or

sadhana in later period for materialistic outlook of some Sadhakas who lost their sacred ideal. So remember that the raw materials of doctrines and dogmas and ceremonies are useless if we do not get into the core of relgion and spirituality. In other words, doctrines and dogmas and creeds are the husks of religion, whereas the carnel is love and devotion and above all the realization of the soul. Religion is not a set of ceremonies and creeds, but it means to bind (*religio*—to bind) man with God, *jivatman* with the *Paramatman*, the phenomenon with the Noumenon. Keep it in your mind that religious life is the pre-condition to spiritual life or spirituality; or, in other words, religious life fulfills the spiritual life. Spiritual life begins with earnestness or eagerness for the attainment of God-realization. In the truest sense, religion itself is realization, or the foundation of religious life is the realization of the *Atman*.

The nature of the human society should intimately be understood or realized, as we are part and parcel of the society. If you study the history of the society, you will find that when a privileged class evolves in the society, it predominates over other classes of people for their self-interest. As for example, when the Buddhist power was predominant, the Buddhists oppressed the Brahmins. Then when the Brahmanical power was predominant, the Brahmins did their best to oppress the Buddhists. The Brahmins then recognised the Buddhists as Sudras. When Pushyamitra ascended the throne, he regained the power and prestige of the Brahmanical religion. The Buddhists were then outcasted. In order to maintain the power and dignity of the Brahmins, Pushyamitra made the *Manusamhita* to be rewritten with

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emancipation (Kaivalyadhai). Devi Tripura also shines in that triangle (vide *Tripurarahasyam*). *Kam* is the Brahman or supreme Siva, and *Kam* is also Brahmamayee Sakti. In the Tantric *sadhana*, three schools are in practice. *kadi, hadi, and ka-hadi. Kadi* and Kali are the same. The *mantras* beginning with *ka*, etc. (*kakaradi*) belong to the *kadi*-school, the *mantras* beginning with *ha*, etc. (*hakaradi*) belong to the *hadi*-school; and the *mantras* with both *ka* and *ha*, belong to the *ka-hadi* school. *Vamachara* or the method of *upasana* begins with Vama or Kali, the Divine Energy, which shines with the pure intelligence-existence-bliss, Parasiva. So *Vamachara* or Tantric *sadhana* of Sakti is an important one in Tantra, and especially in the Bengal school of Tantra.

some corrections, or in new light. In fact, the edition of the *Manusamhita* after Pushyamitra took a new rendering, and some are of the opinion that for that reason we find two sets of diction and rule in the former edition of the *Manusamhita.* We find many liberal orders and injunctions by the side of many illiberable rules and regulations. Sometimes it is found that if a non-Brahmin used to read the Vedas, hot melted lead used to be poured into his ears. The women were not allowed to read the Vedas and to utter the *pranava-mantra.* If any Sudra behaved ill-treatment with the Brahmins, he used to be punished with death sentence. Many cruel customs were also prevalent in the Brahmanical period. I think that some of them were mere interpolations by the self-seeking Brahmins, and the self-interested Brahmins introduced many social rules and customs for their own interest, which were really undesirable and condemnable.

The time of autocracy has passed, and now the people want equal status, equal power and equal privilege. It is good. We should not predominate over other humiliating their power and prestige and also depriving them from their legal as well as social rights. *Smritis* are the *Shastras* which lead rules and regulations for better management of the human society. But sometimes they are written for some selfish motive, so they do harm instead of doing good to the people of the society. This is the age of science and reason, and now the people of the country want justice, fellow-feeling, and sympathy from one another. The attitude of autocracy has not yet been changed, rather it exists even now among some privileged classes. England is an example to it. Democracy is still predominant in America. But, in America, the people enjoy the privilege of equal status. There, men and women enjoy equal right in Railway trains, in the offices, in the streets, in the markets, and everywhere. In every walk of life, we find there a competition among men and women. Now men and women of India are also following that ideal. In ancient times, in India, men and women enjoyed equal status and equal right, but those were curved in the Brahmanical period. How women enjoyed equal right, respect, and regard in ancient Indian society,

know them by going through the pages of the Vedas, Brahmana literature, and Samhitas. Also look into the pages of the *Puranas*. The *Manu-samhita* also showed proper respect and regard for the Indian women. But, in the Brahmanical period, as I have said before, the women were deprived of their prestige and privilege. But the women are the backbone and power of the nation, so they should not be in any way deprived of their equal status and equal right. They should be given sufficient opportunity to build up their educational and social carriers. They should be given proper education, so as to stand by the side of their husbands and the people of the society. In the Rig Veda, you will find the idea of *Ardha-narishvara,* which suggests the equal status and equal right of both men and women in Vedic time. Sayana, in his commentary of the Vedas, has shown proper respect to the women. Acharya Sankara has composed the hymn of *Ardha-narishavara,* showing his homage to Siva and Gauri.

Look at the ideal characters of Gargi, Maitreyee, Visvavara, Apala, Ratridevi, and others, who were really honoured in the Upanishadic period. Brahmavadin Gargi challenegd Maharshi Yajnavalkya, so as to discuss about the *brahmatattva,* or the philosophical doctrine of the supreme principle, the Brahman. The talented woman, Kshana, the wife of Varahamihira, showed her efficiency in the art of astronomy in the court of the King Vikramaditya. At present, India is regaining her past glory and ideal. Now the women are receiving proper education and training in all aspects of their life. It is a good sign no doubt, and this shows that India will again rise in its highest summit of culture and civilization. We should not forget that India is the sacred land of the self-realized Rishis. This is the land of Sita, Savitri, Damayanti, Behula and, other illustrious ideal women. This land will again be placed in its glorious status. But beware of your selfish motive, fanaticism, bigotry, and narrowness of mind. Open your mind, and love the people of your country, who are really the backbone of your nation and country. They should not at all be despised and neglected as the illiterate, poor, and depressed class in the society, but they should be given proper privilege and opportunity, and they

should be raised and enlightened with wisdom and education. If you look at the corner of your society, you will find that many of them are still downtrodden, oppressed and neglected. But love them, and forgive them, and welcome them by your side, because they are also possessed of pure and kind heart, highmindedness, and sincerity. They are supplying you your bread and butter by dint of their hard labour and sincere effort, and you will notice that most of you, the so-called cultured and civilized clerks, are still criticising them right and left, enjoying yourselves as the most privileged ones. Shake up all those pitiable and undesirable ideas and dealings shown to them, and love them as your beloved brothers and sisters. Show the real sympathy instead of lip-sympathy to your fellowmen, who really need it. Do not seek the opportunity of the ideal of the caste system of the Vedic or Brahmanical period. The distinctions of caste and colour you will not get anywhere in the Vedas and Upanishads. The Kshatriyas of the Brahmanical period were both the warriors and the self-realized men. Remember the ideal of Raja Janaka in the Epic period, who was an ideal Ruler and at the same time a realized man. In the time of the *Mahabharata*, the Brahmins were both the warriors and the performers of the sacrifices and rites. It is said that in ancient time, the priestly class originated from the Kshatriya or warrior class. In ancient Greece and Rome, we find this evidence. The practice of different kinds of sacrifice before the fire, consecrated to different deities like Indra, Vayu, Varuna, Asvinis, and others, were prevalent in the Vedic times. Butter (*havih*), cakes (*purodasha*) and Soma juice were offered to the tongues of the blazing fire. The *samans* (Vedic songs) were sung by the Udgata (priest), and the Brahmā (the chief priest, well-versed in four Vedas) used to direct and supervise the functions of the sacrifices. Those priests were the *Rishis*, who dedicated their life to spiritual practices, so as to attain the sublime Brahman-knowledge. Those Brahmin-priests were quite different from the Brahmin or priestly class, who were only the household-worshippers in the Epic period. And it is a fact that the Kshatriya king used to perform many sacrifices (*yajnas*) like *Rajasuya, Asvamedha*, etc., and rites (*satras*) like *Kariri, Putresti*, etc.

In the Veda, we find no word like *varna* (caste or class). We find some references that the caste-system was divided according to colour (*varna*) of the people, and, in this respect, the words *Kshatriya* and *Vaishya* are found in the Vedas. Afterwards the caste system was made according to the qualities (*guna*) and actions (*karma*) of the people. The *Gita* also mentioned about it : 'चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः' (4.13), i.e., 'the castes were divided according to the occupations and social practices.' Now, that law or practice is not applicable, but still we claim that the descendants of the Brahmins are to be known as the Brahmin. The Kshatriya class is not available at present, and now the Government has arranged the Police and Military men as separate classes, who maintain peace and order in the states and countries. The Vaishya class may be known as the merchants, and the labourers are generally recognized as the Sudras, which is not proper, because the labourer class is the backbone of the society. The Vedic division is now absolutely extinct, so if you are in favour of the olden custom of the Vedic time, then, according to the colour of the body, the Western people, who are white in complexion, will be known as the Brahmins, the yellow-coloured Japanese will be known as the Kshatriyas, the blue-skinned people will be known as the Vaishayas, and the dark-skinned people will be the Sudras. Now, considering from the dark complexion of the people, the Africans including the dark-skinned Brahmins of India, will be known as the Sudras. So it will not be wise now to dispute with the caste-system, according to the division of colours (*varna-vibhaga*), but you can judge and consider this system from the viewpoint of quality and character, i.e. of good quality (*sadguna*) and pure and noble-character. The *Shastrakaras* have defiened the word Brahmin as 'ब्रह्मजनातीति ब्राह्मणः' i.e. 'who knows or has realized the supreme Brahman, is called the Brahmin'. So, from this definition, you cannot consider a man as the Brahmin, who is merely born of the Brahmin family. Here generation, descendant, or family should not be considered. So men and women should be rational and argumentative in this new age of rationalism and science.

In this age, the sense of selfless service should again

be revived and maintained. In the Buddhist period, especially during the reign of the Emperor Asoke, practices of hospitality and selfless services were observed throughout India. The Christian missionaries adopted those practices, and perhaps they got the idea of them from the Buddhists. The compassionate Sri Chaitanya advised his devotees to follow the ideal of *jive-daya* and *jive-prema*, i.e. showing compassion and love towards all, irrespective of caste, creed, and colour. Sri Ramakrishna advised his followers to serve men and love all the living beings realizing them as living God—'*Nara-Narayana*'. Being inspired by that living and lofty ideal of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda said :

बहुरूपे सम्मुखे तोमार
छाड़ि कोथा खुंजिछ ईश्वर ।
जीबे प्रेम करे येइजन,
सेइजन सेविछे ईश्वर ।

That is, God exists in manifold forms, so leaving behind all living beings or creatures, where are you searching for God! Remember that he who loves all beings, serves God, and no other one. Here the ideal and spirit of love and service are evident. Having these ideal and spirit in his mind, Swamiji introduced in the Ramakrishna Mission the work of service among the people, irrespective of caste, creed, and colour. Like Sri Ramakrishna, Swamiji introduced selfless Relief Works and other services in the spirit that the individual souls (*jiva*) are the Narayana or Siva. In this selfless service, there remains no distinction of castes like the Brahmin, Vishya, and Sudra, but all are the Brahmin-Narayana. Vaishya-Narayana and Sudra-Narayana. This idea of Narayan or Siva is the Vedantic idea which says that 'जीवः ब्रह्मैव नापरः' * * i.e. '*jiva* is no other than the Brahman'. This is the universal truth, and this truth will never become the falsity. This truth will exist as truth all the time— 'त्रैकालिक सत्य' * * This truth is not attained as a result of any action, but it is already attained (*anadhigata*) and is uncontradicted (*avadhita*). Like the self-effulgent light of the sun, this universal truth exists. Everything causal, subtle, and material, will die or be decayed, but truth will exist forever and ever. Sri Rama-

krishna realized this immortal and universal truth, and preached it before the world, nay, he called this truth into action, brought it to the practical field, for the welfare of the mankind at large. Swamiji said that Vedanta or immortal knowledge is generally meant for the *Tyagis* or *Sannyasins* of the forest, but it should be preached and introduced among all worldly men and women. This Vedantic knowledge has been applied in the practical field of service by the Ramakrishna Mission in the form of Relief Works, dispensaries, hospitals and in other humanitarian and philanthropic works and activities. You will have to serve the others in the spirit of worship, and it is the ideal message of this age. It will not be wise for you to sit down only in the corner of the room, or in the forest, and to make spiritual *sadhana* for the emancipation for your own self, but you will have to adopt spiritual practise for your emancipation as well as for the emancipation of all the beings of the universe. Just think about the loftiest ideal of the Bodhisattvas of the Buddhist religion, who did not ask for their own emancipation (*mukti*), until and unless all the peoples and animals of the universe are freed from the bondage of *samsara*. This attitude of the Bodhisattvas is known as the *maitribhavana*, i.e., the contemplation of an infinite compassion, love, and wisdom.[1] Gautama Buddha

[1] The best picture of the Bodhisattva is given in the *Mahayana-sutras*. In Santideva's *Bodhicharyavatara*, we also find the mention of the enlightened Souls like the Bodhisattvas. The Bodhisattvas live simultaneously in two worlds, the world of appearance and the world of reality—*samsara* and *nirvana*. *Prajnaparamita* mentions about three *kayas* (bodies), *dharmakaya*, *sambhogakaya*, and *nirmanakaya*. The Bodhisattvas may be classified as belonging to four groups : (1) First, there is the novice Bodhisattva, or aspirant to Bodhisattvahood, who accepts intellectually the Bodhisattva Ideal. (2) The second group consists of all who have attained any of the first six *bhumis* (the *paramitas* mention about ten *bhumis* or stages of development), and who may, therefore, be called the Bodhisattvas of the Path. (3) The third group is made up of the Irreversible Bodhisattvas, who are the Bodhisattvas *par excellence*. (4) The fourth and highest group is that of the Boddhisattvas of the (*dharmakayas*). Between such Bodhisattvas of the *dharmakayas* and the Buddhas there is no real difference, and if there is any difference, it lies in the fact that the former embody the state, the latter, the dynamic aspect of the *dharmakaya*.

The individual Bodhisattvas are, however, well-known in the Mahayana, and they are numbered about thousands. The most popular Bodhisattvas constitute two groups, one consisting of five and the other of eight members. The five Dhyani-Bodhisattvas are associated with the five so-called Dhyani-Buddhas, iconographically as their

wanted to sacrifice his own life for the cause of saving the life of an ordinary kid. Sri Ramakrishna also felt severe pain in the heart when someone was passing over the field nearby treading with his feet the living green grasses on it, at Dakshineswar. Sri Ramakrishna's love and sympathy were not limited only to the human world, but it surpassed and covered the animal, vegetable, and other worlds. Really, he had infinite love and compassion for all the animate and inanimate objects. So we must follow the ideal of Ramakrishnadev. We must not also live for ourselves, but we must live for the rest of the universe. We are here to help in the onward progress, not only of our own individual self, but also of the whole humanity, of the whole race, and of all living creatures. We must not stop simply after doing something that will help our own people and our own nation, but we must go on doing things that will help not only our own nation, but also all nations, not only all human beings, but also all living creatures, lower animals, even plants. Just remember that our life is for humanity and for more than humanity; for the lower animals, and for the whole creation. Each individual must remember that one ideal or truth that we are the servants of all creation, and not only the servant of a particular man or nation. Philanthropy and charity are narrow, when compared with the great service of creation of the world. The moment we realize that we are the

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attendants, but, in reality, as their dynamic counterparts or emanations. Thus Samantabhadra is associated with Vrochana, Vajrapani with Akshobhya, Ratnapani with Ratnasambhava, Avalokitesvara with Amitabha, and Visvapani with Amoghasiddhi. Together with their respective *dakinis* or *prajnas*, or feminine counterparts, and a host of minor emanations, these make up the five spiritual families (*panchakala*), on the complex symbolism of which is based much Vajrayana practice, especially in the realms of art and meditation. The eight Bodhisattvas are Samantabhadra, Vajrapani, Avolokitesvara, Manjusri, Maitrayee, Akashagarbha, Kshitigarbha and Sarvanivarna-vishkambhim. Two more, Mahasthanaprapta and Trailokyavijaya, are sometimes added, raising the number to ten. The best known, whether in China, Japan and Tibet, are Manjusri, Avalokitesvara, Vajrapani, Maityaya, Samantabhadra, Mahasthanaprapta, and Kshitigarbha. The respective Buddhas are Virochana, Amitabha,, and Akshobhya, who form the original nucleus out of which was developed the well-known scheme of five Dhyani-Buddhas. Manjusri represents Wisdom, or transmuted intellect. Avalokiteswara, is compassion, or purified emotion, and Vajrapani, power or sublimated volition.

Consult Bhiksha Sangharakshita. *The Three Jewels* (Rider & Company), 1967, pp. 187-189.

children of immortal Bliss, the moment we come to know that all men and women of the universe are our brothers and sisters; the moment we realize that the *Atman* of all men, animals, and creatures of the world are our own *Atman*, then we cannot live only for ourselves, but we live for all the beings and objects of the universe. Then we cannot live in any way within the limitations of our selfish motives, egocentric ideas, and individual consciousness, but then we transcend all these, and instantly break up the fetters of false knowledge (*mithya-jnana*), which deludes us, and entangles us in the mess of *maya*. And that is the real purpose of religion, of philosophy, and of all kinds of service.

I have already discussed that desire is of two kinds, good and bad—holy and unholy (*sat* and *asat*). When the desire is devoid of any fruit or result, and is meant only for the good of the universe, then it is known as holy, and when it is concentrated only in one's own self, then it becomes selfish and unholy. The desire itself is a bondage, but when it is not motivated by any idea of result or return, then it purifies the heart, and leads men and women to the path of emancipation or absolute freedom. Sri Krishna repeatedly made us alert from the clutches of desires and actions which are motivated and are followed by their results. Sometimes it is believed that work which is performed as work for work's sake, or is done in the spirit of worship of God, is also motivated by desire, though that is meant for attaining to God. But it is not correct, because work or action which is performed as worship of God, is not to be considered as work, as that kind of work purifies the heart and leads us to God-realization. The *Gita* also said : 'युक्त कर्मफलं त्यक्त्वा शान्तिमाप्नोति नैष्ठिकीम्' (5.12), i.e., 'the steady-minded, abandoning the fruit of action, attains peace, born of devotion'. Sankara said : 'यस्माच्च युक्त ईश्वराय कर्माणि * *' * *" i.e. 'resolves, 'I do actions for the sake of God', etc. It should be remembered that work which is done with a selfish motive, or with an egocentric idea, causes to bind us in this delusive world of phenomena, and so the *Gita* further said : 'कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन' i.e. 'only in performing work, you have right and not in asking its result, because selfish idea makes men concentrate in the petty self only, it turns the mind towards

the phenomenal universe and not towards God or immortal *Atman*, so men are entangled into the bondage of the contingent world. Now, purification of the mind or heart means transformation of the ego-centric idea into pure consciousness, and it is no other than the removal of selfishness from the mind or heart. Ramakrishna Paramhansa also said : 'आमि मले घुचिबे जञ्जाल' i.e. 'when 'I' or the igoistic idea or selfishness dies out, all dirts of diversion or change are removed, and the mind is silenced'. The little limited 'I' (*aham*) is selfishness or ignorance, and with the removal of this limited idea of 'I' the heart is purified, and, the Brahman-consciousness is revealed. Sri Ramakrishna also said : The Brahman is beyond the reach of word and mind, but is known by the 'pure mind'. So, remember that the pure mind or pure consciousness, and the Brahman-consciousness are one and the same. Water without waves, is the ocean itself Therefore, though the *Atman* or Brahman is supersensible and is beyond mind, yet it is an object of immediate awareness or direct experience—'अनुभूतिमात्रगोचरम्'। The Brahman-experience is an existent *something* ('अस्तीत्येव उपलब्धव्यम्'), and we define the divine nature of the *Atman* or Brahman as 'one without the second' ('एकमेवाद्वितीयम्')। But, in truth, says Sankara, the Brahman transcends the categories of one and many, i.e. duality and nonduality—'द्वैताद्वैतविवर्जितम्'।

Sri Krishna said,

त्रिविधं नरकस्येदं द्वारं नाशनमात्मनः।
कामक्रोधस्तथा लोभस्तस्मादेतद् त्रयं त्यजेत्॥१६।२१

That is, 'triple is this, the gate of hell, destructive of the self: lust, wrath, and greed. Therefore, these three, one should abandon'. 'The gate to hell, or the gate to darkness ('त्रिविधं * * द्वारम्'— * * (11.21) and 'तमोद्वारैस्त्रिभिः' (16.22)) are the same thing. The hell (*naraka*) or darkness is lust (*kama*), passion or wrath (*krodha*), and greed (*lobha*). These three modifications of the mind are the cause of pain and delusion. Will or desire creates them in material form. So, if we control our will or desire, then we can control the mind, which is the source of them.

Now, what do you mean by the word 'control'? To control, or to check, does not mean 'to kill', but to reduce

the modifications of the mind into its simplest or original form, and that means 'to transform' i.e. 'to transform the mind into consciousness'. The will or will-power is known in Tantra as Kamakala or Kundalini, which is known in Vedanta and Sankhya as the primordial Energy. The *Prakriti* and Mahamaya are one and the same, and they vary only in their conceptions and names. The *Prakriti* of the Sankhya is the *mula-ajnana* (causal nescience) of Vedanta. Tantra calls this source of the manifestation of the universe as the all-intelligence and all-consciousness coiling Energy (Kundalini). She remains as coiling energy because she is unmanifested (*avyakta*), and so she is conceived as sleeping in the base of the spinal column (*muladhara*). When she is manifested or awaken, she saturates and animates the whole system of the body, then she gradually communes (unites) with the Parama-Siva that shines in the housand-pettaled lotus (*sahasrara*). In truth, the concentrated coiling energy or consciousness at the base of the spinal column (*muladhara*) is no other than the primordial Energy or consciousness in the *sahasrara*. The Kundalini-Sakti is no other than Siva, only difference between them lies in the fact that one appears as dynamic and as an effect, and the other appears as static and as a cause. Viewing from the standpoint of sportive play (*lila*) or divine manifestation (*sristi*), the cause,Siva andthe effect, Sakti, appear as different, but from the transcendental viewpoint they are one and the same prime-principle. The Kamakala or Kundalini remains as the stored-up energy in the base of the spinal column (*muladhara*) in the form of will-power. When the course of that will-power is turned upwards towards the supreme upper lotus, i.e. towards the transcendental pure consciousness, then a common man is transformed into a God-man. When that *kama* or will-power is directed towards the senses and phenomenal objects, then men live in this universe as enchained and deluded like the animals, and then their pure consciousness (*shuddha-chit*) remains covered with nescience (*ajnana*).

Again, the will-power creates personality and character of a man. When the will-power is controlled and directed towards good and enlightened something, it brings perfect peace and happiness, and when it is misdirected, it brings

pain and suffering which are the curse unto a man. Therefore, it depends upon the method or way of direction. An ordinary man does not know the real method (tricks) of directing the will-power of mind, so he is involved in difficulty. The *Gita* also said : 'योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्' * * * i.e. 'Yoga or union of the self with God means dexterity in action'. The *Gita* further said : 'अनाश्रितं कर्मफलं कार्यं कर्म करोति यः। स सन्नासी योगी' (६।१) i.e. 'he who, without depending on the fruits of action, performs his bounden duty, is a Sannyasin, and a Yogi'. The selfless man is known as a Sannyasin because of his renunciation of the thoughts concerning the fruits or results of action, and he is regarded as a Yogi because he performs action as a means to attaining to Yoga, or because he abandons thoughts or ideas concerning the fruits or results of actions, causing unsteadiness of the mind. Do not, therefore, think that some unseen force (*adrista*) is directing you, or is compelling you, to do actions, but remember that self-effort or *purushakara* can help you if you are sincere. You say it an unseen force (*adrista*) because you do not see or know it, but that unseen force is also governed by a law of nature, and that law is not at all an exception. There is a higher law which governs everything, phenomenal and mental. Even the gigantic solar system is not governed by an unnatural something which happens accidentally without higher or cosmic law. So there is nothing supernatural cause. If you say that by the unseen force or *adrista* you mean the accumulated *samskaras* of the actions done in the previous incarnations, then you can conceive it, but you must further know that though *prarabdha* has produced your body and mind, yet it has no supreme authority to do and undo all things. You can only direct and transform your *samskaras* which were accumulated previously, and are also hoarded in this incarnation. You must remember that you can control habit by counter-habit.

Ignorance or nescience is the root of all evil. Ignorance about the *Atman*-knowledge is *ajnana*. I have already said that Sankara called *ajnana* or *maya* as the false-knowledge (vide the *Adhyasa-bhasya*). Ignorance should be translated into English as 'delusion', and not as illusion, because delusion does not mean an absolute non-existence (*asat*), but

it means *relative reality,* which exists for the time being, and does not bear permanent existence. Delusion is more like a dream. Dreams are real so long as we are dreaming, but when we wake up, they become unreal. If all these phenomenal and mental things with which we are living, be transitory, and if they exist for the time being and we consider them as real, then it is the same thing as if we are dreaming. But there is an awakening from sleep, and that is called superconsciousness. It is known also as God-consciousness. There it *appears* like a dream, but not at present. At present they all are real, and we must go on doing just as we are doing now, but we should keep it in our mind that the phenomenal and mental objects are dream and are unreal as they bear their relative existence. Sankara said in the commentary on the *Prashna-Upanishad* (1.16) : 'मायानाम वहिरन्यथा आत्मानं प्रकाश्यान्यथैव कार्यं करोति, सा माया मिथ्याचाररूपा' i.e. '*maya* causes to mislead unreality as reality, so it is like *mithyachara,* i.e. dealings which are unreal or false'. So everything is accomplished right if you escape from the delusive clutches of *maya.*

But, for it, discrimination is necessary. The *Devas* in the heavens are also not rescued from *maya.* Sri Ramakrishna used to tell us a story, and that story is . once Vishnu descended on the earth and took the body of a pig. He remained satisfied with the she-pig (*shukari*) in a muddy pond for a long time. In time, the she-pig gave birth to many offsprings, and Vishnu out of attachment lived in happiness with those offsprings. The *Devas* in heaven were at stake. They at last determined to go near the pond, and tried to bring back Vishnu. So they went near the pond, and saw that Vishnu was living in happiness with the offsprings. Then the *Devas* told Vishnu : 'O Vishnu, what are you doing here? You are the Lord of Vaikuntha, so go back to Vaikuntha'. Vishnu replied : 'No, no, I am alright here. You all go back. I shall not go'. They being disappointed went to Mahadeva (Siva), and related everything to him, that happened. Mahadeva gave them assurance, and told : "Don't be hopeless; I am going to Vishnu, and I shall let all the offsprings of Vishnu to be devoured by my atendants." Really the attendants (ghosts) of Mahadeva devoured the off-

springs one by one, and pierced the belly of Vishnu (with pig-body) with his tridant. Then Vishnu laughed at loudly, and came out from the body of the pig in effulgent form, and said : 'This is *maya*'. So *maya* can do and undo everything. And I have said before that *maya* is like a dream. As long as *maya* exists, so long ignorance persists, and when awakening comes, the darkness of ignorance is replaced by the light of knowledge.

You worship the deities, but I advise you to worship the living *Atman*-consciousness that eternally shines in your temple of the body. This worship is known as the worship of the *Atman* or *Atmapuja*. The *Atmapuja* means to identify your petty self with the universal Self or Brahman. While worshipping a deity, the priest will have to completely identify himself with the deity : 'देवं भुत्वा देवं यजेत्' ; 'देवीं भुत्वा देवीं यजेत्'। During the time of worship of Durga or Kali, the priest will have to perform first the function of *bhuta-suddhi*, and, in that function, the priest infused his own self, i.e. the vital force (*prana*) into the idol of Devi, Durga or Kali, and then it is understood that Devi Durga or Kali is energised with *prana*. The priest performs the function of *chaksurdana* which means the infusion of power of vision into the eyes of the Devi. There you will find that the priest infuses his vital energy or *prana* into the idol of Devi Durga or Kali. 'There the subjective idea or thought of 'देवीं भूत्वा देवीं यजेत्' * * is objectified into the deity, and the material body of the deity is then spiritualized with divine energy. So the performances of the functions of both *bhutasuddhi* and *chaksurdana* are not very easy thing. As long as the priest (*Sadhaka*) completely forgets his individual I-entity and identifies himself with the Divine Mother, so long his worship will not bring any success, so long the material earthen idol or *Mrinmayee* will not be transformed into spritual *Chinmayee*. In this age of materialism, the bright examples of it are Sadhaka Ramaprasad, and Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. They knew how to worship the *Atman* or Divine Energy. While the *Shastras* prescribe the worship of the idols of the deities, they say that the deities are not other than the symbols (*pratikas*) of one and the same *Atman* or Brahman. Patanjali said : 'तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः' i.e. 'the

Pranava or *Omkara* is the symbol of the Brahman'. The word *'tasya'* means 'the indeterminate formless (*nirguna, nirakara*) Brahman', and its symbol (*pratika*) is the *Pranava* which is conceived as the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman with form (i.e. *sakara*). The formless indeterminate Brahman is beyond the appreciation of the senses and also of the mind. So neither any sense, nor the mind, can conceive it. In order to conceive it, or to have an idea or a mental picture of it, the symbol of the Brahman with attribute (*guna*) and form (*akara*) is necessary. The importance of sign or symbol is to convey some idea or image, and in Yogadarshana and Vedanta *Pranava* as the universal and all-inclusive symbol has been conceived and been prescribed for concentration and meditation. It is essential for spiritual *sadhana.* Ordinary peoples have limited their vision into phenomenal or gross material objects, so they cannot easily appreciate or understand the supersensible objects. Therefore, they need some medium to appreciate the subtle and supersensible objects. The human beings are possessed of manifold tendencies, so their taste and temperament and choice must be expanded and rectified. The Hindu *Shastras* have prescribed different kinds of symbol or medium, and by these manifold symbols or mediums (*pratikas*) or images (*pratimas*), they try their best to reach the ultimate goal. The Hindu religion is very liberal, so it has not limited its vision to any particular thing, or object, or image, and, for this reason, hundreds and thousands of forms of deities have been imagined, and their various contemplative compositions (*dhyanas*) have been composed for getting ideas of them and also for realizing them with their true essence.

You have already noticed that faces of different men are not alike, and all faces differ from one another. Really they are not alike at all, and you cannot reduce all the faces into one, if you like. Similarly, though the manifold manifestations came (evolved) from one and the same cosmic mind (*Prakriti*) yet you cannot easily reduce them into one. But the Yogis say that if you practise concentration and meditation, you will be able to reach the cosmic mind, and from there you will attain the *Atman.* It is only possible first in the psychic plane, and then in the spiritual plane. But, in the material plane, you cannot reduce all the different human minds into

one. It is impossible. The scriptures say that the word (*vachaka*) and the meaning[1] (*vachya*) or the name and the person, are one and the same, because word or name conveys only the meaning or person. Word or name has no separate existence of its own other than the meaning or person. As a shadow of an object is meaningless other than the object, as a reflection (*prativimba*) of a person is meaningless other than *vimba* or the person, so the man or *jiva* being reflection of the Brahman, is non-different from the Brahman. In Vedanta, it is called the theory of reflected-reflection or *vimba-prativmba-vada*. The Vivarana school of Vedanta says that when the face of a man is reflected in the mirror, will you think that the face, reflected in the mirror, is different from the real face ? No, the face, reflected in the mirror, being a reflection or duplicate, is false or unreal, whereas the real face, which has been reflected, is real. However, to appreciate the Real through the medium of the idea, symbol or medium, idol-worship has been prescribed for the people in general. But it should be remembered that *Atmapuja* or the worship of the Real, is superior to symbol or image-worship. The *Mahanirvana-Tantra* said,

उत्तमो ब्रह्मसद्भावो ध्यानभावस्तु मध्यमः ।
स्तुतिर्जपोऽधमो भावो बह्यपूजाधमाधमा ॥

That is, 'the feeling of oneness with the Brahman is best, the state of meditation is middle, praying and muttering of the *mantras* are lowest, and, external worship is worst'. In fact, the secondless indeterminate Brahman has been conceived in different forms. The conception of the determinate Brahman is essential for them who are in daulity, and love to worship the Brahman as God, Divine Mother, or any other deity. Viewing from the plane of creation (*sristi*) or evolution (*abhivyakti*) and also from that of worship and contemplation, duality or multiplicity appears real. At this plane, *sadhana, sadhaka,* and *siddhi—jnana, jnata,* and *jnyeya,—upasana, upasaka,* and *upasya*—all are real and meaningful. I have already said before that these are meant for men of different tastes, different likings, and different viewpoints. Manifoldness is

[1] The word 'meaning' conveys the idea of a desired object (*Istha*).

the natural condition of the universe. But it may be asked as to where from this idea came ? The idea of manifoldness evolves from the idea of oneness, as the ideas of two, three, and many give rise the idea of one. This universe is the plane of relativity, and here everything phenomenal exists in relation to other things. But beyond relativity there exists something which does not suffer from relativity, and that something is the transcendental one without the second. When you realize that transcending principle, everything relational or related will seem unreal, because the related things or objects are subject to all kinds of change. The *Mahanirvana Tantra* said that they who like the supreme knowledge of the Brahman, are superior or best. You meditate upon the Brahman, but you naturally separate the idea of the Brahman from you, otherwise the Brahman will not be an object of your meditation or consciousness. But you will be able to go beyond the sense of duality through the processes of discrimination and meditation, but as long as you will involve yourself in the process of meditation, you will have to live with the sense of duality, and there is no scape from it. So, in comparison with the feeling or experience of non-duality, the idea of duality is inferior. Regarding prayer and counting of the beeds for *mantra*, it can be said that they are also the means or paths to proceed towards achieving the Brahman-knowledge, but they depend on the clear conception of the choosen deity, to whom prayer or act of muttering of the *mantra* depends always on some method or process, in absence of which prayer or muttering of the *mantra* is resolved into nothing and is meaningless. So all methods or processes are meant only for the lowest kind of the *Sadhakas*, who live and have their beings in duality. Regarding external worship, without realizing its real significance, says Tantra, is worst kind of religious practice because the worshippers are carried out in it by their own deep-rooted beliefs and sectarian faiths and creeds. In many cases whose worshippers are misdirected and unsuccessful. So Tantra says all to select the path of discrimination first, and then renunciation, which will lead them to the immediate awareness of the *Atman* or Brahman.

Acharya Sankara said that apparently the existence of the world seems real, so long as the realization of the non-dual eternal Brahman is not attained : 'सर्वव्यवहाराणामेव प्राग्ब्रह्मात्मता-विज्ञानात् सत्यत्वोपपत्तेः' and when the Brahman-knowledge dawns upon a man, he realizes everything phenomenal as ephimeral and unreal, and the supreme Brahman is the only eternal and real one. But you must remember that after Self-realization phenomenal universe appears as unreal means that everything living and non-living of the universe is pervaded by the reality of the Brahman. Until and unless the Divine realization does come, we do not consider the process of contemplation (*upasana*), symbol and image (*pratika* and *pratima*), deity (*devata*), and *mantra* as useless, because if we do that (living in duality), our faith and belief will be shaky, or be lost. Sri Ramakrishna said, '*yata mata tata patha*', i.e. 'as many beliefs there are, so many are the paths or methods for attaining to God'. So all kinds of religious faith and practice are real and helpful for us, so long as we do not reach the goal. The religious faiths and practices may be manifold, but the goal is one. So we will have to try our utmost to proceed towards the goal, and when the goal is reached, we will know what is real, and what is unreal, and not before that. The Advaitins discriminate the real from the unreal by saying 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*), but the devotees adopt the path of devotion (*bhakti*) and the performers of action select the path of work without asking its result (*niskama-karma*), and the Yogis follow the path of concentration and meditation. So the paths are many and the faiths and creeds are manifold, but the goal, the realization of the *Atman* or Brahman, is one. So we must not quarrel with one another in the path, but must reach the goal. The quarrels are only in the path, and are not beyond the path, and when you will reach beyond your religious practices (*sadhana*), you will find tranquil peace, harmony, and divine love.

Sincere practice (*sadhana*) is required. I have already said that you will have to proceed towards the goal for the attainment of the Absolute, following certain belief and path. Those who are idle, talk too much, and do not practice, they are the men of undeveloped intellect (*manda-buddhi*). Sadhaka Tulsidas said,

सोते सोते केया करो भाइ उठ भज मुरार ।
एगायसा दिन आते ह्याय यव् लम्वा पसार ॥

'O my friend, what are you doing always going to sleep? Arise and awake, and the days are numbering, so take shelter in Hari or Ramachandra. Further he said : 'कै कहे हरि दूर ह्याय, किन्तु हरि ह्याय हृदयमे' i.e. 'some say that Bhagavan Hari is at distance, but Hari resides in the heart of all'. To Tulsidas, there was no difference between Hari and Ramachandra, because he was a true devotee of God, he was a realized man, so he possessed no idea of difference or duality between Hari and Ramachandra.

It is very difficult to remove the idea of duality from an ordinary man, because as long as we are the slaves to senses and desires and passions, so long the idea of duality of difference remains. The case of a man of developed mind is different. The intelligent ones can analyse what is good or bad. The intelligent ones have the capacity to quieten thei unruly and disbalanced state of the mind. Yet it requires sufficient training for developing the mind, and when the mind is developed and intelligence shines forth, then the power of self-analysis or discrimination comes, and then it is easy to quieten the onrush of the modifications or diverse sensations of the mind, so as to concentrate and to be transformed into pure consciousness, which brings permanent peace and happiness to a man.

There are two opposite things in the world, one is hunger or desire, and the other is renunciation or self-satisfaction. Hunger or desire leads men to worldliness (*samsara*), whereas renunciation cuts asunder the knots of worldliness. The cause of hunger is dissatisfaction, or it can be said that intense desire is transformed into passion. Religious and spiritual men should try to educate the mind and to control the onrush of the mind. The psychic entity is the mind, and the psychic force may be called the *mukhya-prana* or vital energy. The psychic entity evolves in twofold aspects, analysed and rectified aspect (*shuddha-vasana*), and gross material and unrectified aspect (*malina-vasana*). These two aspects of the mind have been beautifully defined and described in the *Yogavasistha-Ramayana*. There it has been said

that *shuddha-vasana* enlightens the soul (*jivatman*) and helps it to attain the God-realization, whereas *malina-vasana* leads men downwards, and binds them in the net of *samsara.* Vedanta says that the *sattva* and *rajas* qualities are predominant in the former, whereas *rajas* and *tamas* qualities are predominant in the latter. So, those who aspire to attain the realization of the *Atman,* should abandon both the *vasanas, shuddha* (pure) and *malina* (impure), and should concentrate their mind to quieten the mind in meditation, which will, in reality, lead them, to the state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*) or God-intuition. The Jnanis, or the followers of Jnana Yoga, select the path of discrimination, which prepares the mind to catch the glowing glimps of the transcendental knowledge.

Similarly there are two qualities, good and evil. The good quality is that which brings pleasure and balance, and evil or bad quality is that which brings pain and disbalance unto us. But the qualities, good and evil, are relative, and the relative things are not real. I have explained this theory of good and evil in my booklet, *Philosophy of Good and Evil.* The *Gita* also teaches us to make a balance between good and evil : 'सुखेदुःखे समे कृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ' * * (II.38), i.e. 'treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and defeat'. This good one brings pleasure, and the evil one brings pain unto us. but the wise ones consider both good and evil,—pleasure and pain—alike. Jesus the Christ, taught a noble thing : "Return good for evil, and bless them who curse you". This practice is very difficult one in the world of action. This practice is possible for them who are self-realized men, and who see the Divinity in everything and everywhere. Christ was a Yogi, and he controlled and subdued all desires and, passions, and his compassionate heart was always ready to forgive the sinners. Ordinary men are disbalanced or perturbed in facing any evil or sin. So practice of Yoga is necessary to control the mind. The principle of non-violence is very difficult to follow for ordinary men who are in the sense-plane and do not know the practice of bringing the mind under control. If you wish to practise non-violence, be non-violent, both inwardly and outwardly. So, it requires practice. Be patient like the ever-enduring earth, who carries everything good and evil in

her loving boosom.

The Sannyasins who have renounced their home and hearth, should be patient, merciful, and non-violent. The orchard garb (*gerua*) is the symbol of renunciation. Renunciation must be called into action both inwardly and outwardly. The clothes must not only be dyed or tinged with *gerua,* but mind must also be dyed with the colour of renunciation. The life of a Sannyasin should be the life of renunciation and desirelessness, otherwise if a Sannyasin only begs door to door, and cannot make him free from the clutches of desires and passions, then what is the utility of taking a vow of a Sannyasin ? He who loves his home and hearth and his near and dear ones with selfish motive, cannot detach him from the bindings of *samsara* or *maya,* but he who can make him free from all household-bindings, is able to purify his heart and also attains to God. He may join in any Ashrama or Math, because he may not get the favourable environment among the family men to satisfy his religious quest, but if after joining the Ashrama or Math, he hankers after desires and objects of sense-enjoyments, then his life is bound to be miserable and his aim of life becomes fruitless. So before taking the vow of a Sannyasin, beware of your desires which drag you down to the plane of sense-enjoyments. First examine your mind what it wants, and practise at the same time self-control. In this age of materialism, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is a bright example of both the Sannyasins and the householders. He was married, but he considered his consort as a representation of the Divine Energy. He worshipped his wife as Mother Bhavatarini, and realized through her all the women of the universe as the divine representations of Sakti. He was initiated into the Tantric *sadhana* by a great woman, Bhairavi Yogeswari, and afterwards he took *sannyasa* initiation from Totapuri, who belonged to the *dsanami naga* sect. He became an ideal Sannyasi. He did not touch any coin of silver or gold, but threw them to the water of the Ganges by saying *'taka mati mati taka'*, i.e. silver or gold coins are like the dust of the earth, and, therefore, they have no worth or value'. His divine consort Sri Sarada Devi lived with him, but he considered her as Sakti, and Sarada Devi too considered him as Siva. He used to

attain to the superconscious state (*samadhi*), whenever absorbed in any Divine sentiment (*bhava*), and used to enjoy everlasting bliss and happiness all the time in his life. He was the ideal type of a Sannyasin as well as of a householder. So you must follow the lofty ideal of his sanctified life, and select the path which will make your life enlightened and fruitful. Sri Ramakrishna came as a Saviour to save the people, irrespective of caste, creed, and colour. He showed in this age of agnosticism a divine ideal of his own life that faiths and methods (*mala o patha*) may vary, but the goal is one and secondless. He, by his *sadhana,* proved that men may choose anyone of the spiritual methods that suits him, and give up all kinds of blind faith, and struggle hard with earnestness and love to reach the goal. All religious and spiritual methods (*sadhanas*) will lead every sincere seeker after Truth to one and the same goal to the ocean of the eternal existence-intelligence-bliss (*Sacchidananda*). Be ready to march towards God, because life is short, and obstacles are many. Hold before you the ideal of Sri Ramakrishna, the latest Incarnation of God, and proceed towards the goal, and sanctify your mundane life and family—'कुलं पवित्रं जननी कृतार्था'। And remember that Jnana Yoga is useful to restrain your mind through the path of discrimination. Jnana Yoga or path of knowledge says to constantly discriminate between the permanent and the transitory, the eternal and the non-eternal and the real and the unreal. In other words, we must seek to discover what we really are. In the *Mundaka Upanishad,* we find a reference of discrimination between our real Self and the apparent self, which has been described in an allegorical way :

द्वा सुपर्णा सयुजा सखाया
समानं वृक्षं परिषस्वजाते।
तयोरन्यः पिप्पलं स्वाद्वत्त्य-
नश्नन्नन्यो अभिचाकशीति।३।१।१

That is, 'like two birds of golden plumage, inseparable companions, the individual self and the immortal Self are perched on the branches of the selfsame tree. The former tastes of the sweet and bitter fruits of the tree, the latter, tasting of neither, calmly observes'. The verses III.1-3 play on the same string of the harp, and say that when the seer beholds the self-

effulgent[1] One, the supreme Being, then transcending both good and evil, and freed from all impurities and dualities, he communes himself with the Lord. Then and then only Divine realization of the *Atman* comes. Realization of the *Atman* or Brahman culminates in the experience or absolute absorption in transcendental consciousness. During this highest experience, the universe of name and form disappears and the aspirant sees his own true nature as the Brahman. He then recognizes that the Self, instead of being apart from the world, shines in all things, and also shines as pure intelligence, existence and bliss. Then diversity or multiplicity disappears, no longer remains there any sense of 'me' or 'mine', and we see the world in an entirely different vision.

CHAPTER VII

THE UPANISHAD

(17th December, 1924, Wednesday, at 5-30 p.m.)

On the 17th December, 1924, Swami Abhedananda discussed about the *Katha Upanishad,* with the help of Sankara's commentary. The special feature of his discussions was that he used to discuss every subject in a comparative way, because he used to say that the method of study should be in the process of 'something of everything and everything of something'. He discussed systematically the *Yogasutras* of Rishi Patanjali, the *Bhagavad Bita* with the help of the graments of the commentaries of Sridhara-swami, Sankara, and others, and the *Katha Upanishad.* The recorded lectures on the *Katha Upanishad* have been given here only from the verse 19 of the first chapter.

Swami Abhedananda said that in the Vedic society, the image-worship was not in practice. Let me give some informations about the Vedic sacrifices and their characteristics, which will help you to get some ideas of the Veda, with its social and religious functions. The Vedic period was the age of performances of the sacrifices invoking the deities like Indra, Vayu, Varuna, Mitra, Agni, and others before the sacred fires of different sacrifices, conducted by not less than sixteen Brahmin-priests, along with the chief priest. In the Vedic age, three Vedas, Rik, Sama, and Yaju (Trayi) were prevalent. The Vedas were subdivided into two portions, *Mantra* and *Brahmana.* These two portions used to play an important rôle in the Vedic society. Those who propagated these two portions of the Vedas, were known as the Rishis. The Rig Veda was composed of different stanzas, in memory of the Vedic gods or detities. In the Yajurveda, those stanzas of the Rig Veda were used to be applied in the sacrifices, and, in the Samaveda, those stanzas were tuned with Vedic notes, which were in downward movements (*avarohanagati*). From the classical period, those movements of the Vedic notes or tones, *prathama, dvitiya, tritiya, chaturtha, mandra, atisvarya,* and *krusta* were changed into upward

movement (*avrohana-gati*), taking the new names of *madhyama, panchama, dhaivada, nishada, sadja, rishabha,* and *gandhara.* The Vedic hymns, consecrated to different deities, were first sung in only three Vedic notes, *nishada* (*mandra*) *sadja* (*madhya*), and *rishabha* (*madhya*). Gradually, five notes were introduced and the (Vedic) scale was composed of pentatonic form (*audhava*). This pentatonic form was prevalent in all the Vedic branches (*shakhas*), except the *Kauthuma-shakha,* in which seven notes were used and their scale (of the *Vedic samagana*) was heptatonic. It is said that in some recensions (*shakhas*) of the Veda, hexatonic scale was also in practice. The ancient singers of Rome, Greece, Mesopotamia, Chaldea, Arabia, Persia, China, Japan, and even of Burma, Java, Indonesia, and other lands, the pentatonic scale (scale with five notes) was prevalent. The ancient Western nations used also the pentatonic scale in their musical system. In India, in the classical period, perhaps in the beginning of the Christian era, seven tones gradually formed the Indian musical scale. There were practice of three registrars (*sthanas*), *mandra, madhya,* and *tara* (grave, middle, and acute or high) with their respective pitches, different aesthetic sentiments and moods (*rasas* and *bhavas*), so as to infuse life into music (*samagana*). Therefore, the *samans* with tunes or tones were also of different kinds according to the practices of different Vedic recensions (*shakhas*). There were hymns in both prose and poetry formulas. The Yajnikas used also *nigada* and *praisha mantras,* and composed hymns in prose formula. There were other *mantras* and hymns, which were used only in the *shanti-svastayana.* The Rishis were the composers and propagators of the *mantras,* nay, they were also the seers of the *mantras,* and the deities (*devatas*) were different in different *mantras* or hymns. Those *mantras* were applied in the sacrifices, and the hymns or *samans* were sung before them.

Now, what is a *mantra* ? The true meaning of *mantra* is 'मननात् त्रायते य सः मन्त्रः' i.e. 'thought of what rescuses the devotee (from the bondage of *samsara*), is called '*mantra*'. In the *Guhyasamajatantra,* the etymology of *mantra* is *manas*—'*mentation*' and *tra*—'*protection*'. Herbert V. Guenthur has given the English translation of the *mantra* :

Mentation which proceeds
Through senses and sense-objects
In named *manas*;
Protection is meant by *tra*
That which liberation from
worldliness is said to be
Consists of commitments and
restraints;
To guard them with existential
Norms is said to be the
mantra-conduct.

Another explanation is that *man* refers to the awareness of reality as it is and *tra*—to compassion protecting sentient beings.[1]

This is a Tantric meaning, but, in the Vedas, it bears a different significance. The *Mantra-Samhita* was known as *mantra* in the Vedic times. For the purpose of understanding or remembering the proper meaning of the sacred *rik*-stanzas while functioning the sacrifice, the Vedas were divided into *Mantra-Samhita* and *Brahmana*. The portion which were meant for *upasana* of the followers of the Vanaprasthas, was known as the *Aranyaka*, and the portion in which the spiritual and mystical doctrines were given, was known as the *Upanishad* or Vedanta. The *riks* or stanzas with letters and meters were meant for invoking the Devas or Vedic deities, and they were also known as the *mantras*, and those *mantras* were either duly prescribed, or prohibited, for the use in the sacrificial functions. In the later period, though the *mantras* or sacred syllables were connected with their meanings as the Devatas or deities, yet they bore some now meanings and significances. Then the *mantras* themselves were known as the deities with their separate sound-bodies (*nada-tanu*), i.e. the *mantras* enshrined the deities, and revealed the deities. Tantra says that it is the sound-body of the deity, having a remarkable connection with the body of the deity which is contemplated in *dhyana* or meditation. The Tantric *mantras* are divided into *kādi, hādi, and ka-hādi*, according to their respective Schools.[2]

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[1]Vide *Tibetian Buddhism without Mystification* (1966), p. 53)..

[2] The Sri Vidya School of Tantra (South Indian) holds that the Vidya of Manmatha or Kamaraja is known as *kādi*, because the *mantras*

In the Vedic sacrifices, butters, cakes and Soma-juice (*havih, purodasha,* and *somarasa*) were applied, and the application of butter (*havih-tyaga*) was known as oblation (*ahuti*). The sanctified butter was known with its peculiar name, *ajya*. Milk, curd, sweet-cooked rice, (*payasa*), and meat were also used for the purpose of the sacrifices. The house-holder (*grihastha*) used to arrange the sacrifices, and were known as the Yajamanas. The Ritvikas (priests) were divided according to three Vedas. The Ritvikas of the Rig Veda was known as the Hota, who only used to read the Rik-stanzas. The Advaryu-priest used to pour in the blazing flames of the fire the oblations (*ahutis*). The Advaryus were the Rig Vedic Ritvikas. The priests who used sing the *samans,* were known as the Udgātā. And there was an expert chief priest, whose name was the Brahmā. Brahmā used to conduct and supervise the whole functions of the Vedic sacrifices. It should be remembered that some of the sacrificial functions were divided into some parts, *grihya, avasathya, smarta,* and *shrauta*. The Agnihotra, Agnistoma, Asvemedha, Rajasuya, etc., were included in the category of *shrauta-karma* or *shrauta-yajna*. The fire of those *shrauta-yajnas* was known as *garhapatya, ahavaniya,* and *dakshinagni*. The base of the *garhapatya-agni* was in rectangular form surrounded by four straight lines. The base of the *ahvaniga-agni* was a circle, and that of the *dakshniagni* was a semi-circle. Now, it seems that from these forms of the bases of the Yajnashalas as well as the sizes and measures of the altars of the sacrifices, evolved some forms of the deities in later times, because the fires of the altars were named after different presiding deities of the sacrifices.

From the records of the history of India we come to know that after the *parinirvana* of Gautama Buddha, mounds (*stupas*) were built, so as to depict the symbolic replica or symbols of the statue of Buddha, and I think that the idea of the Buddhist mounds or *stupas* evolved from the ideas of the forms of the altars or houses built for the Vedic sacrifices (*yajnashalas*) in later period. Now, it is quite possible

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begin with the letter, *ka,* and that of Agastya is known as *hādi,* as the *mantras* begin with the letter, *h*. The *ka-hädi* School of *mantras* is alternatively used.

that from the idea of the *stupas*, evolved the idea of the stakes or *yupas*. The use of the sacred *yupas* was prevalent in the Vedic time, because many animals were used to be sacrificed for the purpose of oblation (*ahuti*) in the sacred fires of the Vedic altars. It is quite natural, therefore, that the Buddhist mounds or *stupas* evolved from the *yupas* of the Vedic sacrifices. Gradually from the *stupas*, temples and images of the deities evolved in more later period. Most of the connoisseurs, artists, and architects are of the opinion that the Buddha-image also evolved from the idea of the Buddhist *stupas*, and afterwards many images of the Vedic and Puranic deities were conceived, and given shapes.[3]

[3]The Yupa-worship was prevalent in the Vedic time, as a part and parcel of the Vedic sacrifice. The Stupa-worship as a representation of a deity or superman, evolved after the Yupa-worship. In the Buddhist period, the idea of Stupa also evolved, and in the Asokan period this idea took its material form. Asoka is said to have built during his lifetime several thousands of Stupas enshrining the relics of Buddha in various corners of his wide-flung empire. Of the monuments unearthed at Saranath, there can with certainty be assigned to the Asokan period. The next monument of the Maurya period is the brick Stupa or relic-tower situated near the Asoka Pillar. In the *Mahavamsha* and ancient Buddhist texts it is recorded that the corporeal remains of Buddha after his cremation, had been divided into eight portions enshrined in eight Stupas at Rajagriha (Rajgir), Vaishali (Basarh), Kapilavastu, Alakappo, Ramagrama (Rampur Deoriya in the district of Basti in Oudh), Vethadipa (modern Bethia. east of Gorakhpur) Pava Patraona, 12 miles north-west of Kushinagar), and Kushinagar (Kasi). A Stupa at Barhut, and second and third Stupas at Sanchi in Central India, and the Great Temple or Stupa at Bodh Gaya at Gaya are worth-mentioning.

Now all these relics were erected in the Maurya and Sunga periods. In the Andhra and Kushana periods, we find the symbols of Gautam Buddha which were depicted in the form of *pipal* tree, *triratna* (trident) representing Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, combined with the *dharmachakra* or Wheel-of-the Law, on the top of a Persepolian Pillar with bell-shaped capital. In Taxila, we find also some relics representing Buddha. The most important innovation introduced during the Kushana period, is the Buddha image. The Graeco-Buddhist School of Gandhara strangely impregnated with the influence of classical Greek art, first started the portrayal of the figure of Buddha. In the Mathura School of Buddhist art, we find a specimen of class of work. A Bodhisattva statue of red sandstone of Mathura is recovered at Saranath between the Main Shrine and Dharmarajika-Stupa. In the Gupta period, we find also some pillars of stone and iron, among which the iron pillar at Qutab near Delhi is worth-mentioning. Besides, the Dhamek-Stupa at Saranath also reminds us of a precious production of the Gupta period. Hiuen Tsang visited Saranath in the 7th century A.D. and he wrote that it was there that Tathagata (the Buddha) having arrived at enlightenment, preached the Wheel-of-the-Law. Now we see that in different strata of Buddhist period, Stupas and other relics representing Buddha were built, and gradually

In the Vedas, we find the sun-worship along with the fire-worship, though fire-worship evolved from the sun-worship. We got many references that fire (Agni) was conceived in the Vedic period as a replica of the sun, and the fire used to be regarded as a 'double' or representative of the sun, and was considered as the sun pertaining to earth (*prithivistha-surya*). I have already said that in the sacrificial fire different deties were invoked and oblation of butter used to be offered on the tongue of the fire. Even now that Vedic tradition is preserved in the society in other form, as after worship of the Devas and the Devis, *homa*-performances are observed and butter is offered to the blazing fire, thinking that the Devas or Devis are accepting that offering of butter (*havih*) for the fruition of the function of worship. In the Upanishadic period we find a reference of Devi Haimavati, the daughter of Himavat or Himalayas, in the *Kena-Upanishad* : 'सस्मिन्नेवाकाशे स्त्रीयमाजगाम बहुशोभमानामुमां हैमवतीं तां होवाच किमेतद्यक्षमिति' (१२) * * i.e., 'in that very space he approached the superbly beautiful and charming Uma-Haimavati. To her (he said), 'what is this Yaksha ? Yaksha was a venerable Being, and he was afterwards identified with Devi Uma, the daughter of the snowy mountains Himalayas. Some are of the opinion that Uma-Haimavati was no other than Devi Durga, but most of the scholars have differed in this respect. Really the Upanishadic Uma-Haimavati has no connection with idea and evolution of Goddess Durga. One of the flames or tongues of the sacrificial fire were known as 'Havyavahani". So when the image of Goddess Durga was imagined in the Pauranic age, Her complexion or colour of the body was conceived as deep yellow like the *shone* flower.

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there evolved the statues of Buddha in stones, sandstones, and marbles.

Rao Bahadur K. N. Dikshit, is of the opinion that the introduction of the Buddha image directly attributable to the influence of the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara profoundly influenced the later course of Buddhist sculpture. When once again we find the *Madhyadesha* or middle Gangetic valley as the herb of the Indian empire, the synthesis of the previous artistic achievements in the different regions was consumated in a remarkable manner. Buddhist art have reached its zenith in the creation of the Buddha images at Saranath and Mathura in the Gupta age, and although a profusion of effort is noticeable in the later centuries in the production of the Mugadha School, they represent a decadent stage of Indian art * *. (Vide *A Guide to Saranath* [1937] Introduction, p. XIV).

In the *khila* part of the Rig Veda, Devi Durga was conceived as Ratridevi, who was also known in the *Taittiriya Aranyaka* of the Yaurveda 'Havyavahini Agni'. In the *Munda-ka-Upanishad* of the Atharvaveda (i.9), it has been said,

काली करालो च मनोजवा च
सुलोहिता या च सुधूम्रवर्णा ।
स्फुलिङ्गिनी बिश्वरूची च देबी
लेलायमाना इति सप्त जिह्वाः ॥

That is, Kali, Karali, Manojava, and Sulchita, and that which is Sudhumravarna, as also Sphuligini, and the shining Visvaru-chi—these are the seven flaming tongues of the fire'. In the *Satapatha-Brahman,* the fire has been conceived as Rudra, Sarva, Pashupati, Ugra, Ashani, Bhava, Mahadeva, and Ishana. It seems that on the altar, named 'Dakshnatana', the burning fire, named Mahadeva, was conceived as Sivalinga on the *Gauripatta.* In the Rig Veda (3.9), we find also the name of the sacrificial altar as 'Dakshnatanaya' or 'Dakshatana' : 'धिया चक्रे बरेण्या भूतानां गर्भमादधे । दक्षस्य पितरं तना ।' The Rig Veda says that 'like father, the altar, Dakshatanaya, will hold fire'. In the *Mundaka-Upanishad* (I.2.3), the rites (*yagas*) of *Agnihotra, Darshapurnamasa, Chaturmasya, Agrayana, Vaisvadeva,* etc., are mentioned,

यस्याग्निहोमदर्शमपौर्णमासा—
मचातुर्मास्यमनाग्रयणमतिथिर्वजितं च ।

In the *Mundaka* (2.1.8), we further find the mention of seven kinds of *Prana,* seven kinds of Archi, Homa, and Sami-dha : 'सप्त प्राणाः प्रभवन्ति तस्मात्, सप्तार्चिषः समिधः सप्त होमा' । Like the sacrificial fire, the sun was worshipped as God, the Powerful, in the Vedic times. I have already said that the sun was replaced by the fire. The consecrated sacred butter (*havih*), which was considered as a symbol of the sun, used to be offer-ed in the sacrificial fire. Then the sun was conceived as the fire of the upper world, and the fire, as the sun of the nether world. From this it is understood that fire was considered as the sacred symbol of the sun, as the symbol-worship was already prevalent in the Vedic society. In the *Brihadaranyaka,* and other *Upanishads,* we find worship as well as contem-plation (*dhyana*) of the *pratika* or symbol, and it was after-wards known as *pratika-upasana, ahamgraha-upasana,* etc.

In the *Mundaka* (I.2.5), we find the mention that when the Yajamana used to offer oblations in the seven blazing flames of the fire during the performance of the *Agnihotra-yaga*, those flames used to lead him to the heaven through the rays of the sun : 'एतेषु यश्चरते भ्राजमानेषु, यथाकालं चाहुतयो ह्याददायन्। तन्नयन्त्येताः सूर्यस्य रश्मयो * *'। Again, in the *Mundaka* (I.2.6), we find that the glowing oblations used to welcome the Yajamana for taking rim to the *brahmaloka* through the path of the rays of the sun.

The sun was again conceived as the golden covering : 'हिरण्मयेण पात्रेण सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम्', * * i.e., 'the face of Truth was covered by the effulgent covering of gold'. So, the *Sadhakas* prayed there : 'पूषन्नेकर्षे यम सूर्यप्राजापत्यव्यूह रश्मोन् समूह * *' we find there that an intelligent Being has been imagined in the sun. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad* we also find the reference of it. In the Rig Veda, the sun, in the form of fire, has been prayed to lead the *Sadhaka* by the holy path (to the heaven): 'अग्ने नय सुपथा राये अस्मान्' * * This *mantra* of the Rig Veda was composed in connection with the marching of the disembodied soul either by *devayana* or *pitriyana* by the path of the *devas* or that of the *pitris* or fathers.

In the Vedic and post-Vedic periods, there were practices of prayers to the sun and the fire. We also find the practice of offering the oblations to the sacrificial fire. The sun used to be worshipped along with the Nature or *Prakriti*. Three aspects of the sun, morning, midday, and evening, were conceived, and that practice is still living among the Brahmins when they observe the *sandhyavidhi*. And it is interesting to note that what the Hindus did in the Vedic time, the Persians follow that practice with the help of Zendavesta even in the present time. The deity of the Persians is the fire. Even now the *sagnika*-Brahmins (the Brahmins who perform religious rites with the help of the fire) of Madras and Bombay preserve the fire like ancient times. They do not take anything without offering oblations to the fire. The Persians are still preserving their 'Eternal Fire' like the *sagnika* or Samavedic Brahmins of the Vedic age. I have seen the 'Fire Temple' of the Persians in Bombay. There, in the altar, fire has been carefully preserved, and that is their 'Eternal Fire'. Fire conceived as the symbol of knowledge or wisdom. In

the intellectual period, i.e., in the Upanishadic age, philosophical interpretations of all the material objects were made for realizing the true significance of the Vedas and *Upanishads*. At that time, the sun and fire both were concerned as the symbol of wisdom or enlightenment.

In the enlightened Upanishadic period, we also find that practice along with the Nature-worship. The internal spiritual worship was also in practice. So, by the side of the matter-worship, the spirit-worship came into being. As for example, in the eighth chapter of the *Chhandogya-Upanishad*, it has been asked : 'यदिदमस्मिन् ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरोकं वेश्म, दहरोऽस्मिन्नन्तराकाशः, किस्तदत्र बिद्यते यदन्वेष्ठव्यम्।' In reply to this, it has been said : 'यावान् बा अन्नमाकाशः, तावत्नेषोऽन्तहृदय-आकाश उभे अस्मिन् द्यावापृथिवी अन्तरेब समाहिते। उभावग्निश्च वायुश्च, सूर्याचन्द्रमसावुभौ बिद्युन्नक्षत्राणि, यच्चासेहास्ति यच्च नास्ति सर्वं तदस्मिन् समाहिमिति।' * * * That is, as the etherial space exists outside in Nature, so inside in the heart. The natural fire, air, sun, moon, lightning, stars—all these objects also exist inside of the human body. Besides, there are the times, present, past, and future. Sri Ramakrishna also said : 'या आछे भाण्डे, ता आछे ब्रह्माण्डे' * * i.e., objects that exist outside, also exist in the external world'. That is, with the development of human intellect and intuition, the people of the Upanishadic period, gradually came to know that objective everything of the universe are representations of the subjective ones. So, if anyone worships the etherial space (*akasha*) that exists in the heart, he worships the external extensive Nature, or *Prakriti*. The external shining (material) sun was gradually conceived as the internal shining Soul that exists in the cave of the heart. We find in the *Upanishad* 'अस्मिन् ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकम्' * * i.e., 'in the etherial space of the heart, which is known as the sacred abode of the Brahman'. The cave of the human heart was conceived as etherial space or *akasha*, and as the sun shines in the vast etherial space, so the Soul or *Atman* shines in the etherial space of the human heart. The *Upanishad* has further identified the heart, the abode of the Brahman, with the 'cave' (3.1.7). The *Mundaka-Upanishad* says : 'पश्यत्स्विहैव निहितं गुदायाम्'।

Like the *Chhandogya-Upanishad* (8.1.2-3), Patanjali has similarly said 'हृदये चित्तसंविद्' (३।३४), The commentator Vyasa has said : 'अस्मिन् ब्रह्मपुरे दहरं पुण्डरीकं वेश्म, तत्र बिज्ञानम् * *'। It means

the heart (*hridaya*) is not only a peculiar part, but is the essential part of the body, and in this heart the soul is conceived to shine, and, therefore, the soul, the source of consciousness, should be meditated upon, so as to receive consciousness or highest knowledge, Bhojaraja similarly says in his commentary (on III.34 : 'हृदयं शरीरस्य प्रदेशविशेषः। तस्मिन्नधो मुखस्वल्पपुण्डरीकाभ्यन्तरे अन्तःकरणस्य स्थानम्। तत्र कृतसंयमस्य स्व-परिचित्तज्ञानमुत्पद्यते। स्वचित्तगताः सर्वा बासनाः परचित्तगतांश्च रागादीनं जानातीत्यर्थः' i.e., 'by performing control with reference to heart, a knowledge of the thinking principle of one's own and of another person is obtained, i.e., 'the Yogi comes to know all the residua in his own thinking principle, as well as passions, etc., in other thinking principle'. 'The *Katha-Upanishad* (I.1.14) says : * * 'तमेतन्निहितं गुहायाम्।' The supreme consciousness that shines in the cave of the heart, is the *Atman*-consciousness. So the Yogis advised the aspirants of divine knowledge to concentrate and meditate upon that source of divine consciousness (the heart). In the *Shvetasvasara-Upanishad* (3.20), it has further been said 'अङ्गुष्ठमात्रः पुरुषोऽन्तरात्मा, सदा जनानां हृदये सन्निविष्टः' i.e., the *Atman* has been conceived as a divine Being, which is of the size of a thumb, and that concentrated consciousness shines in the heart of all the living beings'. And this divine conscious Being or *Purusha* is 'अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्, आत्मास्य जन्तोर्निहितो गुहायाम्'। Being or *Purusha* is smaller than an atom, again greater than the vast *Mahat* or *Prakriti*,[4] and that Being exists in the form of the *Atman* in all beings'. The part of the verse : अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान् * * connotes the idea that the sphere of the man's understanding or konwledge gradually expands and it extends from the matter-consciousness to the spirit-consciousness, from the gross to the subtle or causal, and from the limited to the unlimited, and it is quite natural.

In the *Brihadaranyaka-Upanishad*, the horse of the Asvamedha sacrifice was compared with the Prajapati, the Creator. The head of the horse (Prajapati) was Usha, the eyes were the sun, the air, as the vital force or *Prana* : 'ऊषा वा अश्वस्य मेध्यस्य शिरः, सूर्यश्चक्षुः, वातः प्राणः'। The Asvamedha-sacrifice was considered as the sun : 'एष ह बा अश्वमेधो य एष तपति, तस्य संवत्सर आत्मा अयम ग्निरर्क'

[4] But *Prakriti* of the Sankya and *Avyakta* of the *Upanishad* are not one and the same thing.

These ideas evolved when the sun-worship was in practice in the Vedic, and especially in the Upanishadic period.

I have already discussed about the evolution of the image-worship in India. The image-worship evolved from the idea of the symbol-worship, which was prevalent in the Vedic period. In the Upanishadic period, Omkara, Gayatri, and the sacrificial Yupa were conceived as the symbol of the universal *Atman* or Brahman. The first-*mantra* of the *Chhandogya-Upanishad* is 'ओमित्येदक्षरमुद्गीथदुपासीत * *' i.e., 'meditate on the letter OM as Udgitha, because OM is a pleasing name of the Brahman'. The *Upanishad* explains what is meant by OM : 'ओमिति हुदुद्गायतिस्योपव्याख्यानम् * *' i.e., 'OM is sung loudly, and so it is known as Udgitha'.वाच ऋक् रसः, ऋचः साम रसः, साम्न उद्गीथा रसः * * i.e., 'speech is the extract of the Rik-stanza, *saman* is the extract of Rik, and Udgitha is the extract of *saman*'. The *Upanishad* says that Udgitha or OM should be meditated upon as the *Paramatman.* Sankara says in the commentary : 'परमात्मवत् उपास्यत्वादित्यभिप्रायः * *' because OM or Omkara is the extract (*rasa*) of everything in this universe.

The letter OM is universal and all-pervasive. The letter 'OM' is constituted of the letter A-U-M. The *Mundakhya-Upanishad* has explained these prime-letters as the states of waking (*jagrat*), dream (*svapna*) and deep sleep (*sushupti*), and the gross (*sthula*), the subtle (*suksma*), and the causal (*karana*). The Grammarians and especially Patanjali call it the Brahman with its sound-body, i.e., Shabda-Brahman. In Tantra, it is called the sum total of all the letters or *matrika-varnas*, known as the *mundamala* or the necklace of the human-heads, weared by Kali, who dances on the breast of static Siva, the absolute consciousness. According to science of language, OM is recognized as the basic sound. In fact, A-U-M include all the letters and sounds of the universe. Now, when you take A-U-M, you first pronounce the word 'A' opening your tongue, and then pronounced U', and then close the lips and pronounce the sound 'M'. This basic sound OM was revealed to the ancient Seers and was known as the mystic syllable. It is the 'Word' or Logos of the Bible. The Logos was described by the Neo-Platonists as the only begotten son of God, because the cosmic mind is the Father, and this idea of Logos is like the Son. This is the pattern of the perfect man, because

it is the product or result of the thinking principle of the cosmic mind or *Prakriti*, and, therefore, it is the Son. Plato and the Stoic philosophers also conceived this idea. It was afterwards taken up by Philo Judia, who lived in Alexandria between 20 B.C. and 60 B.C. In his writings, we find that he also described the Logos as the only begotten son of God. Jesus the Christ was then identified with the Son of God, as Sri Chaitanya was identified by the later Gaudia Vaishnava savants and mystics with both Radha and Krishna. The later Vaishnava philosophers wanted to bring God nearer to us through the divine Incarnation of Sri Chaitanya. It seems that the later Gauriya-Vaishnavas consciously or unconsciously incorporated this idea from the Alexandrian philosophers, and especially from Philo Judea, who tried to bridge the gulf between the mortal man and immortal God. Philo wanted to bring God nearer to the appreciation of the human world. The Logos gradually became a mediator or medium between Jehovah and His creation, the man.

Similar idea is found in Patanjali's *Yogasutra*. He has said that OM or *Pranava* is the indicator or mediator of the Brahman. OM or *Pranava* is the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman which indicates the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman. In fact, *Pranava* is the mediator between the determinate and the indeterminate. Patanjali says : 'तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः' i.e.. '*Pranava* is the symbol of the (indeterminate) Brahman'. Patanjali further says : 'तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम्' i.e., 'the repetition of this OM and meditating on its meaning in the way'. The commentator Vyasa says : 'प्रणवस्य जपः प्रणवाभिधेयस्य च ईश्वरस्य भावना। तदस्य योगिनः प्रणवं जपतः प्रणवार्थञ्च भावयतश्चित्तं एकाग्रं * * ।'

Further it is said that Patanjali of the *Mahabhasya* (on the *Paniniya-Vyakarana*)[5] has advocated the theory of Sphota which bears the same significance of the theory of *Pranava*, the Sabda-Brahman. This theory as well as philosophy of Sphota have been explained by Madanamishra, Bhatrihari, and others on the basis of *sabdadvaitavada*. Now, it is a fact that Patanjali, Mandanamishra, Bhatrihari, and others are the upholders of non-dualism (*advaita*), in connection with the Sabda-Brahman, and so their Advaita should be known as Sabdadvaita or

[5] It has already been said before that Patanjali of the *Yogasutra* and Patanjali of the *Mahabhasya* are not one and the same person.

Bhavadvaita.[6] However, Patanjali and Mandanamishra are of the opinion that though Sabda is the combination of different *varnas* or letters, which are not eternal and permanent, yet behind those non-eternal *varnas*, there shines an eternal *varna* or sound which is known as Sphota. As this eternal *varna* or sound or Word manifests the meaning or signigficance, so it has been called Sphota. As for example, from the sound of 'cow' there manifests a formless eternal sound like a reflection or resounding one, which is known as Sphota, which expresses the meaning of the cow. *Varna, pada,* and *vakya,* etc., are like the unreal and non-eternal adjuncts (*upadhis*) of the eternal Sphota, and the universe and all the phenomenal objects are the gross manifestation of Sphota, along with their names and forms or sounds, and, therefore, all these gross manifestations of sound (*vangmaya jagat*) are the transformation of the Sabda-Brahman or Akshara-Brahman. But Kumarila, Prabhakara and other Mimamsakas do not admit the theory of Sphota, as they hold that *varna* or sound itself is eternal, and from this eternal sound four kinds of eternal sound, *para, pasyanti, madhyama,* and *vaikhari,* which are known as *hindu, varna, buddhi,* and *dhvani* evolved and they respectively reside in the navel base, heart, and throat. Tantra also admits this theory. Plato calls it Idea or Type, Philo calls it Word, and the Christians call it Logos or Son of God.

Like the Sphota, *Pranava* (A.U.M.) is recognised as eternal and universal sound or word. When the letters A-U-M are coalesced or formed together, they sound like only two letters, 'A' and 'M'. Now, the first basic sound is represented by the position of the mouth, when it is wide open. What kind of sound can you produce just by opening your mouth? The gutteral sound 'A' is produced, and this is the first sound. The last sound is produced when you close your mouth completely. The 'M' sound is produced by the lips, and the 'A' sound is by the throat. The larynx and the palate must be kept all wide open. Then between these two sounds we get the whole gamut of sounds. All sounds that can be produced by the mouth, are included between the first 'A' sound and the last 'M' sound. All sounds of all animals or birds can be repre-

[6] Similarly the upholders of the theory of *rasa* or aesthetic sentiment maintain *rasadvaitavada*, i.e., theory of non-duality of *rasa*.

sented within the range of these two sounds, 'A' and 'M'. Now, the middle sound is half way, then the mouth is half-closed. What sound is that? That would be 'U'. Thus together A-U-M are the three sounds,[7] and these three sounds include all the words that can be uttered or produced by the human mouth, and naturally it includes all thoughts and ideas, which are represented by all such words. It is, therefore, all-inclusive, and this syllable is used to represent the cosmic mind which has infinite thoughts and ideas.

In the *Taittiriya Upanishad* (shikshavalli) OM has been known as the (*saguna*) Brahman : 'ओमिति ब्रह्म। ओमितीदं सर्वम् * * ओमिति सामनि गायन्ति'। The OM is recognized as the universal Vedic *mantras*, and from it evolved in seed form all the *mantras* of the Tantra. It has already been said before that Hrim, Krim, Shrim, Aim, etc., are the *Vija-mantras* of the Tantric deities. Tantra is the counterpart of the Veda. In the latter period, the Brahmins adopted both the primal *Vija-mantras*, OM and Krim, Hrim, etc., when the contemplation of Sakti is found in the *Devisukta*, it has been said,

अहं राष्ट्री संगमनी बसूनां
चिकितुषी प्रथमा यज्ञियानाम्।
तां मां देवा व्यदधुः पुरुत्रा
भूरिस्थात्रां भूर्या वेशयन्तीम्॥

That is, God should be meditated as the all-pervading intelligent Principle. No one can think about the attributeless

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[7] There is, in reality, five sounds, or fivefold division of Old, and these five sounds or fivefold division is known as A, U, M, Ardha-chandra, and Bindu (or Nada-bindu and Shanta), which are known as five rays. The *Prapanchasara Tantra* says that the waking state (*jagrat*) is Bija, the dream state (*svapna*) is Bindu, the deep sleep state (*susupti*) is Nada, Turiya is Sakti, and Laya beyond is Shanta. Now, commonly those five letters of OM are known as A, U, M, Chandra (*ardha-kala*), and Bindu. Different Tantras interpret these letters in different ways. Some of the Tantras say that there are seven (or twelve) Saktis of Omkara, and Sakti as Nada is a development of the letter which is transformed into Ardhachandra and then into Bindu. The *Netra-Tantra* and the commentary, *Tantraloka* by Kshemaraja say that seven Saktis (or energies), together with the five letters. A, U, M, Ardhachandra (*ardha-kala*), and Bindu of Pranava, are *unmana, samana, vyapika* (or *vyapini*), *anjni, mhananda, nada, nirodhini, ardhachandra, bindu, ma-kara, u-kara,* and *a-kara*. In fact, AUM together with Ardhachandra or Kala form the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, or Sakti, and Bindu is the indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman or *niskala*-Siva, and Bindu saturates and animates the letters of Omkara, and it is the supreme goal.

indeterminate Principle, therefore, men think or meditate upon that which is possessed of name and form. The indeterminate one has no form, therefore, how will you think about it? So the *Yogasutra* has prescribed the universal syllable or sound OM, so as to get an idea of the indeterminate Principle and also to think about it. In Advaita Vedanta, we find the words *shravana, manana,* and *nididhyasana,* i.e., hearing of the *mahavakya,* along with the faculty of discrimination, and then concentration upon the real meaning or significance of the *mahavakya, 'aham brahasmi',* along with *vichara,* and then to dive deep into the real essence of the *mahavakya* and to identify the individual self with the transcendental Self, the *Atman.* The Yogic proceses of concentration and meditation are akin to those of the Vedantic processes of *shravana, mana,* and *nididhyasana,* to some extent, and the essence of the two processes is one and the same. The Yogic process is mainly depended on the method of suppression of the modifications of the mind, whereas, the Vedantic process is depended on the negative path of 'not this, not this', i.e. the *vichara* of *neti neti.*

Concentration on the determinate Brahman is easier than concentration on the indeterminate Brahman. Patanjali has advised to concentrate the mind upon the sun : '* * भुवनज्ञानं सूर्येसंयमात् * *' (3.26). Now, by concentration upon the sun, some kind of power (*vibhuti*) is achieved. Patanjali has further said : 'हृदये चित्तसंविद् * *' (3.34), i.e. 'the power of knowledge about any kind of thought is achieved if we concentrate on the heart of any great soul'. Sri Ramakrishna said that these are the psychic powers (*vibhutis*), and they do not help us to attain Godconsciousness. It is said that there is an empty space in the heart, and the Sadhakas conceive that space as the seat of the immortal *Atman.* The heart of the human beings has been compared to a bud of a lotus : 'दहरं पुण्डरीकम् ।' It has already been said that the *Upanishad* has advised to concentrate the mind on the *Atman* who shines as the *Purusha* with a size of a thumb. The Buddhists concentrate their mind on the Bhagavan Buddha sitting in the posture of *padmasana.* The Buddhist sacred *mantra* 'ओं मणिपद्मे हुम् * *' suggests the idea of pebble, i.e., Buddha sitted on a lotus. Now, OM and Hum are the two primal

vija-mantras of which OM is Vedic and Hum is Tantric. But, in the Buddhist Tantra, we find the use of both the primal *mantras*, OM and Hum. In the *mantra* 'ओं मणिपद्मे हुम्', OM and Hum are considered as the Buddhist Tantric *mantra*. Dr. Kern is of the opinion that in the ancient system of the Buddhist spiritual *sadhana*, both the *mantras*, OM and Hum, were not found, and at that time the ancient Mahasamghikas used to follow *dharani* or *vidhyadhara-pitaka* in their *sadhana*. *Dharani* means any idea or thought, and a Sadhaka used to concentrate his mind upon that idea or thought. Similarly, *Vidhyadhara* means a base or a ground, upon which the mind is concentrated. It is said that in the first century A.D. when the ideals of the Hinayana and Mahayana doctrines were established, especially the Hinayani and Vajrayani Buddhists took the help of the primal *mantras*, OM and Hum on the ideal of the Bodhisattva, and thus they attained Nirvana in their meditation. Some of the Buddhist scholars find some differences of idea in the primal *vija-mantras*, OM and Hum. They say that the progress or development of OM is upward towards an universal ideal, whereas that of Hum is downward towards the phenomenal human core of the heart. One is the idea of manifestation, and the other is the idea of un-manifestation. But their highest ideas were one and the same, as they used to bring unto men fruition of spiritual practice. Again it is found that without the *vija-mantra* OM, Hum bears no value and significance. So, in the Buddhist Tantric *sadhana*, both OM and Hum have been adopted with the idea of synthesis. or middle path (*madhyama-pantha*). The *madhyama-pantha* means an eternal tranquil idea or principle, and those two *mantras* do not merge in any way into the ocean of eternity. Neither one does submit to the other, rather they maintain a balance between them, and the Buddhist Tantra said that as a result of that balance, *sunyata*, i.e. *suchness* or *thatness* with some energy is established. The Buddhist Tantra have further conceived that OM is the sun and Hum is the earth, and with the help of OM or the heat of the sun, Hum or earth is elevated and ffourished. So, in the Buddhist Tantra, Hum is taken along with OM, for better understanding, or deeper experience of the supreme principle (*tattva*), as OM is the door of knowledge or higher experience,

whereas Hum is a sacred sacrificial sound which is enlightened with the light of knowledge.

Similarly, Hrim, the *lajja-bija,* is the manifestation of that which is not yet complete and full. Hrim is the *vija-mantra* of Dakshina-Kali of the Kalikula of Bengal School of Tantra as well as the *vija-mantra* of Bhuvaneswari of the South Indian Sri-vidya School. The *vija* Hrim is called the Hrillekha, i.e. *lekha* originates from the root *hrit*—to streaking from the heart. This *vija-mantra* is also known as the Kamakala who creates the world as Kundalini. Further Hrim is the primordial Word, which represents the eternal Sakti.

Now, in connection with the primal sound OM, Hrim, or Hum, it can be asked as to what is a *mantra.* It has already been explained before that *mantra* is a sound-body (*nada-tana*) of the deity; or *mantra* is a special word or name of God; or *mantra* is a name of some chosen deity, infused with energy or vital force (*prana*). A *mantra* of a chosen deity is received from an experienced teacher, and is repeated and contemplated along with the thought or conception of the deity. But it should be remembered that it (*mantra*) is not a mere arrangement and muttering of the letters, but Tantra says that when the transcendent Brahman desires to manifest out of its own volition, there is a stir or a throb, which starts a series of vibrations. These vibrations take the form of sound or *nada,* which is the origin of the whole universe. Each chosen deity has its own *nada* (or *vija-mantra,* i.e. sound-body) containing chains of vibrations in the high sphere. The *mantra* enshrines the deity, and reveals the deity to the earnest seeker. And *mantra* is not only a means to contact with the deity, but is also the deity itself, which leads the devotee to the path of enlightenment. The *mantra* is to be effective, when through initiation a devotee gets guide from an expert *Guru.* Now, a *Guru* or spiritual teacher is he who is sufficiently enlightened with divine knowledge. The disciple concentrates his mind on a personality for prayer and praise, and that personality is the chosen deity or *Istha* with the sound-body. In the time of repetition of any *mantra,* the disciple must take the sacred *mantra* not as a mere sound or word, but as God Himself or the deity itself, and will think that he is within God or deity. Maharashi Patanjali said: 'तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम्' i.e. 'while

muttering the *mantra,* think its meaning, i.e. the deity whose name is the mantra.[8] By the repetition of the *mantra,* the name (*nama*) and the possessor of the name (*nami*) become one and are identified, and thinking of the meaning or presiding deity of the *mantra* is the time of muttering (of the *mantra*) is known as the mental repeatition, i.e. *manasa-japa.*

The process of muttering or repeatition of the *mantra* is of three kinds, verbal, mental, and of thought form (*vachika, manasika,* and *upamshu*), as we find three divisions of action, physical, mental, and spiritual. The *manasika* one is better, as it rapidly helps the disciple to concentrate and meditate upon the deity which exists for the first time in sound-body, then in the thought-body, and at last in the knowledge-body, which is no other than the immediate experience of the deity itself. It should be remembered that *japa* is always accompanied by concentration and meditation on God, or on the chosen deity. So the muttering or repeatition of the *mantra* of God, or of deity, must not be blank at all, but there must be an object of *japa* and *dhyana.* In the *Yogashastra,* blankness which happens for sleep, is a kind of obstacle (*kasaya*), that obstructs the process of repeatition and concentration, and that means it spoils all attempts of *sadhana.* So be inwardly alert and conscious all the time when you will do *japa* and *dhyana,* because the conscious *japa* and *dhyana* can only bring success in the path of spirituality.

The breathing exercise (*pranyama*) is helpful for concentration of the mind, because the Sanskrit word, '*pranayama*' means 'control of breath' (*prana* means 'the breath' and *ayama* means 'to control', and, therefore, *pranayama* means 'the control of breath or vital air'). There is a close connection between the breath and the vital energy or mind, because if breath is rapid, the mind is automatically rapid and disturbed.

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[8] Like *mantra,* Tantra bears some inner significance or meaning. In the *Agama,* it is said

तनोति बिपुलानर्थान् तत्त्व-मन्त्र-समन्वितान् ।
त्रानं कुरुते यस्मात् तन्त्रमित्यभिधीयते ॥

Tantras are divided into Saivatantra, Saktatantra, Vaishnavatantra, Saurtantra, Gānapatyatantra. Besides, the Buddhists and Jains have their own Tantras. It is said that the cult of Tantra sprung over first in Gaudadesa, and then in Mithila, and in Maharastra and Gujrat it was not much appreciated.

So, the *Yogashastra* has advised to control first the breath, and then to concentrate the mind upon God or *Atman*, or on some chosen deity. Therefore, *pranayama* is helpful for controlling the mind. Otherwise if the mind is concentrated on some chosen deity through the process of discrimination, *pranayama* or control of breath is automatically attained. In some cases, the devotees concentrate only on the methods of *pranayama* and *asana*, and are addicted to physical feats and magical psychic powers, which bring frustration in the spiritual field.

The seat of the intelligent *Atman* has been considered by the *Upanishad* as the heart. It has already been said that the heart has been conceived as a lotus, and the *Atman* shines there. Most of the spiritual teachers advise to concentrate the mind upon the lotus of the heart. Another seat of the *Atman* has been conceived in the *ajna-chakra* that exists in between the two eye-brows. In Tantra and Yoga literature, the *Sadhakas* imagine the lotus (plexus), *ajna*, possessed of two petals. The Sadhaka is advised to concentrate upon the *ajna-chakra* where the *Atman* shines. Again Tantra says that behind the *ajna-chakra* there is the *guru-chakra*, possessed of twelve petals, and in the centre of the *guru-chakra*, there shines the choosen deity or *Ista* in the form of *Guru*, and there *Ista* and *Guru* are one and the same. The Sadhaka is advised to identify himself with the *Ista* or *Guru*, and that means the *jiva* or individual consciousness is identified with the universal *Atman* or Brahman-consciousness. The prime aim and object of *japa* and *dhyana* are to merge the ego-consciousness into the Self-consciousness. So the realized spiritual teachers (*Gurus* advise the disciples that the *Ista* is not different from the *Guru*, the transcendental higher-consciousness. Now, *Guru* is not an ordinary man with flesh and blood, but he should be contemplated as God Himself. During the time of spiritual initiation (*diksha*), *Guru* advises the disciples to meditate upon the luminous all-consciousness *Ista* residing in the *guru-chakra*, so as to open the eyes of knowledge. As the body or form of *Ista* or *Guru* is imagined as composed of pure *sattva* quality, his colour is considered as white, and *Ista* looks at the disciple means he infuse his dynamic spiritual force into the disciple, so as to energise or inspire him. Sometimes the

Yogis instruct the disciples to concentrate their mind in the centre of the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrara-padma*) in the top of the head, and there, they say, shines the Paramasiva, the embodiment of transcendental consciousness and bliss. The Yogis are of the opinion that at that time the fortunate disciples (Sadhaka) visualize the confluence of the three main cords. *ida*, *pingla*, and *sushumna*. The psychologists say that brain is the seat of all kinds of power or faculty, and all suggestions in the physical system come from the brain. *Ida*, *pingla*, and *sushumna* cords have been conjoined in the modulla oblongata which is situated just behind the head. The Yogis imagine in the confluence of those cords an empty space as the seat of pure consciousness, and the Yogis by the help of imagination materialize their ideas or thoughts, and thus they catch the divine glimpse of the Divinity, and that experience enables them to go beyond this world of ignorance. They imagine six *chakras* (plexases) throughout the spinal column, which are *muladhara*, *vishuddha*, *manipur*, *anahata*, *svadhisthana*, and *ajna*, and conceive that the divine coiling energy, *Kundalini* is aroused by the intense will-power of the Yogi in the *muladhara*, and that energy gradually rises upwards towards the other *chakras*. saturates them, and energies them. and at last is united with the supreme consciousness, the Paramasiva, which shines in the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrara-padma*) in the centre of the head, and this divine union of Sakti with Paramasiva is the prime-goal of Yoga and Tantra *sadhana*. In Vedantic *sadhana*, we also find that when the *jiva*-consciousness is united or communed with the Brahman-consciousness, the individual soul realizes himself as one with the universal Soul. Then he is free, and cuts asunder the chain of worldliness (*samsara*). In Yoga and Tantra *sadhanas* also, when the individual *jivatman* comes in contact with the universal *Paramatman*, the knots of the heart are torn asunder, all doubts are removed, and all actions are faint and calmed. Vedanta says that *mukti* means the regaining of the forgotten knowledge, or divine recognition, whereas Yoga and Tantra admit complete unison of the socalled two divine principles, or absolute merge of duality into undivided oneness.

CHAPTER VIII

UPANISHAD

(19th December, 1924, Friday, at 5-30 p.m.)

The *Katha-Upanishad* begins with discussions on philosophy and religion with a story of Nachiketa, who went to the after world (*paraloka*) with his mortal body and came back as an immortal soul. Nachiketa went to the King of Death (Yama) who was a Self-realized Being. He approached that Being who was the embodiment of the *Upanishad*, and afterwards came back to this mortal mundane world with the undying transcendental knowledge of the *Atman*. Now, what is *Upanishad*? The word *Upanishad* is derived from *upa* (near) and *ni* (with certainty) as prefixes, and *kvip* as a suffix to the root *sad*, meaning to split up (destroy), go (reach, attain), or loosen (upa+kvip+ni+sad=*Upanishad*). The *Upanishad* is the supreme or transcendental knowledge, and if any one comes near to, or comes in contact with, this supreme knowledge, it destroys the darkness of ignorance or nescience. Sankara said that the supreme knowledge is called the *Upanishad* by virtue of its association with the significance of this knowledge that splits up, injures, or destroys, the seed of worldly existence which is ignorance, in the case of those seeks of Truth and emancipation, who, after becoming detached from the desires for the seen and the unseen objects, approach (*upa-sad*), the knowledge which is called *Upanishad*, and who is then deliberated on it with steadiness and certainty (*ni*) :

'ये मुमुक्षवो दृष्टानुश्रविकविषयवितृष्णाः सन्तः उपनिषच्छब्दवाच्यां वक्ष्माणलक्षणां विद्यामुपसद्योपगम्य तन्निष्ठतया निश्चयेन शीलयन्ति तेषामविद्यादेः संसारबीजस्य विशरणाद्विसनद्विनाशनात् इत्यनेनार्थयोगेन विद्योपनिषदित्युच्यते ।'

Nachiketa was the son of Vajashrava. Vajashrava being desirous of fruit performed a Visvajit sacrifice, gave away everything of his property to the Brahmins. He also gave away the cows that drank not water and ate not grass, and whose milk was milked for the last time, and lost their organs

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[1] English translation by Swami Gambhirananda (vide *Eight Upanishads*, Vol. I, pp. 97-98).

('पीतोदका जग्धतृणा दुग्धदोहा निरिन्द्रियाः'). At that time, boy Nachiketa approached his father and asked : "Father, to whom will you offer me" ('कस्मै मां दास्यतीति') Nachiketa spoke to his father a second time and a third time. To that, his father, being annoyed, said to Nachiketa : "To Death I offer you" ('मृत्येव त्वां ददामीति') Nachiketa did not give any reply to his father, but he became ready to proceed to the *Yamaloka*. He went to Death's abode, but Death was not present at that time, so he waited for three nights outside, without taking any food and water. The ministers of Death (Yama) did not know how to deal with the guest. However, Death returned, and heard everything from his ministers. Death was given a warning . "A Brahmana guest enters the houses like fire, so he should be sympathetically treated". So Death approached Nachiketa with adoration, and said : "O Brahmana, since you have lived in my abode for three nights without food, a quest and an adorable person as you are, let my salutations be to you, and let good accure to me by averting the fault arising that lapse. Ask for three boons—one in respect of each night":

तिस्रो रात्रीर्यदवात्सीर्गृहे मे-
ऽनश्नन् ब्रह्मन्नतिथिर्नमस्यः ।
नमस्तेऽस्तु ब्रह्मन् स्वस्ति मेऽस्तु
तस्मात्प्रति त्रीन्वरान् वृणीष्व ॥१।१।९

To that Nachiketa said : "O Death, of the three boons I ask this one as the first, viz., that my father, Gautama may become freed from anxiety, calm of mind, freed from anger towards me, and he may recognise me, and talk to me when freed by you":

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[2] This story of Nachiketa and Yama, the Lord of Death, happens also in the *Taittiriya-Brahmana* (III.11.8) and the *Mahabharata* (*anushasana-parva*, 1063). The story as depicted in the *Taittriya-Br.* is similar to that in the *Katha-Upanishad*, but the story as depicted in the *Mahabharata* differs There in the *anushasana-parva* (106), it has been stated that before entering into the Kingdom of Death, Nachiketa died, and entered into the *Yamaloka* with his luminous subtle body. This story of Nachiketa has been described in connection with the praise of the gift of the cows (*'godana-prashanaparatvana'*). Nachiketa was offered with wealth and happiness of *svargaloka*, which were refused. Ramanuja said in the commentary that *Svargaloka* lies in between *Suryaloka* and *Dhruvaloka*, and it is the indirect meaning, whereas the direct meaning is the attaining of the Immortality. Sankara entirely discarded any kind of *loka*, which is in time, space and causation.

शान्तसंकल्पः सुमना यथा स्या-
द्वितमन्यूगौतमो माऽभि मृत्यो ।
त्वत्प्रसृष्टं माऽभिवदेत् प्रतीत-
एतत् त्रयाणां प्रथमं बरं वृणे ॥१।१।१०

Death granted that boon. Then Nachiketa was prepared for asking the second boon, and his second boon was to ask immortality for the dwellers of the heaven. Nachiketa said : "O Death, I have heard that there is no fear of death and decay and there is neither hunger, nor thirst, nor sorrow, in heaven. So, O Death, such as you are, you know that Fire which leads to heaven. Of that you tell me who are full of faith. The dwellers of heaven get immortality. This I ask for through the second boon" :

स त्वमग्निं स्वर्ग्यमध्येषि मृत्यो
प्रब्रु हि त्वं श्रद्धधानाय मह्यम् ।
स्वर्गलोका अमृतत्वं भजन्ते-
एतद् द्वितीयेन वृणे वरेण ॥१।१।१३

Death sanctioned also the second boon.

Then Death said to Nachiketa : "O Nachiketa, really I know well about the Fire which is conductive to heaven. I shall tell you of it. That very thing you understand, with attention from my words. That Fire which is the means to the attainment of heaven and which is the ground of the world, know it to be founded on intellect (of the enlightened ones)" :

प्र ते ब्रवीमि तदु मे निबोध
स्वर्ग्यमग्निं नचिकेतः प्रजानन् ।
अनन्तलोकाप्तिमथो प्रतिष्ठां
विद्धि त्वमेतं निहितं गुहायाम् ॥१।१।१४

Death told Nachiketa of the Fire which is the source of the world. Nachiketa then repeated his prayer for boon as before. Death was very much pleased, and said again :

तमब्रवीत् प्रीयमाणो महात्मा
बरं तवेहाद्य ददामि भूयः ।
तवैव नाम्ना भविताऽयमग्निः
सृङ्कां चेमामनेकारूपां गृहाण ॥१।१।१६

That is, "Out of favour towards you, I now grant again another boon. This Fire will be known by your name indeed. And

accept this multiformed necklace as well." Then Death praised the *karma,* and concluded the result of knowledge about the Fire : 'त्रिकर्मकृत् तरति जन्म-मृत्युः' * * etc. Death said to Nachiketa that the Fire would lead him to heaven, for which he prayed the second boon. He then told Nachiketa to ask for the third boon : 'तृतीयं बरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व' (१।१।१९) Then Nachiketa said,

येयं प्रेते विचिकित्सा मनुष्ये-
ऽस्तीत्येके नायमस्तीति चैके।
एतद्विद्यामनुशिष्टस्त्वयाऽहं
वराणामेष बरस्तृतीयम् ॥१।१।२०

That is, 'this doubt that arises, consequent on death of a man—some say, 'It exists', while others say, 'It does not exist'—I would know this being instructed by you. Of all the boons, this one is the third boon'. This kind ff doubt arose not only in Nachiketa's mind, but also arose in the past in the minds of many people, and will arise in the hearts of majority of the people even in the present time. It is also an interesting question about the soul after death. The agnostics and materialists of all countries are of the opinion that spirit being the product of matter, life of every living being is completely destroyed with the destruction of the material or physical body. Their difficulty is this that they cannot discriminate the immortal, all-intelligent, and all-conscious Self or *Atman* from the mortal body. They believe that the Self or *Atman* has no separate existence of its own other than the life-breath (*prana-vayu*) or vital energy, but they should know that the life-breath or vital energy borrows its existence and power from the Self or *Atman,* which is the prime-source of existence and energy. The life-breath and the Self is not one and the same. In India, in ancient time, there were some agnostic thinkers who were known as the Charvakas or Lokayatas. It is said that they were the followers of Brihaspati, who taught the science of materialism. They did also believe that material body is the ego or spirit, and at the time of death when the physical body dies, the spirit or *Atman* also dies. Again, when a man or an animal dies, his all-conscious and intelligent soul or self goes out in the form of life-breath (*prana-vayu*) drawing out all the outward and inward senses and

sense-organs. The physical and mental forms of the soul are like the coverings or heaths, and they are divided into three states, gross (*sthula*), subtle (*suksma*), and causal (*karana*). The soul exists in this phenomenal world with its garb of gross material body with the seventeen kinds of element (according to Samkhya), five external physical organs (*karmendriya*), five internal physical organs (*jnanendriya*), and *manas* and *buddhi*, i.e., *antahkarana*. The soul exists in the mental world with its subtle body (*suksma* or *linga-deha*) after the death of its physical form, and the soul exists in the causal world, when it remains as a part and parcel of the cosmic mind. The cosmic mind is the *Prakriti* which exists with *Isvara*. The causal body of the soul is also different from the pure *Atman*, which is devoid of all attributes, all adjuncts, and all coverings or sheaths or bodies. Nachiketa was intelligent, and was a lover of knowledge, so he asked Death the real nature of the *Atman*. But Death at first refused to unfold the secret of the divine nature of the *Atman*, because he knew that until and unless a man's intellect is keen and sharp, and mind is purified, he cannot even grasp the knowledge of the *Atman* (*atmatattva*). So, with a view to testing whether Nachiketa is absolutely fit or not, for appreciating the supreme knowledge of the *Atman*, Death (Yama) said,

देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं पुरा
न हि सुविज्ञेयमणुरेष धर्मः ।
अन्यं वरं नचिकेतो वृणीष्व
मा मोपरोत्सीरतिं मा सृजैनम् ॥१।१।२१

'That is, 'with regard to this (knowledge of the *Atman*), even the gods entertained doubts in day, of yore, for being subtle, this substance (the *Atman*) is not easily appreciated. O Nachiketa, ask for some other boon, do not press me; give up this boon, which you wish to know from me'. This is the common practice on the part of the teachers to refuse to impart knowledge if the student or devotee be not sufficiently intelligent. But Nachiketa was a boy of extraordinary merit. He was struck with wonder when he heard from Death 'देवैरत्रापि विचिकित्सितं किलः' * * i.e., 'even the gods entertained doubts in days of yore'. Really the gods (bright spirits) are gods as the consequences of their good deeds done. Strictly speak-

ing; gods are not the self-realized free beings, according to the results of good works, they took the position of gods. In the *Upanishad,* it has been mentioned that for the realization of the supreme Self, gods will have to take birth in this world of work. The human birth is the best one, because in this birth, or in the human plane only, a man can attain to Godconsciousness. Nachiketa was further astonished to hear that being the lord and director of death, Death (Yama) himself said that the knowledge of the *Atman* is not easily attained. So he said to Death : 'वक्ता चास्य त्वादृगन्ये न लभ्यो'

* * i.e., 'I came to know from a great soul like you that the gods doubt about the real nature of the *Atman,* and the *Atman* is neither easily understood, nor attained, but it is my firm conviction that there is no competent teacher like you, who can only make this difficult task very easy'.

Then Death (Yama) felt difficulty to divert the mind of Nachiketa. So he tried to tempt him with the wealth and luxuries and phenomenal materials of enjoyments. Death told Nachiketa,

शतायुः पुत्रपौत्रान् वृणीष्व
वहून् पशून् हस्ति-हिरण्यमश्वान् ।
भूमेर्महदायतनं वृणीष्व
स्वयञ्च जीव शरदो यावदिच्छसि ॥१।१।२३

'O Nachiketa, as for sons and grandsons that will be centenaries. Ask for many animals, elephants, and gold, and horses, and a vast expance of the earth. And you yourself live for as many years as you like'.

एतत्तुल्यं यदि मन्यसे वरं
वृणीष्व वित्तं चिरजीविकां च ।
महाभूमौ नाचिकेतस्त्वमेधि
कामानां त्वा कामभाजं करोमि ॥१।१।२४

"If you think some other boon to be equal to this, ask for that. Ask for wealth and long life. You become (a ruler) over a vast region. I make you fit for the enjoyment of (all) delectable things'.

ये ये कामा दुर्लभा मर्त्यलोके
सर्वान् कत्मांश्चन्दतः प्रार्थयस्व ।

इमा रामाः सरथाः सतूर्या
न हीदृशा लम्भनीया मनुष्यैः।
आभिर्मत्प्रत्ताभिः परिचारयस्व,
नचिकेतो मरणं मानुप्राक्षीः ॥१।१।२५

That is, 'whatever things there be that is desirable and difficult to get—pray for all those cherished things according to your choice. Here are these women with chariots and musical instruments—such are not surely to be had by mortals. With these, who are offered by me, you get yourself served. O Nachiketa, do not inquire about death'.

Nachiketa heard of Death patiently, and became not deviated from his firm resolution. He had in him great thirst for knowledge, so nothing can quench that thirst except the *Atman*-knowledge. He with modesty and humiliation said to Death,

श्वोभावा मर्तस्य यदन्तकैतत्
सर्वेन्द्रियाणां जरयन्ति तेजः।
अपि सर्वं जीवितमल्पमेव
तवैव वाहास्तव नृत्य-गीते ॥१।१।२६

'O Death, emphemeral are these, and they waste away the vigour of all the senses that a man has. All life, without exception, is short indeed. Let the vehicles be yours alone, let the dances and songs be yours'. Though very young, yet intelligent and enlightened Nachiketa knew that all things of the phenomenal universe are changing, and, are, therefore, unreal. Further he knew that it is true that enjoyments cannot mitigate desires for enjoyments, and it is renunciation or desirelessness that brings peace and calmness unto men. Besides, desires and enjoyments of desires create a circle which will revolve all the time, and will not stop until and unless men go beyond that circle. Vedanta calls this circle, *maya*, or delusion, because it deludes men, and eternally chain them in worldliness (*samsara*). Lust and gold are the elements of *maya*, so the Yogis and the Jnanis leave them as a bondage, and desire only for the knowledge of the *Atman*, which brings immortal peace unto us. Nachiketa was possessed of power of discriminating the real from the unreal, so he was neither agitated by the words of the Ruler of Death, nor was tempted

by those ephemeral objects, which Death promised to offer him, rather he said,

न वित्तेन तर्पणीयो मनुष्यो-
लप्स्यामहे वित्तमाद्राक्ष्म चेत्त्वा ।
जीविष्यामो यावदीशिष्यसि त्वं
वरस्तु मे वरणीयः स एव ॥१।१।२७

'Man is not to be satisfied with wealth. Now that we have met you, we shall get wealth. We shall live as long as you will rule it. But the boon that is worth-praying for by me, is that alone'. 'O Death', replied again, the fire is not extinguished by the pouring of butter on it, but is by the pouring of water. Desires cannot be fulfilled by desires. So I request you to instruct me what is the knowledge of the *Atman*.'

Really silver or gold coins cannot bring peace unto men, because if you hoard thousand rupees, your mind will in the next time hanker for ten or twenty thousand rupees. Men are so mad after wealth and pomp that lying in a hut, he dreams to be a man of lakhs of rupees. Alexander the Great nearly conquered the whole world, but yet he was not satisfied in his mind. A dwarf, we know, cannot leave the hope of touching the moon. Therefore, silver and gold cannot mitigate the desires and passions of men. It require, for them renunciation, and renunciation can only bring unto us desirelessness and perfect peace. 'So, O Death', said Nachiketa, 'I do not want any riches and pomp. If you are pleased to grant me the boon, you instruct me the eternal knowledge of the supreme *Atman*.'

अजीर्यतामृतानामुपेत्य
जीर्य्यन्मर्त्यः क्वधस्थः प्रजानन् ।
अभिध्यायन् वर्णरति-प्रमोदान्
अतीदीर्घे जीविते को रमेत ॥१।१।२८

'Having reached the proximity of the undecaying immortals, what decaying mortal who dwells on this lower region, the earth, but konws of higher goals, will take delight in a long life while conscious of the worthlessness of music, dispost, and the joy thereof'. Now, Nachiketa was fully conscious of the things and objects of pleasure of the changing phenomena.

He said birth and death, origin and decay, are the inherent characteristics of *samsara*, so their enjoyment will not bring permanent peace and solace. Besides, it is an undeniable fact that death will destroy everything, and it is the final consequence of all the beings and objects of the world, so he prayed Death to instruct him the eternal knowledge of the immortal *Atman* which will conquer death. He said,

यस्मिन्निदं विचिकित्सन्ति मृत्यो
यत् साम्प्रराये महति ब्रूहि नस्तत् ।
योऽयं वरो गूढ़मनुप्रविष्टो
नान्यं तस्मान्नचिकेता वृणीते ॥१।१।२९

'O Death, tell us of that thing about which people entertain doubt in the context of the next world and whose knowledge leads to a great knowledge. Apart from this boon, which relates to the inscrutiable thing, Nachiketa does not pray for any other'.[2]

Now, let us see what is difference between an ordinary common man and an uncommon divine man. The seed of the Divinity is within every individual, and all the living souls are no other than the all-intelligence Brahman, but, yet there are some differences in the manifestations of the Divinity. Though the sun throws its rays equally on all the beings and objects, yet its manifestation on mirror, or on water, differs from that on stone, or on earth, so one and the same Divinity shines in all the objects, sentient and insentient, yet its manifestation differs in different things or objects. According to the theory of evolution, every living being is marching onward towards better manifestation and at last reach the submit. which can be said to be the human being, possessed of intelect, power of understanding, and intuition. But, in the human world, there are also grades of evolution, which are called material, ethical, and spiritual. An ordinary man becomes a God-man when after passing through the material, ethical, and spiritual planes by gradual progress. In the human being, we also find a dull and unintelligent man by the side of an intelligent man. What is the cause of this varia-

[2] The English translations of the Sanskrit texts have been incorporated from the *Eight Upanishad*, Vol. I (translated by Swami Gambhirananda).

tion? This variation explains the lesser and greater manifestations of one and the same intelligence in two beings, and it means that in one, intelligence is partially manifested, whereas, in the other, it is fully manifested, though intelligence itself neither increases, nor decreass, but remains the same. Similarly, the *Atman*, the source of intelligence and consciousness shines in every living and non-living beings, but its outward manifestation differs from one another because of gories of name and form further delude the beings in the form (*nama-rupa*) create difference in the beings, and these categories of name and form further delude the beings in the form of *maya* or nescience. The categories or adjuncts are the concrete structures of name and form, and these, in other words, are the cause of creating greater or lesser manifestation in men. So we should struggle hard to go beyond the categories of name and form, and then we shall realize that the one and the same *Atman* shines itself in its own undying glory and sublimity.

Now, regarding the *Devas*, it can be said that by dint of their good works they have attained their higher stages or status. The heavens are not situated in the sky like the imaginary castles, but they are on the earth, but we through our imagination think them as the regions where there is no sorrow, suffering, crying, or trouble. The dualists and especially the performers of actions like the sacrifices believe in some highest regions where the *Devas* live and also the holy ones enjoy eternal peace. The Bhaktas also conceive a highest *loka* in the heaven, where there the souls feel no thirst and hunger, and that highest *loka* is known as the Baikuntha, where Narayana, the Lord of the universe, lives with his divine consort, Lakshmi. But Advaita Vedanta says that any kind of *loka* or region is under the sway of nescience, and that means the *lokas* or regions are not permanent like the *Atman* or Brahman which suffers no limiting category of attribute or adjunct. In the *Puranas* and also in the *Bhagavad Gita* it has also been said : 'क्षीणे पुण्ये मर्त्यलोकं विशन्ति' ; 'आब्रह्मभुवनाल्लोकाः पुनरावर्तिनोऽर्जुन' (८।१६) i.e., 'all the beings of the universe create cycles of their births and deaths', and 'only they who reach me (i.e. realizes the *Atman*) do not born further' : 'मामुपेत्य तु कौन्तेय पनर्जन्म न विद्यते' (८।१६)। So, heaven and hell are the mental

or conceptions, and we project them outside as the consequence of reward or punishment here in this world, or there in the world after death.

Now, the ideas of heaven and hell, as well as reward and punishment, according to merit and demerit of the individual souls, are prevalent in all the nations of the world. The ancient Jews did not believe in heaven or hell at first, but the critical readers of the Old Testament are familiar with the fact that it was after the Babylonian Captivity which lasted between 586-536 B.C. that the Jewish Rabbi's and Doctors began to believe in reward and punishment and, consequently, they accepted the Persian conception of heaven and hell. Like the Jews and the Christians, the Mohammedans also owe their idea of heaven and hell to the Persian source, but the Mohammedan heaven is more concrete than the Christian. The Greeks and the Romans also believed in heaven and hell, and their paradise was Elysian Fields, and their hell was Tartarus. The Teutonic nations also believed Elysian where the virtuous and the just were rewarded and the wicked were punished. The Norwegian heaven was the place of Odin, the supreme God. The Indians also believe in heaven and hell. So we find that various ideas of heaven and hell are according to likes and dislikes of the individuals, the tribes, and the nations. Such heavens and hells do not really exists outside, but they exist in the minds of those who believe them. They are like the dreamlands, which exist merely on the psychic plane of the dreamers. The *Upanishad* says that heaven and hell are the realms (*lokas*) like *Pitriloka, Devaloka, Indraloka, Chandraloka, Suryaloka,* and *Brahmaloka,* etc., and the departed spirits go their according to good results of their *karmas,* and at the end of the period of enjoyment of the fruits of their works, they are forced to come back again to the earth. Vedanta says that going to such heavens and enjoying celestial pleasures for some days, or months, or years, cannot be called the attainment of true salvation or *mukti,* because they are within the realm of phenomenal universe *(prithivi-loka)* limited by time, space and causation.

I would like to give you some idea of *svarga* or heaven, which the *Mimansakas* of India suggest. They say 'स्वर्गकामो यजेत' i.e. 'if you want to go to heaven, perform sacrifice'.

There was a time in ancient India, when different kinds of sacrifice and rite were performed by the kings, and other rich householders, who were known as the Yajamanas. Those sacrifices and rites were performed on the ideal of the Vedic sacrifices and rites, and those sacrifices and rites of the classical period were out and out performed for getting some results. The great sacrifices like *Asvamedha, Rajasuy*a, etc., were also performed in the classical period. The Mimansakas say that by the performance of the sacrifices, a kind of unseen power originated, and that power was known as the *apurva*, and that *apurva* used to play the role of medium for taking the performers to the highest region or *svarga*. Those sacrifices were also known as *karma*, i.e., *yagakarma*. With the advent of Acharya Sankar who propagated the *jnanamarga*, quite opposite to *karma* or *kamamarga*, the performances of the sacrifices and rites gradually lost their mind in the society. Certainly you have heard the historic debate between Sankara and Mandanamishra. Mandanamishra was a great advocate of the *karmamarga*. Sankara chllenged him in a rational debate. Ubhaya Bharati, the talented wife of Mandanamishra, presided over the debate, and Mandana was defeated, and became the disciple of Sankara. Now, this fact undoubtedly prove the defeat of the Mimansakas who loved too much of sacrifices, which led the performers to the heavens. It is said that many of the Mimansakas burnt themselves in the burning pire as a protest. Sankara preached that *karmas* have no power to confer upon man the eternal and permanent salvation (*mukti*), but discrimination, renunciation, and desirelessness can only give men guarantee to grant them absolute freedom from the bondage of delusion or *maya*. The people gradually realized the superiority of knowledge and unselfish works, and as a result of it, the functions of *karmakanda* were replaced by those of *jnanakanda*, and only a faint remains of those Vedic and Pauranic functions of the sacrifices and rites retained anyhow their existences even in the present-day society in the form of *homa* which is observed after the functions of *puja* and *shanti-svastayana*.

In Christianity, we find that the idea of heaven is connected with that of salvation, and this idea gave rise to many religious faiths and creeds along with observations of many fasts and

festivals centered round the Christian Church. The Christian Church kept in memory of its Head, Christmas, Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Mass, Ascension and Whitsuntide. These are the landmarks in the Christ-life, and each represents an event in his life with a hidden spiritual significance. As for example, (1) The Christmas festival of the Spirit on the plane of Incarnation typifies Love and Self-denial. The exalted spirit tabernacles in flesh, abnegates Self, animated by love. It is to the Christians the festival of self-denial. (2) The Ephiphany, the festival of the manifestation of this new light to the world, is to the Christians the festival of spiritual enlightenment, the shining of the true light that lightened every one that is born into the world, not carrying of it to self, but the uplifting of the Light so that they can see and may come to it. (3) The Fast of Lent typifies to the Christians the struggles of Truth with darkness. It is the wrestling with the adversaries. The recurring season shadows forth a constantly recurring struggle. It is the Fast of conflict. It is the Fast of wrestling with evil and that of the endeavouring to overcome the world. (4) Good Friday typifies to the Christians the consummation of the struggle, the end that awaits all such conflicts in our world—death, but death in Life. It is the festival of triumphant self-sacrifice : the realization and consummation of the Christ-life. It is to the Christians no Fast, but a festival of triumphant Love. (5) The Easter is the festival of the Resurrection and it typifies to the Christians the perfected Life, the risen Life, and the glorified Life. It is the festival of Spirit, conquering and to conquer, of the risen Life, enfranchised and set free. (6) The Whitsuntide, which Christendom associates with the baptism of the Spirit, is to the Christians a festival of great importance. It typifies the outpouring of a large measure of spiritual Truth on those who have accepted the Christ-life. It is the festival which is the complement of Good Friday. As human ignorance slays the Truth that it cannot receive : so, as a consequence, from the higher realm of Spirit comes a blessing on those who have embraced what the world has crucified. It is the festival of the outpoured Spirit, of increased grace, and of richer Truth. (7) Ascension is the festival of the completed Life, of the return of the Spirit to its home, and of the final sundering—not of Divine life but of

earth life. It is the festival of the completed work. Now these are the spiritual ideas which unlerlie the festivals of the Christians and which are attached with the idea of heaven.

Now, in the Indian society, religious people perform works for getting their results, and it is very difficult to go beyond hope or expectation of enjoying the fruits ofr works. Majority of people are habituated to do work with their selfish motive. They want to get fruits of their works, and it is natural. Sri Krishna instructed to do work for work's sake, because the hope of fruits of works bind men in the den of delusion, so he said : "In the works you have right and not in their fruits" 'कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन' and 'कृपणा फलहेतवः' The lovers of works want results of their works, so they are miser being depriveed of the permanent result like eternal bliss and freedom. So they repeatedly incarnate in this world, and after enjoyinjg some days take leave of this world, and thus they loom the net of births and deaths, and cannot go beyond this net. The Jnanis do not want any return of their works or do not desire to go to heaven. They deny even the highest status of the Prajapati Brahmā : 'तुच्छं ब्रह्मपदम्–वैराज पदम्'।

The Ruler of Death (*Yama*), therefore, examined Nachiketa in different ways, and found that the boy was very resolute and firm in his selected prayer for the knowledge of the eternal *Atman*. Death tried his utmost to tempt Nachiketa, but Nachiket was strict to his reply : 'नान्यं तस्मान्नचिकेता बृणीते' i.e. 'O the Ruler of Death, Nachiketa is not desirous of anything other than the immortal knowledge of the *Atman* or Brahman'. Then Yama was very much pleased with Nachiketa for his great renunciation. So, let us follow the ideal of Nachiketa to go beyond all temptations of worldly desires. His extreme thirst for knowledge of the *Atman* is really a bright example for all men of all ages. So, when your attachments to the worldly things will fade away by the help of the power of discrimination, then real state of desirelessness (*vairagya*) appears with an intense desire for knowledge of the *Atman*, and then you can consider yourself as a fittest man to receive that highest knowledge, and I assure you that if, at that time, you struggle hard to qquench your spiritual thirst, you will be successful, and will attain to the transcendental knowledge of the *Atman* or Brahman. So I tell you all again

to be very frank and sincere, giving all kinds of bad habits and ideas. Be sincere in your words and thoughts, and try to avoid idle talks, conversations, and discussions on trifling matters, because those will disturb your mind, and will bring disbalance in you. Try to concentrate your mind on the noble thought of the *Atman,* who is the Soul of souls, and Life of life, and who is the prime-goal of the human life. Be resolute that you will attain to the knowledge of the supreme *Atman* in this very life before you leave this mundane world.

Now, when Death or the Ruler of Death, found that Nachiketa did not ask anything other than the knowledge of the *Atman,* he was very much pleased, and said to Nachiketa,

अन्यच्छ्रेयोऽन्यदुतैव प्रेय-
स्ते उभे नानार्थे पुरूषं सिनीतः ।
युयोः श्रेय आददानस्य साधु
भवति, हीयतेऽर्थाद् य उ प्रेयो वृणीते ॥१।२।१

That is, after testing Nachiketa, Yama found his fitness for knowledge, and said : 'the preferable is different indeed, and so, indeed, is the pleasurable different. These two, serving divergent purposes, (as they do), bind men. Good befalls him who accepts the preferable out of these two. He who selects the pleasurable, falls from the true end'. Really all worldly men are impelled by these two, *shreya* and *preya,* under an idea of personal duty ; for according as one hankers after prosperity or immortality, one engages in the pleasurable, or the preferable. These two, phenomenal prosperity and eternal immortality, are opposed to each other, inasmuch as they are of the nature of knwledge and ignorance. Sankara in his commentary on the theory of superimposition (*adhyasa-bhasya*) said that those two things are opposed to each other, inasmuch as they are of the names of light and darkness. But yet men and women being deluded by the inscrutable nature of nescience or *avidya,* want mortality instead of immortality.

The two opposite things or paths are known as the preferable (*shreya*) and the pleasurable (*preya*). The word *shreya* connotes the idea of absolute emancipation of the individual soul which is imprisoned in the material body. Ignorance

is a predominant factor in this world of changing phenomena. Ignorance is known as *avidya* or non-knowledge, and knowledge which removes delusion or ignorance, is known as knowledge. The philosophers have called ignorance (*ajnana*) as a covering (i.e., that which covers the light of the *Atman*) and knowledge (*jnana*) as the removal of the covering. *Preya* or the pleasurable is that which gives men and women pleasures which are phenomenal, unreal and temporary, and its opposite thing is *shreya* or the preferable, which is transcendental, real and permanent. In the highest sense, *shreya* is the attainment of the eternal knowledge of the immortal *Atman*. So the real aspect of *shreya* is attainable, so as to enchain the soul from the bondage of nescience (*ajnana*) and to enjoy permanent peace and happiness.

I travelled all over India, the whole Continents of Europe, China, Japan, and other near and distant countries, and everywhere I found the people are mad in running all the time after ephemeral phenomenal objects. They do not turn their eyes towards the eternal object of life, which is the *Atman*. They are sleeping, as if, the sleep of delusion, and have drunk the wine of attachments to phenomenal objects. Sadhaka Ramaprasad had sung : "Full many a gem are scattered in the courtyard of Chintamani, and ordinary men and women only collect them and do not pay attention to collect the precious stones lying inside the chamber of Him'. This is the magic play of Mahamaya, and if all men and women wish to get the blessings of Chintamani, then the play of Mahamaya will be meaningless. Again, if any fortunate one dedicates him to the feet of Mahamaya, she rescues the devotee from the bondage of ignorance. Sri Ramakrishna said that Mahamaya (*maya*) has no power to directly confer absolute bliss on anyone, but she takes the devotee to the door of Chintamani, and Chintamani, the *Atman*, rescues the devotee. In the *Chandi*, Mahamaya is known as Yogamaya, who deludes all the living beings of the universe, but when she is pleased, she can bestow the blessing of the absolute freedom on everyone :'सैषा प्रसन्ना वरदा नृणां भवति मुक्तये' (१।५७) Further it has been said in the *Chandi* :

सा विद्या परमा मुक्तेर्हेतुभूता सनातनी ।
संसारबन्धहेतुश्च सैव सर्वेश्वरेश्वरी ॥

That is, 'Mahamaya Bhagavati is the cause of freedom from the worldliness, is Herself the internal Brahman, and, at the same time, is *avidya*, the cause of worldliness. She is the supreme Lord of the Creator and the Preserver (Brahma and Vishnu'. So, in the *Chandi*, Mahamaya is described as both *vidya* (knowledge) and *avidya* (ignorance), and she is the cause of both freedom and bondage. From this it is understood that when that primordial Energy identifies herself with the eternal transcendental Brahman and pervades with her essence the whole universe ('नित्यैव सा जगन्मूर्तिस्तया सर्वमिदं ततम्'), she can directly bestow the blessing of salvation on the devotee, and when she is known as the cause of bondage of worldliness ('संसारबन्धहेतुश्च') and is known as the *Prakriti*, the embodiment of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* ('प्रकृतिस्त्वं हि सर्वस्य गुणत्रयविभाविनी') she cannot directly function the work of bestowing bliss upon any devotee. True kind of *shreya* is the blessings of the Divine Energy, which enables us to attain to Godconsciousness. The *Katha-Upanishad* says,

श्रेयश्च प्रेयश्च मनुष्यमेत-
स्तौ सम्परीत्य विविनक्ति धीरः ।
श्रेयो हि धीरोऽपि प्रेयसो वृणीते
प्रेयो मन्दो योगक्षेमाद् वृणीते ॥१।२।२

'The preferable and the pleasurable approach mankind. The man of intelligence, having considered them, separates the two. The intelligent one selects the electable in preference to the delectable; the non-intelligent one selects the delectable for the sake of growth and protection of the body, etc.' For the ordinary men it is difficult to discriminate the real from the unreal, or the permanent from the impermanent. The Jnanis are just like the duck. When milk is mixed with water, the duck can separate the milk from water. Similarly, the Jnani can discriminate the real from the unreal in this world of unreality. The Jnani can separate the preferable from the pleasurable, if they are mixed together. Similarly, in this world of pleasure and pain, the Jnanis prefer pleasure instead of pain, nay, the real Jnanis discard both pleasure and pain, because pleasure and pain being relative, are unreal. The ignorant do quite opposite, and are like the camel to eat the thorny grass although bloods come out of their mouth. The

worldly men also follow the similar method, and though they are fully conscious of the impermanent nature of the phenomenal pleasure, yet they cannot avoid them, and consequently, suffer all the life. This kind of desire or attraction can be known as delusion. Moreover, the *samskaras*, accumulated in the past and present incarnations, compel them to proceed in the wrong path, and they cannot do anything if they desire to do otherwise. It can be said to be a weakness,, and for this weakness and wrong notion, they cannot realize that they are, in essence, pure, intelligent, free, immortal, and eternal, and are above all sorrows and sufferings. They become so weak that they cannot even try to realize that transcending state of the *Atman*. Their minds cannot think all these things. But the time will come when they will regain their lost power and knowledge, and then they come to know that they are the birthless and deathless immortal *Atman*. This kind of regaining knowledge of the *Atman* can be known as *recognition* (*pratyabhijnana*). Vedanta says that *recognition* dispells the darkness of ignorance or nescience. This divine *recognition* is said to be the real knowledge, or the knowledge of the *Atman*. After attaining to the knowledge of the *Atman*, an enlightened soul can live in this world of nescience, and then the world seems to him as a place of real pleasure (*majārkuti*). The Jnanis also live and move in this world of delusion and the world cannot bind them. That state of perfect release appears to the Jnani as a field of play of hide and seek, because they are free forever and ever by touching the neutral man (*buri*), the *Atman*, in the play of the world. The enlightened souls perfectly enjoy the play of the world by touching the supreme Being, God the Absolute, and then nothing can pollute them. Then they live in this world, and take pleasure in everything in this world like a witness (*sakshi*), being unaffected by all things, phenomenal and mental. It is true that real pleasure comes when a man witnesses the play of this world disinterestedly. So it is our duty to achieve the real preferable (*shreya*) leaving aside the pleasurable that binds men in the net of delusion.

MISCELLANEOUS

"God whom we know and whom we declare to you is in very truth a God of Love—a God whose acts do not belie His name, but whose love is boundless, and His pity unceasing to all. He knows no partiality for any, but deals out unwavering justice to all."

"Immutable laws govern the results of deeds. Deeds of good advance the soul, whilst deeds of evil degrade and retard it. Happiness is found in progress, and in gradual assimilation to the Godlike and the perfect. The spirit of divine love animates the acts, and in mutual blessing the souls, find their happiness."

"May I not deny Brahman ; may not Brahman deny me. Let there be no spuring (of me by Brahman), let there be no rejection (of Brahman) by me. May all the virtues that are (spoken of) in the *Upanishads* repose in me who am engaged in the pursuit of the *Atman ;* may they repose in me."

CHAPTER IX

MISCELLANEOUS TOPICS

One day we asked Swami Abhedananda : "Maharaj, the peoples flock to the holy places, but are they benefited in going to those places?"

Swami Abhedananda said : "Yes, they are benefited. But can you say the place where God does not exist? In the *Isha-Upanishad,* you will find the verse : 'ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वम् यत् किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्' * * i.e., "God pervades all things or objects of this universe, because He is all-pervading. The holy places and shrines are the special ones, where His sacred manifestation is vivid. As for example, the sun shines and its rays are thrown equally on everything of the universe, but, yet on the mirror or water, the rays are greatly manifested (i.e. reflected). The atmospheres of the holy places are sacred, because those who visit those places, observe sanctity and holiness, so men and women who visit those places, get inspiration in their hearts, and their minds become calm and peaceful.

Men can do and undo anything and everything for the cause of wealth or money.. I have seen in the Western countries that most of the peoples are the slaves of dollar, and that is the aim and object of their life. In India, I have also noticed that the people of India have surpassed the Westerners in many respect. Ordinary men are slave to money or dollar, and in many cases they do not hesitate to commit murder, and this practice proves that men of this nature are the slaves to passion. Passions and desires are always followed by selfishness. Now, what is selfishness? Selfishness is motivated by the limited ego-centric idea. The desires and motives of selfish men are concentrated to the petty selves who look only after their own individual interest and affair, and not to those of others. This selfishness is known as ignorance or nescience. This selfish motive is a kind of limitation, as it limits the mind and the ideas of men and women and as a consequence they cannot go beyond the attachment of the corporal body. They take care of the

body and also of them who are only connected with his self-interest. But the tendency which creates limitation or contraction, instead of expansion of the mind, brings unto them wretchedness and destruction. So selfish men and women do not find peace and happiness in their mind.

QUESTION : The holy shrines have become now the centres of earning money and of exploitation.

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : Yes, that I know. Men and women visit the holy places with their religious sentiments and sanctified heart in order to get peace and solace for the time being, but if the sincere visitors find improper business in those places, they are afflicted and naturally come back from those places with their heavy hearts. A similar instance happened to me. Returning from the West, I went once to visit the temple of Kamakshadevi in Assam. When I proceeded towards the temple-door, I found that some Pandas (priests) were forcing the pilgrims to offer money. I heard that one Panda was talking to some pilgrims that if they do not pay Rs. 5, they will not be allowed inside the temple for worshipping the Devi. These cases are regrettable. I found that inner side of the temple was very dark. I tried to carefully get into the temple, but was about to slide from the stairs down. There was no light inside the temple.[1] The Pandas earn too much, and have made a great income out of them, but they are quite indifferent of arranging even the lamps. All the pilgrimages suffer the same condition.

Besides the temples and the holy shrines, the method of worshipping of the gods and the goddesses has been turned into a commercial business in most places. The duty of the priest or *purohita* is to look after the good and welfare of the *Puras* or Yajamans. This kind of degeneration happened in the Brahmanical period just in the post-Vedic period. In the stereotyped Brahmanical period, the religion was purely formal. Prayers came to mean only the muttering of the *mantras* or sacred formulas. Most of the religious functions became loaded with symbolic subtleties and mysteries, and were ultimately lost in a lifeless mechanism of idle rites

[1] At present lights have been arranged inside and outside of the temple.

and pedantries of formalism. Priesthood became predominant, and it was rather a profession and an hereditary one. The Yajamans or men for whom the religious functions were performed, stood aside, and they were only the passive agents for supplying men, money, and munitians, and the priest or *purohita* did the rest for the Yajamanas. Sefilshness, with its longing for power, prestige, and enjoyment, pressed its way in and dimmed the lustre of the original ideal. Attempts were made to deprieve the rights of the non-Brahmin races. The non-Brahmins were treated like the Sudras, and were absolutely neglected. The women, the representatives of the Divine Energy or Sakti, were deprieved of their right from the Vedas, and they were considered as the door of the hell —'नरकस्य द्वारं नारी'। Really such was the social condition and treatment of the Brahmins of the dark Brahmanical period. Gradually protests were uttered or made by the true and rational Brahmins and other leaders against the degeneration of the society. They raised a revolt against ostentation and hypocrisy of the self-seeking priests, and blushed at the corruption of a great deal. The Brahmanical rule gradually faded away, and new era of light began to dawn over the changing society.

There was a time when the priestly caste monopolised the acts of worship or *puja*. Now, what is the real significance of worship or *puja* ? An act of worship or *puja* is no other than an offering of respect and reverence to the supreme in power, quality and in everything. It is a kind of dedication of the individual self to the supreme self, who is known as the deity, god or goddesses, or the Ruler of the universe. The priest is a humble and sincere man who dedicates his limited ego to the unlimited eternal Ego. And this is the true spirit of worship or *puja*. In any kind of worship, the priest infuses his own spirit into the deity, thinking himself as one with the deity. The essential thing in every worship is *prana-pratistha*, i.e., infusion of one's own life into the heart of the deity. So the act of worship is not at all a childish play. The deity (Devi or Devata) wants your mind only, i.e., He or She wants your sincere and spotless tranquil mind, which will be the medium or instrument of the deity as to reveal Him or Her. Until and unless you become identified

with the spirit of the deity, so long your act of worship will be considered as meaningless. So make your mind blank or empty and fill it with the spirit of the Divine, and then and then only, you will make yourself fit for worshipping the deity, or the Divine.

QUESTION : What is difference between *prana* (vital energy) and *manas* (mind) ?

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : There is a close connection between *prana* and *manas*. Again *prana* cannot exist with *manas*, and vice versa. *Prana* can generally be compared to a railway engine, and mind, the driver. We find that mind directs everything in this universe, and the *Yogavasistha Ramayana* says : 'मनो हि जगताम् कर्तृ' * * i.e., 'mind is the director of everything of the universe'. It is true that without the vital force or *prana*, mind remains inactive, so *prana* is the motive force behind *manas*, the internal instrument. In the *Upanishad*, it has been said : * * 'प्राणेत्येवं 'उपासीत' * * i.e. '*prana* or vital force can be prayed'. There *prana* is the Hiranyagarbha-Brahmā, who projects the universe in manifested form from the unmanifested state. The vital air is also known as *prana*, and there *prana* is the main vital air which animates and elevates the material body as well as other airs like *apana*, *vyana*, *samana*, and *udana*. They all are airs or *pranas*, but they differ in names according to their functions and locations. The main vital air is known as *mukhya-prana*, and it is *mukhya* or main because in the absence of it, all other subordinate *pranas* and the sense-organs become inactive and lifeless. In the *Kena-Upanishad*, it has been said,

ॐ केनेषितं पतति प्रेषितं मनः
केन प्राणः प्रथमः प्रैति युक्तः ।
केनेषितां वाचमिमां वदन्ति
चक्षुः श्रोत्रं क्व उ देवो युनक्ति ॥

That is, 'willed by whom does the directed mind go towards its objects? Being directed by whom does the vital force, that proceeds all, proceed (towards its duty) ? By whom is this speech willed that people utter who is the effulgent being who directs the eyes and the ears'. Here the Brahman (determinate) is described as the supreme ruler and director,

and other *pranas,* senses, and sense-organs are under the control of the Brahman. There the vital air or vital force is meaningless without the source, the Brahman. So the *Upanishad* (*Kena*) says : 'यद्वाचाऽनभ्युदितं' etc. 'यन्मनसा न मनुते ; यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति, यच्छ्रोत्रेण न शृणोति, यत्प्राणेन न प्राणिति * * तदेवब्रह्म त्वं बिद्धि' i.e. 'That which is not uttered by speech, that which man does not comprehend with the mind, that which man does not see with the eyes, that which man does not hear with the ear, and that which man does not smell with the organ of smell.....know that to be Brahman.....' The *Upanishad* says that senses and sense-organs including mind are apparently directed by *prana* or life-force, but mainly their source or fountain-head is the Brahman.

The will-power is the director of everything, and the source of the will-power is mind. Kant, the great German philosopher, also said that the seat of thinking, feeling and willing—these three psychic functions are the ego or self, and ego or self is composed of the stuff of the mind. Tantra says that *jnana, iccha,* and *kriya,*—these inner activities are the ingredients of the mind, behind which the *pranasakti* or vital energy exists. Tantra says that this *Sakti* or energy is the divine Energy who co-exists with the all-intelligence and all-consciousness Siva. Siva and Sakti—the static Energy and the dynamic Energy are like the coupled I-consciousness and It-consciousness (*aham* and *idam-chaitanya*) which form the undivided secondless entity of the Brahman. This Brahman is the cause and ground of everything of the material, mental, and spiritual world. The will-power (*icchasakti*) in its individual (*vyasti*) aspect, performs everything of the universe, composed of the categories of space, time, and causation, and the will-power in its collective (*amasti*) divine aspect, become the cause of creation, i.e., evolution of this vast universe, with its sentient and insentient objects. In individual way, the will-power instigates or inspires men, women, and animals in their field of work, makes them active, and brings success or unsuccess unto them. Good or bad happens to them as a consequence of their works, but the will-power remains at the root. In the *Upanishad,* we find that the Brahman (determinate) willed, and as a result of will, the one and secondless Brahman

become the many or manifold : * * 'एकोऽहं बहुस्याम' and being the manifold universe, the Brahman entered into all the objects of the universe : 'तत् सृष्टा तदेवानुप्रविशत्'। the word 'तदेवानुप्राविशत्' * * i.e., 'after projection He entered into it', suggests clearly the idea that projection or world-appearance is no other than the Brahman itself, or the world is not different from the Brahman. However, the will-power is the cause of everything phenomenal.

Now, can a man do everything through will-power? Yes, infinite possibilities lie latent in a man or a woman, and through intense desire or will, he or she can do and undo everything through the power of will. It is a fact that a man creates something means he manifests something which remained unmanifested in the limitless store of his subconscious or unconscious mind. We should remember what power exists in the macrocosm, exists also in the microcosm. A man is the universe in miniature form, and, therefore, infinite power slumbers in the bosom of his submerged mind. Ordinary man does not know the secret, so he thinks himself little and powerless. The individual will-power is again non-different from the universal will-power, which is known as the *Prakriti,* or primordial Energy. So if a man realizes that his real source is the infinite and eternal *Prakriti,* he can manifest everything greater or smaller. Vedanta also says that the individual soul (*jiva*) is no other than the universal Soul, the Brahman. The *Prakriti* appears different from the Brahman for its stuff and function. Her stuff is the accumulated infinite *samaskars* of the living and non-living beings and objects, which are the seeds of creation or manifestation, and its function is to create or manifest the manifold appearance. But when she looses its forms of stuff and function, she is identified with the causeless and groundless Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna also said that whom you say Kali, the dynamic divine Energy, I call her the Brahman. In the form of Kali or divine Energy, she functions as the Creator or Creatrix, and, in the form of Brahman, she creates nothing, but shines as non-different from the one and secondless Brahman. So it can be said that from the viewpoint of evolution or projection (*sristi*), the indeterminate and formless (*nirguna* and *nirakara*) Brahman appears as determinate and formless (*saguna* and

sakara), but, Sri Ramakrishna said : "One and the same supreme Brahman itself assumes both the forms of the determinate Brahman and the indeterminate Brahman. *Nitya* (transcendental essence) and *lila* (immanent sportive playful principle)—these two aspects belong to one and the same supreme Brahman or Reality." Now, this realization (*anubhuti*) does not come to them who are in the abiss of darkness of ignorance but to those who are enlightened and have risen above all kinds of controversy of isms, creeds and beliefs, and have realized the Truth.

Do not think that as a man creates many things through his will-ower, so he can create the universe and all phenomenal objects like God, the Creator. A man may be considered as a creator in miniature form, but he cannot be raised in the status of the all-powerful omnipresent and omniscent God. A man can beget his children, can build houses or palaces, and can hoard immense wealth, but he cannot create men and women and animals and trees, creapers, rivers, seas and oceans. A man cannot create the solar system with the sun, moon, and stars, but he only enjoys them as a onlooker, and is surprised with the magnificent creation of God, the all-powerful highest Principle. But do not miss the point that in essence or in reality you are non-different from God. The same Brahman-consciousness shines not only in God, but shines also in you and I, and in all the living and non-living beings. A great pire of fire may appear greater in size and magnitude than little part of the great fire, but in potency and power, a great pire and a bit of fire are the same. As for example, as a bit of fire can destroy a great city, so can a great pire of fire. The Brahman-consciousness fully shines in the heart of everyone, so, from the viewpoint of consciousness, individual pure consciousness and God-consciousness are one and the same. The difference between them appears only to them who are in ignorance or *avidya.* Through the differentiating power of *avidya,* men think themselves as different from God (*Isvara*).

While discussing about God and the individual souls (*Isvara* and *jiva*), the Swami said that an individual soul is like a reflection (*pratibimva*) of God (*bimva*). As the reflected face of a man in the mirror or water is no other than the face

of a real man, so an individual soul and all the beings of the universe are the reflection of one and the same self-shining Brahman. Sankara and the followers of the Vivarana school are the upholders of the theory of reflection (*pratibimvavada*) whereas Vachaspati Mishra and others are the *avacchedavadis*. The *prativimbhimvadis* say that the idea of difference between God and the individual souls are superimposed (*adhyasta*) : 'प्रतिबिम्बे बिम्बात् भेदमात्रस्याऽध्यस्त्वेन * *', but viewing from the pure consciousness, both God and the individual souls are non-different 'स्वरूपेण तस्य सत्यत्वान्नप्रतिबिम्बस्वरूपजीबस्य मुक्त्यान्व्यासम्भव इति'। So, men think themselves as ignorant and limited due to nescience or *avidya*. This nescience is known as non-knowledge or *ajnana*, and knowledge of *jnana* is that which dispels the darkness of ignorance, and makes men realize that he is not in bondage, but is free, birthless and deathless, and is eternal and immortal.

QUESTION : What is the real purport of the *Bhagavad Gita* ?

SWAMI MAHARAJ : It is said that the *Gita* was produced in the battle-field of Kurukshetra, which was known as Dharmakshetra. The Divine songs of the *Gita* are applicable to all the people, irrespective of caste, creed, and colour. Sri Krishna was the charioteer as well as the director of the battle. Reaching the battle-field of Kurukshetra, Arjuna said to Sri Krishna : "O Achyuta, the mmortal One, place my chariot between the two armies, that I may just see those who stand here desirous to fight, and know with whom I must fight in this strife of battle": 'सेनयोरूभयोर्मध्ये रथं स्थापय मेऽच्युत' (१।२१)। The chariot was, therefore, placed amidst both the armies, but seeing all the kinsmen standing to fight, Arjuna was overcome with deepest pity, and said in sorrow : "* * my limbs droop down, and mouth is dried up. A tremor comes on my body, and my hairs stand on end." Having said thus, Arjuna, sorrow-stricken in mind, cast aside his bow and arrows in the midst of the battle, and sat down in the chariot, and thus the first chapter of the *Gita* ended. The second chapter is very important, because, in this chapter, you will find Sri Krishna as the real guide not only in the battle-field of Kurukshetra, but also in the battle-field of *samsara*, where hundreds of thousands people, being deluded by the

inscrutable *maya*, are crushed and slain, and cannot restore their divine consciousness of the *Atman*.

Arjuna displayed grief and delusion (*moha*) caused by his attachment for, and the sense of separation from, dominior, the elders, sons, friends, well-wishers, kinsmen, near and dear ones, and this notion arose in him from delusion of 'I am theirs, and they are mine'. Grief and delusion are thus the cause of bondage of *samsara*, where the battle is going on all the time between good and evil. So Vasudeva Krishna then wished to teach Arjuna for the removal of his grief and delusion, which are natural to the ignorant people. Sri Krishna taught Arjuna the distinction between *jnana-nistha* and *karma-nistha*, i.e., between the devotion of discriminative knowledge and the devotion of selfless work. Thus with reference to the Sankhya and the Yoga standpoints two distinct paths were instructed by Sri Krishna, seeing the impossibility of *jnana* and *karma* being conjoined in one and the same person simultaneously, as one being based upon the idea of non-agency and unity, and the other on the idea of agency and multiplicity. Arjuna was also perturbed to hear the conjunction of knowledge and work intended for all, and so he asked Sri Krishna, his Divine guide : "Tell me conclusively that which is the better of the two (*jnana-nistha* and *karma-nistha*)." Sankara has elaborately explained here and clarified the matter in his commentary on the *Gita* (in the second chapter).

Sri Krishna introduced Arjuna the divine knowledge of the *Atman*, so as to remove his ignorance and grief, but Arjuna was not consoled. And this is the nature or condition of ordinary people of the human society. Ordinary men and women are getting flashes of the light of discrimination (*viveka*) all the time, when confronting with hundreds and thousands of distresses and calamities in their worldly life, but yet they cannot restore consciousness and right knowledge. So repeated knocking is necessary for opening the door of conscience or right knowledge for entering into the temple of the divine wisdom and also for shaking off the fetters of false knowledge. Like Sri Krishna, a Man of Realization, we need the self-realized guides or *Gurus* to lead us to the path of divine wisdom. We have noticed that when Arjuna did

not restore his right knowledge, Sri Krishna showed him his Divine manifestation (*bibhutiyoga* in the tenth chapter, before showing him his universal form (*visvarupa-darshana*). In the eleventh chapter, we find, that Arjuna said :

मदनुग्रहाय परमं गुह्यमध्यात्मसंज्ञितम् ।
यत् त्वयोक्तं बचस्तेन मोहोऽयं विगतो मम ॥

"O Sri Krishna, by that speech (on divine manifestation), which has been delivered by you for my benefit, that highest secret which is called *adhyatma*—this, my delusion (*moha*), is gone." After hearing about the secret of divine manifestation of Sri Krishna, who was the embodiment of discrimination, renunciation, and wisdom, Arjuna's delusion was completely removed, and his heart or mind was simultaneously purified or transformed into pure consciousness. Then Arjuna, being divinely enlightened, was willing to see the Lord's universal form (*vishvarupa*), and he said : 'द्रष्टमिच्छामि ते रूपमैश्वरंपुरु षोत्तमम्' (११।३) i.e. 'I desire to see thy form as *Isvara*, O Purusha supreme'. Similarly, when by the process of hearing of the *mahavakya* (*shravana*), discriminately concentrating on and thinking of, the secret of the *mahavakya*, *'aham brahma'smi'* (*manana*), and absorbingly meditating upon the *mahavakya* (*nididhyasana*), the minds of men and women are identified with the Brahman, then real purification of the heart comes, and then and then only, they are competent to realize the all-pervasive universal form of the Brahman, which can be said to be the *Vishvarupa* or 'सर्वं खल्विदं ब्रह्म' i.e. "all that exist, are no other than the all-consciousness Brahman. So, before *chittasuddhi* and *jnana-vichara*, complete dedication of surrenderance and sincerity are required. This dedication or surrenderance (*sharanagati*) was expressed by Sri Ramakrishnadeva when he said : 'नाहं नाहं तुहुँ तुहुँ' i.e. 'not I, but you only exist'. In this attitude of complete surrenderance, there remains no room for two 'I's. At that time the individual ego is completely identified with, or merged into, the universal Self. Such was the condition of Arjuna, and Sri Krishna, his teacher and guide, gave him the spiritual eyes to witness the universal form (*vishvarupa*) of Him 'दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुःपश्य मे योगमैश्वरम्' (११।८) Really spiritual teacher (*guru*) is he

who can open the spiritual eyes of the disciple,[2] and when the eyes are opened, the disciple sees, i.e., realizes the unspeakable and undying glory of the *Atman* or Brahman. So, the *Gita* is a book of renunciation, and Sri Ramakrishna said that if you repeat the word *Gita*, you will pronounce *tyagi, tyagi*[3] renunciation or desirelesness.

In this world of desires, there are two extreme things, enjoyment of desire (*bhoga*) and abandonment of desire or desirelessness (*tyaga*). Between these two, one is the positive pole, and the other is the negative pole, of the same magnet of *samsara*. Now, it is a fact, that positiveness is followed by birth, or involution is followed by dissolution. But we can conceive that between these two extremes, there is a neutral point, where those two extremes meet together and completely lose their natures of positiveness and negativeness, and this neutral point is the *Atman*, which is neither positive, nor negative, but is the source and cause of those two extremes, positiveness and negativeness. Similarly enjoyment of desire (*bhoga*) and abandonment of desire (*tyaga*) are the two extremes of one and the same Essence, which is neither positive, nor negative, but completely absorbs them and transforms them into oneness. So, he who has realized the transcending *Atman* or Brahman, has transcended all dualities and diversities, and remains as an unifying principle which is not, in reality, one or many, but goes above one and many : 'द्वैताद्वैतविवर्जितम्' The realized soul can live in this world of nescience, but lives all the time, in all circumstances, as witness, being detached from all good and evil—all merit and demerit.

The *Gita* has also preached the Karma Yoga, i.e., selfless work. It says that the mind is purified if a man does work without asking its results. The mind is a stuff which is composed of two manifestations, positive and negative (*samkalpa* and *vikalpa*), and when these two manifestations or modifications (*vrittis*) are calmed, the mind shines in its own glory, i.e., the mind is transformed into pure conscious-

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[2] The true significance of the word *Guru* is: *Gu* means 'darkness' of ignorance, and *ru* means 'opens' or 'removes' i.e. he who removes the darkness of ignorance of the disciple, is known as *Guru*.

[3] The words *gitā* and *tyāgi* are synanimous.

ness. *Chittasuddhi* means purification of the mind or transformation of the mind into its own real state, the absolute calmness. Patanjali has mentioned about the mind in two aphorisms : 'योगश्चित्तवृत्तिर्निरोधः' (१।२) and 'तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम्' (१।३) Bhoja raja has explained the five states of mind as तत्र क्षिप्तं मूढं बिक्षिप्तं एकाग्रं निरूद्धं इति चित्तस्य भूमयः चित्तस्यावस्थाविशेषाः and these states evolve according to the *gunas, sattva, rajas,* and *tamas.* By concentration, these states, in relation to three *gunas,* are quitened, and then the mind shines in its own essence. The third aphorism says that 'तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम्', 'द्रष्टुः पुरुषस्य तस्मिन् काले स्वरुपे चिन्मात्ररूपताम् अवस्थानं स्थितिः भवति।' In the fourth aphorism we find 'वृत्तिसारूप्यमितरत्र'। 'सारप्यं तद्रपत्वम्'। The words चिन्मात्ररूपताम् and तद्रूपत्वम् connote the same idea, i.e., when the *vrittis* which evolve by the power of *gunas, sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* are calmed or quietened, then the mind shines as pure consciousness (*chinmatram*) or shines as it is (*tadrupattvam*). So the *Gita* says that if you do not desire to get the fruits of actions, the actions will not bind you with attachments. The *Gita* further says :'कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं विद्धि ब्रह्माक्षरसमुद्भवम्' (३।१५) Here *kama* means the sacrificial functions (*yajnas*), and they evolve from the Vedas. Now, 'daily duties or works' and 'sacrificial functions' convey the same idea. There was a time (in ancient India) when the sacrificial functions (*yajnas* and also *sutras*) formed the main part of the human life, because the people were of the idea that the heavens (*svar*gas) are the be-all and end-all of life, and the sacrificial functions are the only means that produce an unseen power (*apurva*) that leads to the heaven, which is the abiss of eternal bliss and happiness. But, with the advent of Sankaracharya, that idea was gradually replaced by an opposite idea that happiness in the heavens are frail and impermanent, and the realization of the *Atman* is only permanent and eternal, and that realization is attained through the purification of the mind, and also through concentration and meditation. The lofty ideas and ideal of the *Gita* were again fully realized by the people, and they took *karma* as an 'action' which forms the important part of the human life in this world of actions or duties. The people used to gradually understand that if all works are done in the spirit of worship (of God), then that practice will bring

purification of mind, and, consequently, they will attain to Godconsciousness.

Now, if we take the meaning of the verse 'कर्म ब्रह्मोद्भवं बिद्धि:' * * we find that the actions are ordained by the Vedas, which are the revealed ones, because the Vedas were not written by any man, as the sayings and truths therein, were revealed, as the breath comes out of the body without any effort : 'अस्य महतो भूतस्य निःश्वसितमेतद् यद् ऋग्वेदो यजुर्वेदः सामवेदः' (बृहं उं २।४।१०)। Sankara also said in the commentary : पुरूषनिःश्वासवद् समुद्भतं ब्रह्म' (vide the commentary of the *Gita*). In the *Vedantasutra* : शास्त्रयोनित्वात् (१।१।३), Sankara said : ऋग्वेदाख्यस्य सर्वज्ञानाकरस्यप्रयत्नेनैव लीलान्यायेन पुरूषनिःश्वासबत् यस्मान् होतो भूतात् योनेः सम्भवः So we find that as the actions evolved from the Vedas, so they should be performed in the spirit of purity or sacredness.

The enlightened and intellectual portion of the Vedas is the *Upanishad,* which is commonly known as the knowledge-portion (*jnanakanda*), and the rest is the action-portion (*karmakanda*). If we trace the derivative meaning of the word Veda, then we get 'knowledge' —(विद्—ज्ञाने), or wisdom. The Hindus did not mean by the Vedas a set of books which must be accepted as truth and as true in every letter, but they meant by Veda, 'knowledge' or 'wisdom'. Otherwise, the actions of sacrifice and rites were performed with selfish motive (for the attainment of heavenly regions), so their fruits or results were not permanent. The unselfish actions have been ordained by the *Upanishads* and *Gita.* The *Upanishads* are known as Vedanta (i.e., end of the Vedas). Sadananda Yati has said in the *Vedantasara* : 'बेदान्तो नामोपनिषत् प्रमाणम्, तदुपकारीणि शारीरकसूत्रादिनी च' i.e., *Upanishad* means Vedanta, and the *Vedantasutra,* as composed by Vyasa and commented by Sankara, are the helping ones to the *Upanishad* or Vedanta.

Now, there is a great difference between knowledge (*jnana*) and action (*karma*) and also between their results. While commenting on the fourth aphorism of the *Brahma-sutra* : 'तत्तु समन्वयात्' Sankara said : 'कर्मब्रह्मविद्याफलयोर्वैलक्षणात्। शारीरं वाचिकं मानसं च कर्म श्रुतिस्मृतिसिद्धं धर्माख्यं * * सुखतारतम्यमनुश्रुयते। ततश्च तद्धेतोर्धर्मस्य तारतम्यं गम्यते' ; i.e., the results of *karma* and *brahma-vidya* are different. The actions, physical, verbal and mental, sanctioned by the *Shrutis* and *Smritis,* are *dharma,* * * we find

differences in the experiences of pleasure, and pain in the human beings and animals. Therefore, *dharmas*, origined from the physical, verbal and mental actions, differs in different men'. So Sankara refuted the theory of origin of knowledge aided by action (*jnana-karma-samucchya*). Because knowledge i.e. Brahman-knowledge is not an outcome or result of any religious, spiritual, or Yogic actions, but it is a self-established and self-revealing one. But sometimes it is believed that realization of the *Atman* or Brahman is the result of spiritual *sadhana*, but that is not correct. The religious *sadhana* may be regarded as a precondition to the attainment of God-consciousness, in the sense that *sadhana* removes the darkness of ignorance or nescience and the self-effulgent light of the Divine consciousness dawns itself upon the purified horizon of the mind or heart of the devotee. Truth is always truth, and it cannot be verified by another truth or by falsity. As for example, the self-shining sun cannot be revealed by any lamp or torch, but it is revealed by itself. The Brahman-knowledge does not require any mediation to be revealed, because it is self-revealing. While commenting on the *Brahmasutra* : 'तत्तु समन्वयात्', Sankara said that the Brahman or *Brahmajnana* is self-established and *vastutantra*, and not *purushatantra*. The Vedic *karmas* like sacrifices and others depend upon *chodanā* or diction, i.e., rule of to be not to be done, but the *Brahmanjnana* does not depend upon any *chodanā* or diction. Now, what do we mean by an action (*kriva*)? Sankara raised a question to 'क्रिया हि नाम सा यत्र बस्तुस्वरूपनिरपेक्षैव चोद्यते, पुरुषचित्तव्यापाराधणा च' 'any action depends on act of willing or unwilling of a man, and realization of the Brahman-knowledge being a mental act, similarly depends on one's willing or unwilling of a man : 'ननु ज्ञानं नाम मानमी क्रिया' * * To this, Sankara differentiated *jnana* from *dhyana*, because *dhyana* depends upon a man as well as on a valid knowledge : 'ज्ञानं तु प्रमाणजन्यम्। * * यथाभूतब्रह्मात्मविषयमपि ज्ञानं चोदनातन्त्रम्।' Sankar said that this question is absurd, because 'भूतं ब्रह्मजिज्ञास्यं नित्यत्वान्न पुरुषव्यापारतन्त्रम्। चोदना प्रवृत्तिभेदाच्च।' Therefore, 'ब्रह्म वस्तुतन्त्रमेव तत्। * * वस्तुतन्त्रत्वात् एव भूतबस्तुविषयानां प्रामान्यं बस्तुतन्त्रम्। तथैव सति ब्रह्मज्ञानमपि वस्तुतन्त्रमेव भूतवस्तुविषयत्वात्।'

That is, the realization of the Brahman does not depend on any man or any valid knowledge, but it is an well-established

fact, and is, therefore, self-revealing. When the veil of nescience is removed, the Brahman manifests itself without the help of any other thing, or object, or process.

By the word *'jnana'* we mean both phenomenal and transcendental knowledge. When *jnana* is used in the prime sense, then it means the Brahman-knowledge, which transcends the categories of time, space, and causation. Sankara said that the Brahman-knowledge is an immediate awareness of the Absolute (*pratyaksha-anubhuti* or *anupalabdhi*). Sankara further said : 'यद्यपि ब्रह्मणि स्वयमेव स्वच्छतास्ति तथाप्यष्ठाना-वरणभङ्गार्थं वृत्त्यपेक्ष्य' i.e. 'though the Brahman-knowledge itself is transparent and pure, yet it requires a medium-like *vritti* or modification for its revelation'. It is revealed in the shining intellect, which is fully infused by the pure consciousness (i.e. *chitpratibimbita-buddhi-vritti*), and for the knowledge of the Brahman and simultaneously for the removal of ignorance, or nescience, medium-like *vritti* (modification) is required, because the *Brahmasutra* says that the Brahman-knowledge is no other than the immediate experience of the Brahman : 'अनुभबावसानत्वाद् भूतवस्तुबिषयत्वाच्च ब्रह्मज्ञानम्' (१।१।२)।

Regarding different experience of the Brahman as well as for removing of the veinl of nescience (that covers the Brahman), Sadananda Yati said that with the revelation of knowledge, 'I am Brahman', there arises a *vritti* in the form of the Brahman (*brahmakara-critti*), then in the thought-form, the pure Brahman is reflected, and as soon as the Brahman-consciousness is identified with the thought-consciousness is removed or replaced, and, simultaneously the self-revealing Brahman-consciousness is manifested in the form of *experience*. Suresvaracharya, the author of *vritti*, said : 'ब्रह्मण्यज्ञाननाशायवृत्तिव्याप्तिरपेक्षिता।' Sadananda Yati also 'ब्रह्मास्मात्यखण्डकाराकारिता चि त्तवृत्तिरुदेति। सा तु चित्प्रतिबिम्बसहितातीप्रत्यापभिन्नमज्ञातं परं ब्रह्मविषयीकृत्य तदगताज्ञानभेव बाधते। * * चित्तवृत्तिरपि बाधिताभबति। * * तथा स्वयंप्रकाशमान-प्रत्यगभिन्न-परब्रह्मावभासनार्हतया * * प्रत्यगभिन्नपरब्रह्ममात्रं भवति।' That is, 'when the pure Brahman-know-

That is, 'when the pure Brahman-knowledge is reflected in the mirror of the mind or thought-consciousness, then nescience (*ajnana*) that resides in the *vritti* is automatically replaced, and the pure consciousness is revealed, and when consciousness in the *vritti* (thought or modification) is

revealed, *vritti* or thought-form, being the product of nescience, is also destroyed, and this is the process for the revelation of the Brahman-consciousness by the help of the thought (form) or *vritti.*

QUESTION : What is relation between action and its result?

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : It has already been explained that as a shadow of an object cannot exist independent of the object, so the result of work. The result of works may be good or bad. The *Gita* says,

सहजं कर्म कौन्केव सदोषमपि न त्यजेत्।
सर्वारम्भा हि दोषेण धूमेनाग्निरिवावृताः॥

'The duty born with oneself, O Son of Kunti, though faulty, one ought not to abandon for, all undertakings are surrounded with evil, as fire with some'. The upholders of the Sankhya, Buddhist, and Vaishesika theories raised their objections against entire abandonment of actions, as no one can renounce one's own nature-born duty in this world of duties or actions. The Sankhya says that the soul of *purusha* is always mobile like the categories (*gunas*)? Similarly, the Buddhists say that action itself is the actor or soul, like the five *skandhas* undergoing change or destruction every moment? The Vaishesikas also forward their objection against the complete renunciation of action or duty, and they say that when the soul acts, it is known as active, when it does not act, it is known as actionless. Such being the case it is possible to renounce action entirely. But there is this peculiarity in this theory : neither is the thing, nor is the soul ever mobile, nor is action itself the actor or soul, but it is a permanent substance, wherein action which was non-existent before, arises, and wherein action which has been existent, ceases while the substance remains pure and actionless, with the potentiality of the activity in it, and as such forms the actor. Thus say the followers of Kanada.

Sankara elaborately discussed about the controversies of opinions of the Sankhya, Buddhist, and Vaishesika thinkers, and refuted their theories. Sankara refuted the theory of transformation (*parinamavada*) and said that the enlightened

one can renounce action entirely, and perfection in Karma Yoga leads to absolute desirelessness or *sannyasa*. Sankara further forwarded his rational opinion that action (*karma*) is the property of the *gunas, sattva, rajas,* and *tamas,* be they regarded as real things, or as things set up by *avidya* or nescience. Action is ascribed to the *Atman* through *avidya,* and it has, therefore, been said that no ignorant man can renounce action entirely even for a moment. On the other hand, he, who realizes the *Atman,* is able to renounce action entirely, inasmuch as *avidya* has been removed or expelled by wisdom (*vidya*), for, there can be no residue left of what is ascribed by *avidya*. Indeed, no residue or residual reflection is left of the second moon (*dvi-chandra*), created by the false vision of the darkness-affected eye, even after the removal of darkness. Such being the case, complete renunciation or absolute abandonment of works are possible for an enlightened soul.

The *Gita* says that actions produce good or bad results, as they are mixed with both the results. Desires remain behind all actions, and all men and women are possessed of desires. The desires are the motive force which compels everyone to do work. Nature with its attributes (*gunas*) is the main cause, and desires are instigated by those attributes (*gunas*) of the Nature (*Prakriti*). So Patanjali advised all to reduce the numbers of thought into one current and to concentrate that on the centre which is no other than the mind (*chitta*). The real nature of the mind is the *Atman,* who is *drastā*. But Vedanta said that the act of reduction, or complete suppression of the mind, is not possible, rather the divergent nature of the mind (*chitta*) should be transformed into pure consciousness. Sankara criticised the Sankhya and Yoga views, and said : 'योग स्मृतिरपि प्रत्याख्याता' in connection with the *Brahmasutra* (II.2.2) : 'एतेन योग प्रत्युक्तः'। Sankara said that when the mind is suppressed, it remains in its own balancing state (*samyavastha*) and that means the mind with its manifestations (modifications) remain in causal form. The causal form, according to Vedanta, is under the level of *maya* or *ajnana,* so if anyone reduces all his divergent thoughts into the balancing and concentrated state of the mind, he will not be able to cut

asunder the knots of nescience (*ajnana*) and so he will not attend the absolute freedom (*mukti*). The absolute freedom comes with the realization of the *Atman* or Brahman : 'तत्त्वज्ञानं तु वेदान्तबाक्येभ्य एव भवति * *, तं त्वौपनिषदं पुरुषं पृच्छामि (बृहः उः ३।६।५०) इत्येवमादि श्रुतिभ्यः।' So the upholders of the Sankhya and Yoga are the dualists : 'द्वैतिनो हि ते सांख्या योगाश्च नात्मैकत्वदर्शिनः'। The contention of Sankara is this that the final analysis of both the Sankhya and Yoga philosophies is reduced to duality and it does not believe in the theory that the individual soul (*jiva*) and the Brahman are one without the second. It is only the *Upanishad* or Advaita Vedanta that teaches that *tattvajnana* or divine realization of the Self is possible from the discriminative process of the Vedantic *mahavakya, 'tattvam asi'*, i.e. you, the individual soul, is no other than the non-dual Brahman.

The *Gita* (3.4) further says,

न कर्मणामनारम्भन्नैष्कर्मं पुरुषोऽश्नुते।
न च संन्यसनादेव सिद्धिं समधिगच्छति॥

'Not by abstaining from action will a man be actionless, nor by mere renunciation does he attain perfection'. Now, without action, a man cannot attend the state of actionlessness. The idle men are of the opinion that any kind of action will be the cause of binding, so they live without doing any action. But those men are hypocrite, because they are spoiling their own life and, at the same time, are depriving the society. The ideal men may think that they will not perform any work physically, whereas they do everything mentally. The mental work is also known as work, the only difference that subjective tendencies of doing works are not projected as objective ones. But, by that, they will not be exempted from the results, good or bad. So, go beyond work by the help of work, as Brihaspati said,

त्यज धर्ममधर्मं च उभे सत्यानृते त्यज।
उभे सत्यानृते त्यक्त्वा येन त्यजसि तत्तज॥

'That is, 'if a thorn enters into your foot, take another thorn for getting out of that thorn, and, afterwards leave both the thorns'. So, you will have to do work selflessly for going

beyond all works. Habit is the second nature, so create a counter-habit of doing work without asking the result of work, and then you will gradually be able to attain the state of desirelessness.

Dexterity in works is also a kind of Yoga. The *Gita* (2.50) says : 'योगः कर्मसु कौशलम्'। Generally we find that the people work without knowing the real method. Sri Krishna said that men and women are destined to work, but they should know the way how to work, i.e., how to work without asking its result. I have already explained that work in the spirit of worship (of God) is the best work, which does not bind men, rather helps them to go beyond work. Motive behind work is to be understood first, and if that motive be good, then work and that work produces good result. But we should be cautious about the result of work, whether good or bad. The *Gita* says that those who want result, will have to face the ill fate : 'फले सक्तः निबध्यते'। Therefore, Karma Yoga or performance of work without the hope of fruit, is the best means to make ourselves enlightened in the path of spirituality. Sri Krishna said,

तस्मादसक्तः सततं कार्यं कर्म समाचर।
असक्तो ह्याचरन् कर्म परमाप्नोति पुरुषः॥

Now, what is *dharma* ? In English, *dharma* is known as religion. Many are confounded to determine the real characteristic of religion. Some say that religion means worship of the deities, rites, fasting and charitable contribution. Some are of the opinion that religion means the muttering of the *mantras*, concentration and meditation, study of the *Shastras*, etc. In fact, religion means to create a link or binding between God and man (*religio*—to bind). Hegel defined religion as a kind of knowledge of the individual mind, and that knowledge is of its nature as the absolute mind. Mathew Arnold defined religion as an emotion founded on morality. Prof. Bradley called religion the unity of man and God. Prof. William James said that religion is a supersensible sacred order and that order brings unity between man and God, who is truth, bliss, and transcendental beauty. Prof. Caird defined religion as the revelation of the human spirit into union with the Divine. Though the Marxist

philosophy defined religion as a pleasing self-hypnotism and an unconscious self-deception or an opium to the nation, yet it has not absolutely banished religion from the human mind. So whatever may be the definition of religion, religion is our knowledge and realization and love. In truth, religion is 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 the supreme Being.

Religion is divided into two parts, essential and non-essential. The essential part of religion is the realization of the *Atman,* and the non-essential part is a particular set of doctrines, dogmas, creeds, beliefs or faiths, which can be said to be the husks of religion, and the carnel is love and devotion to God, which lead to the realization of the *Atman.* The French philosopher Bergson has divided religion into two, static and dynamic, but I would like to divide religion into two, self-control and self-knowledge. Religion does not only teach men and women to go to the temples or churches or mosques, but also teaches to love God or Allah, and to dedicate their life to Him. Religion is a deep penetration into the core of the *Atman,* and it itself is the divine realization.

Religion or *dharma* can be said to be an experience and living contact with the absolute Reality. Religion, in the West, drew its central idea and inspiration from the intellectual culture of the Greeks, whereas religion in the East and especially in India, drew its impetus and inspiration from the intuitive seers of the *Upanishads.* True to say that the East has been the origin or fountain-head of great religions. Hinduism in the Indian soil is saturated with the basic faith in spiritual realization and also in direct vision of God. Further religion is individual, so long as the highest ideal of it is not realized, and when that ideal is achieved, it is turned into universal love and feeling. Sometimes the religious traditions have got mixed up with secular interest, fanaticism, racial prejudice, and limited motives, and in the pages of the history of religion we also find many recurrings of them. For this reason, from time to time, great teachers or Incarnations come to this world to teach the new gospel of truth and to lead men and women towards the absolute freedom. Those great souls teach that deepest thing of life is known only

through higher intuition, and this intuition is beyond intellect and reason, though is not antagonistic to intellect and reason. Intuition that wells forth from religion or religious consciousness, gives us the knowledge of the whole spirit, or of the integral whole, into which everything duality or diversity fades away, or is merged. Then we are aware of our true being which is the universal Brahman, the core of all realities.

The *Upanishad* says : 'आत्मानं विद्धि' i.e., 'know thyself', or 'know thy Self'. Really the Self or *Atman* animates and elevates the mind, intellect, knowledge, and consciousness. In this world of relativity, we know all objects which means we bring the objects to the limit of our senses. The realists, or the naive realists, say that we know objects which always exist outside, as independent of us. The neo-realists are almost of the same opinion. The idealists hold that we know things or objects, the images of which already exist in our mind or consciousness, and we see those objects means we project those internal or mental images outside in the universe. The Vijnanavadin Buddhists or the Yogacharins absolutely deny the external existence of the objects, as they hold that the *vjnana* or consciousness, that exists inside, is only real, whereas the external representation is unreal. The non-dualist Vedanta and especially Sankara and most of his followers believe that it is a fact that the external objects exist in relation to the internal images of the objects, and the representations of the objects outside are phenomenally real, and transcendentally unreal.

Now, regarding knowledge, it can be said that when we know something, we become the subject, and something to be known is the object, and the relational knowledge that creates a bridge between the subject and the object, is called knowledge. So there happens a tripartite function in case of perception or knowledge of something. This tripartite function is known as *triputi.* And, in this tripartite function, consciousness plays an important role. According to Advaita Vedanta, the one and the same consciousness plays the parts of knower, knowledge, and known (*jnata, jnana,* and *jneya*). Again, the *Atman* itself assumes the forms of subject, object, and relation. But it should be remembered that

there is no other knower of the *Atman.* The *Atman* is known as an integral intuitional experience, which is known as *anupalabdhi,* and it is known means it itself reveals its pure nature. As the sun is shining in the sky, so the *Atman* is above all kinds of change, and it is imperishable, eternal, and immute.

Some are of the opinion that the state of actionlessness is religion (*dharma*). But remember that until and unless you become liberated, by removing the veil of nescience, the question of the state of actionlessness does not arise. The life of a *Jivanmukta* is a bright example of *a-karma* or *naiskarma,* i.e., actionlessness. A *Jivanmukta* is he who is liberated in his life time. He lives in this universe as an ordinary man lives, but his outlook or vision is altogether changed, and he does not see and feel the universe as before. He then sees the divine manifestation of the *Atman* in everything and everywhere. Then ego-centric idea is totally destroyed means it is transformed into Divine consciousness. The phenomenal objects appear to him as objects, so as to serve the purpose of his phenomenal life, but yet he knows that their real essence and existence is non-different from the eternal and immortal *Atman* or Brahman.

Until and unless you go beyond *maya* or *ajnana*, you will not be free from the worldliness (*samsara*). *Maya* or *ajnana* has been compared with a cord that binds, and to cut the cord, the sword of knowledge is necessary : प्रज्ञानेनैनमाप्नुयात् * * that is, we shall have to realize the *Atman* by *Prajnana'*. The *Isha-Upanishad* says,

हिरन्मयेन पात्रेन सत्यस्यापिहितं मुखम् ।
तत् त्वं पूषन्नपावृणु सत्यधर्माय दृष्टये ॥

'The face of Truth (Brahman in the solar orb) is concealed with a golden vessel. Do thou, O Sun, open it so as to be seen by me who am by nature truthful'. 'I shall behold that form of thine which is the most benigh. I am that very person, that is yonder in the sun'—

'यत्त रूपं कल्याणतमं तत्त पश्यामि ; योऽसावसौ पुरुषः सोऽहमस्मि' ।

"We shall have to pray to Him, and this prayer is nothing but the knocking at the door of Truth. Prayer means an auto-suggestion into the deepest core of the heart, where shines

the self-effulgent *Purusha*, the *Atman*." The form of prayer is given in both *Chandi* and *Upanishad*, but I prefer the prayer which are given in the *Upanishad* :

असतो मा सद्गमय, तमसो मा ज्योतिर्गमय ।
मृत्योर्माऽमृतं गमय, आविरावीर्म एधि ।
रुद्र यत्ते दक्षिणं मुखं तेन मां पाहि नित्यम् ॥

'O the inner-self and self-effulgent *Purusha*, lead us from untruths to *Truth*, from darkness to Light, from mortality to Immortality. Turn your compassionate eyes towards us. Remove all obstacles in the path of manifestation of your heavenly divine powers, and bless us so that we never forget our real nature which is non-different from you." This prayer is meant for realization of the *Atman*. The *Atman* is known as the Whole, and it is always self-complete. If you imagine any part of the *Atman*, then that part will be eternal and self-complete, because every part of infinity is infinity. The spark of fire is no less powerful than fire; our individual existence is no other than the universal existence. The reflection of the face is non-different from the face itself. It may be asked that the *Atman* shines in every living beings and as there are different living beings, so the *Atman* within them seems as different. To this it can be said that there shines only one sun[1] in the sky, and when the sun is reflected in water, preserved in different pots, the reflections appear as different, but, in truth, the sun is one and the same. Similarly, the *Atman* is one and unique, but its reflecion in different living beings only appear as different.

QUESTION : What is a real *dharma* ?

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : I have already explained it before. *Dharma* or religion is not an outward exhibition, but it is an innermost thing that shines in all the living beings. Kapila has divided religion into three, *adhidaivika*, *adhibhautika*, and *adhyatmika*, i.e., providential, caused by animals, and spiritual. Now, what kind of religion you wish to know ?

QUESTION : We wish to know the spiritual religion.

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : The object of spiritual religion is the

[1] It is only an example, otherwise there are other suns and greater suns in the vast etherial space (*akasha*). There are also dying suns in the sky.

Atman, who dwells in the material body. This dweller is the divine reflection or representation of the absolute Brahman. The method, by which the secret of the *Atman* is disclosed, is known as *spiritual religion*. Spiritual religion begins when a man sincerely aspires to know or realize the real essence of the *Atman*. Religion determines the relation between the *jivatman* and the *paramatman—jiva* and *Isvara* or Brahman.

The objects which are generally known as limited or partial, are, in truth, infinite or whole. As for example, there is air in a room, and you close the doors and windows, and claim that you have limited the sky or ether. But that is not possible, because you have limited only a part of the eternal sky or ether, and the rest remains unlimited. Similarly, we mistakenly think that the eternal *Atman* is limited by the physical forms of the living beings, but, in truth, the *Atman* is never limited by any barrier. The non-dualists never imagine the parts of the indivisible *Atman*, though the qualified non-dualists and dualists do that, but to the non-dualists, all the individual souls are no other than the self-complete *Paramatman*.

QUESTION : Maharaj, did Sri Ramakrishna preach any new religion ?

SWAMI MAHARAJ : No, Sri Ramakrishna is the consummation of all the Incarnations who came before. He did not preach any new religion, but he revived the old ideals of religion with a new outlook. He did not come to destroy anything, but came to construct everything on the ideal of the glorious past. So, it was not any new truth that Sri Ramakrishna preached though his advent brought a new light. His method of unity of all religions is worth-mentioning.

QUESTION : If the current of eternal religion remains the same, then what is the utility of Sri Ramakrishna's advent in this world ?

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : His advent was necessary for the reconstruction of religion which was stereotyped and the course of which was stagnant. Sri Krishna said in the *Gita* : "Whenever there is decline of religion, and an ascendency of irreligion, then I manifest Myself. For the protection of

the good, for the destruction of the evil-dooers, for the firm establishment of religion, I am born in every age" (*Gita*, IV.7.8). Ideal men or Super-men appear in this universe from time to time, for throwing some new light. The *Avataras* are the *ādhika-Purushas*, and they take the risk of rescuing them who are deviated from the right path. Sri Ramakrishna has also said : "He, who was Rama and Krishna, has come to this age as Ramakrishna, though Vedanta does not admit it". But Vedanta admits that this world-appearance is a sportive play of *Isvara*, the determinate Brahman. While commenting on the *sutras* (2.1.32-333 'न प्रयोजनबत्तात्' and 'लोकबत्तुलीलाकैवल्यम्'। Sankar said : 'केवलं लीलारूपाः प्रवृत्तयः क्रीड़ाबिहारेषु भवन्ति, यथा चोच्छ्वासप्रश्वादयोऽनभिसन्धाय बाह्यं किञ्चित् प्रयोजनं स्वाभाबादेव संभवन्ति, एवमीश्वरस्याप्यनपेक्षा किञ्चित् प्रयोजनान्तरं स्वभावादेव केवलं लीलारूपा प्रवृत्तिभवति।

From this it is understood that Sankara and other Vedantists admit this creation (*sristi*), i.e. projection as an effortless sportive play of *Isvara*. The *Avataras* are the direct messengers of God, and their advents in the phenomenal universe are for the welfare of the human society at large (लोकसंग्रहार्थम्) * * The Vaishnava savants are of the opinion that the *Avataras* are the Supreme Beings, and they can manifest themselves in various forms. The *Avataras* are real, and not illusory. Or it can be said that the *Avataras* bring unto mankind a new spiritual message as well as an awakening. An *Avatara* is a descent of God into man, and that means God limits Himself for some purpose on earth, and possesses even in His limited form the fullness of knowledge and wisdom. Sri Ramakrishna has said about the *Avataras* as the *Isvarakotis*, and they are the branches of Rama and Krishna in the tree of Sacchidananda. Sri Ramakrishna has also given a hint about his ownself, He said : 'In this age, the king is visiting his kingdom in disguise (एबार छद्मबेशे राजार राज्य-परिभ्रमण) Sri Ramakrishna was the consummation of all the *Avataras*, and I have witnessed it in my ecstatic vision that all the *Avataras* of all ages entered in the body of Sri Ramakrishna. I have described that vision in my *Sri Ramakrishna-Avatarastotra* (published in the *Stotraratnakara*). In this age of scientific rationalism, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna's advent proved to the world how

the Lord of the universe can be realized and be attained in this life, and no one except him has ventured to go through all the tests of sceptics and agnostics to prove that he had attained to Godconsciousness. Those who have seen him, lived with him for years and watched him by day and by night, have proclaimed before the world that he was the embodiment of the highest spiritual ideal of all nations, and that whosoever worships him, with faith and reverence, worships the latest manifestation of Divinity.

QUESTION : What do you mean by birth and death ?

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : Distribution is life and unification is death. Expansion is life, whereas contraction is death. As for example, a potter made some earthen vessels out of a lump of clay. This process of distribution (of clay) is known as expansion (of earthen materials). Distribution further connotes the idea of variation. One lump of clay was distributed to many earthen vesels. Again, when those vessels are broken into pieces and formed into a lump, that is unification or contraction. Therefore, unification is death, whereas distribution is life.

Again, struggle for existence is life and idleness is death. You are fighting for life against your adverse circumstances, surroundings or environments, and this fighting means struggle for expansion, which is life. So struggle for expansion is positive, whereas idleness is negative. Again, aspiration is life, and satisfaction is death. You are living in the society and at the same time you have no aspiration and struggle for progress, you are rather satisfied with that which you already possess, and this condition of life is no other than death.

QUESTION : Is salvation (*mukti*) achieved in this life

SWAMIJI MAHARAJ : Yes, in this life you can attain salvation or absolute freedom, if you struggle hard for achieving it. Sankara said that ordinary men take matter as spirit, or consider material body as all-intelligence *Atman*, and this consideration happens only for wrong or false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*). But you are, in reality, the *Atman*, and if you realize that you are the immortal *Atman* and not the moral body, then that realization reveals knowledge or *jnana*. So removal of ignorance or *bhrama* is called the absolute

freedom of *mukti*. Therefore, freedom and bondage are the creation or construction of the mind. Spiritual practice or *sadhana* means repeated efforts. These efforts are also known as habit. Salvation or *mukti* is not a fruit that you will catch it by your hand, but for achieving or attaining it, you will have to sincerely practise. You must have self-confidence and firm resolution in your mind. Be resolute like Gautama Buddha, and say like him — इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरम् i.e. 'let my material body be destroyed, if I do not attain to Iirvana, then *mukti* will be attained by you.

First be a real man. Sri Ramakrishna used to say to be a man or *manus,* i.e. we must be conscious of ou real entity and essence. 'We are the children of immortal Bliss. Our material body will die, but we the immortal souls will not die. This idea of immortality is *sat* or real existence, and all other things than the *Atman* are *asat* or non-existent. This universe is the plane of relativity, where exist both existence and non-existence. Good and bad are relative in this world of relativity, because we say the favourable condition of life as good in relation to the unfavourable condition, which is bad. The *Upanishad* said that the idea of two creates fear : द्वैताद् भयम् * * and where there is one and no rival, you will get fear from anyone. The existence of the *Atman* is permanent and non-dual, so it never creates fear. Duality arises from the limiting categories of time, space, and causation, which are known as delusion or *maya.* Time, space, and causation have created a gulf of difference between the reality and the unreality. Unreality is that which does suffer from the changes of birth and death, and reality is that which does not suffer from them. The immortal *Atman* has neither birth, nor death, nor it undergoes any change, but, it is constant and exists all the time as the same. Now, this unchangeable pure state of the *Atman* is realized when the mind and intellect are purified, sharp, and acute through the process of discrimination and when the mind and intellect shine in their fullness. The *Atman* is knowledge. When ignorance about the *Atman* is removed, the self-revealing knowledge is regained, and this recovery or regaining requires no process, no method, or no medium.

We shall have to educate our mind, so that it can under-

stand what is wrong and what is right. The present system of education is defective, because it does not teach what is spirit, but it teaches only matter. The real education is that which imparts knowledge of the immortality, but now we are getting education of the subjects or objects, which are mortal, and which are liable to change and death. So we have lost all confidence in our immortal nature, and we think that we have come to this universe only to witness the change, and not the unchangeable. Character-building is an essential thing in the field of education. But nowadays we are neglecting this thing, and, consequently we are landing day by day in a hopeless demoralizing state, which makes us forget the ideals of our glorious past. The real education is not banished from religion that builds our character as well as our inner nature. Education that teaches us what we are in reality, is true education. True education gives us the knowledge of unity, cleanliness, purity, sympathy, and fellow-feeling, which are the good qualities as well as the essential nature of a man. So, let us impart education to our nation, which will remove all selfishness, bigotry, fanaticism, and shortsightness. Cowards die many times before their death. So rise above all cowardice ideas and attitudes, and march forward to make our life ideal and blissful. History repeats itself. If we try to build our life, our character and our nation with the lofty ideals of the glorious past, we will be able to make again a new history for them who are coming behind us.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is standing on the crest of civilzation and culture of this new age. He is the limitless unfathomed ocean of religious thoughts and spiritual ideas of the hoary headed past as well as of the present age. Do not try to limit this Supreme Lord, who is vast as the sky, and do not try to understand and to interpret Him through your narrow vision. He is the Saviour as well as the best refuge in the delusive ocean of worldliness. Do not say only that He has done this or that, has renunciated the lust and gold, and has performed severe penance for twelve years, but also follow Him, and call into action His golden ideals in your life.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa is an ideal Type in this

age of science and reason. Mere lip-prayer to Him will not do anything, but dive deep into the core of His life and sublime thoughts, and sincerely pray to Him with your pure heart. His life was a life of great renunciation and infinite love. So dedicate yourself unto Him, and He will undoubtedly grant on you the grace of absolute freedom and eternal bliss. Let us meditate upon his all-transcending and all-embracing divine form, which I described in the *Ramakrishna-Avatarastotra,* composed in the holy monastery of Baranagar :

हृदयकमलमध्ये राजितं निर्विकल्पं
सदसदखिलभेदातीतमेकस्वरूपम् ।
प्रकृतिविकृतिशून्यं नित्यमानन्दमूर्तिं
विमलपरमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजाम ॥१
निरुपममतिसूक्ष्मं निष्प्रपञ्चं निरीहं
गगनसदृशमीशं सर्वभूताधिवासम् ।
त्रिगुणरहित सच्चिद्ब्रह्मरूपं वरेण्यं
विमल परमहंसं रामकृष्णं भजाम ॥२

Shining in the lotus of the heart, assurely,
Beyond all change, real or unreal,
One and compact, untouched by *Prakriti* or her evolutes; the eternal image of Bliss,
The spotless Swan Supreme,
Ramakrishna, we adore.
Beyond compare, extremely subtle,
Outside the cosmic flux, impulseless,
Vast as the sky, the Supreme Lord,
Where home is all beings, the very Brahman,
Above the realm of the triple *gunas,*
The best refuge, the spotless Swan Supreme,
Ramakrishna, we adore.

AN APPENDIX

TO CHAPTER ONE

The Power of the Sun :

We spend our lives in a *natural spaceship*—the earth. It rockets around the solar system which is 50 billion times more voluminous than the earth.

Within this solar system is the sun, nine planets, 32 moons, 30,000 asteroids, 100 billion comets, innumerable dust apecks and gas molecules.

But this is just an infinitesimally tiny corner of the universe, smaller than an atom in the corner of a room.

The most dominant object in this 'neighbourhood' is the sun. This sun accounts for 99.86% of the substance of the solar system. It has a diameter of 864,000 miles—over 100 times that of the earth. "The total energy the sun emits in a *single second* would be sufficient to keep a one-kilowatt electric fire burning for 10,000 millions years. Put a different way, the energy the sun emits in one second is greater than the *whole amount* of energy the human species has consumed throughout its *entire history*" (vide Fred Hoyle : *Astronomy*, page 232).

Only a tiny fraction of this thousand-billion-billion-ton orb's energy outputs falls on the earth. Still, it is 100,000 times *greater* than all the energy used in the world's industries.

The Speed of the Light :

According to scientific experimentation on earth, light approximately 186,000 miles per second, to find out the distance light travels in one year, we multiply : * *
186,000 × 60 seconds × 60 minutes ×24 hours × 365 days. That means light—at least as far as scientists can calculate based on conditions in the vicinity of earth—travels 5,865,696,000,000 miles per year—approximately six trillion. Astronomers, of course, must *assume* that the laws of physics,

as observed from the earth, hold true for all parts of the universe. They must assume that the speed of light is constant across space and time, and that hitherto no unobserved physical phenomena ever enter the picture.

On to the Stars :

Our solar system, for example, is merely *one tiny part* of the Milky Way galaxy. The sun, astronomers claim, is around 30,000 lights years from the center of the Milky Way—if your mind can conceive of such immense distances.

Our sun is but an average star among a spiral of 100,000,000,000 other stars of varying size—all in our galaxy. The Milky Way galaxy, according to some estimates is 100,000 lights years in diameter and 10,000 light years thick at the centre. But it is only one of billions in the universe.

The famous *Trifid Nebula* is so named because of its three-lobed appearance. Embedded in this great cloud of cosmic gas and dust is a very hot star that courses the nebula to shine. Its distance is so far from that light travelling at 186,000 miles per second which left the star 200 years before the birth of Christ is reaching us today. It would take ten years to span the diameter of this nebula.

Beauty and Vastness :

Some astronomers think that the distance of the great Nebula in Orion may be about 500 parsecs (1,600 light years or 9,600,000,000,000 miles). Light leaving the Orion Nebula one hundred years before the fall of the Roman Empire in 476 A.D. would be reaching us now. It would take light about 15 years to cross the diameter.

The Nebula consists of 60% hydrogen and 38% helium gas, the remaining two present is dust. Ultra-violet light from intensely hot star (18,000 degrees centigrade or 32,400 degrees F) excites rarified gas to produce the inferno of colour seen.

The Veil Nebula in Cygnus :

It consists of fast-moving gas ejected from an exploding star more than 50,000 years ago. The star's fragments have become a globe of gas some 300 trillion miles wide, still

hurlting outward at 300,000 m.p.h.

The Milky Way Galaxy :

The milky galaxy actually contains some 100 billion stars or suns. Ours like the Andromeda Galaxy, is considered a large one. Some 'dwarf' galaxies have less than one billion suns; the average-sized galaxy will have 10 billion stars. Counting at the rate of 125 stars a minute, it would take 2000 years to count all the stars estimated to be our galaxy.

The Milky Way Galaxy is so large that light, travelling at 186,000 miles per second, requires 100,000 years to cross it rim from rim. It contrast light zips from the moon to the earth in one and a quarter seconds; from the sun to the earth—a distance of 95 million miles—in 8 minutes and 20 seconds; around the earth seven times in less than one second.

Our solar system, in which the earth orbits, is 7,340,000,000 miles in diameter. (The diameter of our Milky Way Galaxy is almost 82 mililon times larger.

Pleiades and surrounding Nebulesity in Taurua :

The light from the Nebula we see, left that area less than a generation after Columbia discovered America in 1492. .....some 456 light-years distant. (Others estimate of its distance range to 410 light-years). The diameter of the star cluster is estimated at 32 light-years.

The Dumbbell Nebula :

It is the brightest planetary Nebula of the northern sky—was likened to a gymnast's dumbbell. One estimate of its distance is given as 490 light-years.

The Crab Nebula :

It is within the Milky Way, some 4100 light-years away—or a distance equal to 80,000,000 trips from the earth to the sun and back. (The sun is 93 million miles from the earth). The speed of the Crab Nebula (of the expansion) is 800 miles per second. Its diameter is estimated at various numbers of light-years—perhaps at four or five. Four light-years is the distance from the earth to the nearest star.

The Resette Nebula :

It is thought to be at a distance of approximately 2500 light-years from earth. The light we now see from the nebula left there near Cyrus, the first Persian King, who died in 530 B.C. The nebula is small, and light can travel its length in 50 years.

The North American Nebula :

A dense cloud of dust between the nebula and earth blocks out part of the nebula—creating the appearance of a 'Gulf of Mexico' and the 'Atlantic Oceans'. Less dense dust in the space between the nebula and earth scalletrs all but the red light. The nebula is so far away, that light travelling at 186,000 miles per second, which left the nebula around 1000 B.C. is only reaching us today.

Ring Nebula in Lyra :

Ring Nebula with only a thousand atoms of gas per cubic centimeter, for surpasses most vacuums attainable on earth.

Planetary Nebula in Aquarius :

Some recent estimations are that it is 390 light-years away. Its diameter is a mere 1 parsec or 3.26 light-years. In miles, the distance is over 19,500,000,000,000 trillion miles from end to end.

Horsehead Nebula in Orion :

Hot, glowing gas is obscured by a cloud of dust—forming the silhoustte of horsehead.

Gaseous Nebula in Sarpens :

Hot glow from cosmic gas, covered with gas or dust.

The Andromeda Nebula :

It is the only external galaxy Northern-Hemisphere can see with the naged eye. Here is a galaxy that can be 10 million trillion miles from earth.

This blazing galaxy contains about 100,000,000,000 stars. Its light, travelling 186,000 miles per second, requires over 12 millions years to reach earth. While an observer looks

at Andromeda, he is absorbing light radiation some 600 times as old as the Pyramids of Egypt. This Nebula is in many ways the twin of our galaxy in appearance. An observer far out space would see Andromeda and the Milky Way as sisters—two gigantic pinwheels.

The diameter of the main body (of the Andromeda Nebula) is about 100,000 light-years. That is, light travelling at 186,000 miles per second would take 100,000 years to cross Andromeda's diameter. Its thickness is a 'small' 23,000 light-years. ... ...

Andromeda's giant stars merge into a shimmering halo among the galaxy's apiraling arms. These huge atomic furnace have temperatues ranging as high as 80,000 degrees F., and are at least 1000 times brighter than our own sun.

Two small galaxies near Andromeda appear to revolve about it like satellites. They are known only by catalogue numbers—NGC 205 and NGC 221. Both are (approximately) the same distance from earth as Andromeda, NGC 205 is 'closer' to earth by 100,000 light-years.

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Really we are struck with wonder when we think of our vast universe. Mr. Harlow Shapley said : "That is perhaps a question for metaphysics. The origin of origins is BEYOND astronomy. It is perhaps beyond philosophy, in the realm of the Unknowable" (vide *View from a Distant Star*, p. 47). And said Mr. William Bonner : "It is for this reason that some people refer to the start of the expansion as this creation of the universe. In some UNKNOWN WAY, it is argued, the matter of the universe *was created* at this moment.. ... we need not try to trace history back before this event, because the universe, and indeed, time itself, did not exist" (vide *The Mystery of the Expanding Universe*, pp. 111-112).

MY LIFE-STORY

(An Autobiography)

by

SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

Translated into English from the original Bengali by
Shri J. K. Roy, M.Sc., I.A.S.

MY LIFE-STORY

CHAPTER I

MY FATHER

My father Rasiklal Chandra was born in the city of Calcutta in 1822. He used to live at 22, Nimu Goswami Lane. My father Rasiklal Chandra was 10 when Raja Ram Mohan Roy passed away in Bristol (England). He passed the Seminar examination of those days in English language in the Oriental Seminary School established in Upper Chitpore Road by Gour Mohan Addy (which is still in existence) and taught there continuously for 25 years.

About a century ago The Oriental Seminary was the only school for Bengali Hindu students for studying English language besides the Hare School which had been established by David Hare and the schools of Christian Missionaries in the city of Calcutta. Many gentlemen of Calcutta acquired proficiency in English language from that school. Many of them were students of Rasik Master. Mention may be made of a few celebrated names among them. Krishnadas Pal, Biswanath Dutta, Attorney (father of Vivekananda), Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist, his younger brother Atul Krishna Ghosh (Vakil of High Court), Amritalal Basu, the masterly dramatist, Suresh Chandra Mitra (lay disciple of Sree Sree Ramakrishna Paramhangsadeva), all of them used to look upon Rasik Master as their teacher with reverence and high regard, they used to touch his feet if they would meet him on the road and according to Hindu custom they used to send presents to him by way of offerings to the teacher.

Neighbours used to come to Rasik Master for having letters written in English and used look upon him with great regard for his extraordinary erudition in English language. He would often act as an interpreter of his neighbours during conversation with Englishmen, for, he could speak fluently in English.

Rasik Master married twice. He had a son and a daughter

by his first marriage. He named his son Beharilal. Beharilal was educated in the Free Church Institution established by the missionary Alexander Duft. Kalimohan Bandopadhyay (Rev. K. M. Banerjee) was his class fellow. They (Beharilal, Kalimohan Bandopadhyay and others) lost faith in Hinduism after having read the Bible of the missionaries and they resolved to follow the doctrines preached by the Christian Missionaries. At last after having passed the Entrance Examination (Matriculation), the belief grew in them that Jesus Christ was the only saviour and they go baptised into Christianity. In those days many of the young Bengali Hindus educated in missionary schools felt pride in giving up their own religion and adopting Christianity. Kalimohan Bandopadhyay was first baptised into Christianity. At this Beharilal in disregard of his father's instruction got converted into Christianity. When after conversion into Christianity Beharilal left his home and took shelter with the Christian Missionaries along with Kalimohan Bandopadhyay, Rasik Master was upset with grief for his only son, and made up his mind to commit suicide by drowning himself in the Ganges. Accordingly one day when he stood neck deep in the Ganges lost in contemplation, he suddenly hear a mysterious voice as if someone was telling him, "Why should you commit suicide, marry again". He was started to hear this and having found none on any side, he thought that it was a message from God and so he did not commit suicide. He got up from the Ganges and returned home pensively and began to pass his days with his heart burning with sorrow. His home was empty for his wife had already expired.

Rasik Master was truthful, virtuous, benevolent, just and a monotheist. After Beharilal had taken to Christianity, my father read the Bible, the Quoran, the Bhagavat Gita and other scriptures and came to realise that "God is one and non-dual and He has innumerable names and forms". He wrote this in bold letters, got it framed and hung it on the wall of his room. He had sincere faith in the monotheism of the *Upanishad* which used to be preached in Brahma-Samaj established by Raja Ram Mohan Roy. He used to find pleasure in reading the Upanishad which had been translated into Bengali by Ram Mohan Roy. He read Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason* in order to refute the Bible. In *Age of Reason* it has been proved that the doctrine

of the New Testament is irrational and fallacious.

On the other hand Beharilal became scholarly after having adopted Christianity. In the Christian circle of Calcutta, Kalimohan Bandopadhyay and others of the same faith gave him the appellation of a devoit Christian or "a great devotee of Jesus Christ" and they used to look upon him with regard and admiration. Beharilal used to preach Christianity like Kalimohan. They were good speakers and writers in English language. Beharilal worked in the post of the Registrar of Calcutta city from where he retired on pension. His father had disowned him and had disinherited him from paternal property.

CHAPTER II

MY BIRTH

In 1850, Rasik Master took a second wife when he was 28. Nine sons were born of the second wife. Among them 5 died in tender age. I was the second of the surviving 4. Long before my birth my pious mother (Nayantara Devi) used to go to Kalighat and pray ardently to the goddess Kali for a son who would be of saintly character, virtuous and a Yogi. She made a resolution before the goddess Kali that if such a Yogi son with saintly character was born to her, she would offer blood by cutting open her breast. The goddess Kali fulfilled her fervent prayer. I was born on 17th Aswin, 1273 B.S. Tuesday (2nd October 1866 A.D.) at 10 p.m. in the ninth waning phase of the moon and Pushya-Nakkhatra. I was born on that auspicious day and in that auspicious hour at my paternal home at 22, Nimoo Gossain Lane. My mother named me Kaliprasad as she had obtained a son through the grace of the goddess Kali. My mother later told a devotee regarding my birth. "When your Swamiji Maharaj was born his whole body was wound up with umbilical cord." At this the nurse said, "Look, this child must be some great soul who had been drawn out of the state of Yoga. He looks as if he were reluctant to be born and so someone tied him up and sent him here". All members of the house then came to see the child. The master of the house (father) told the nurse on having seen this "cut the cord otherwise the child will die of distension of abdomen". The nurse cut the cords but the child lay with his eyes closed as if dead. For about an hour the child would neither move nor cry. The nurse said, "the child is absorbed in meditation. His meditation is not yet over. Do not have any anxiety'.

With a slight touch of chilly powder on the eye-lid, the child cried out and after 10 minutes he was bathed in warm water. The marks of the tissues however remained on the body for six months. My mother said, "I had prayed to the goddess Kali in Kalighat for a virtuous and saintly son

and had promised that if I would get such a son, I shall offer blood taken out of my breast to you, Mother". Mother Kali has sent this son to fulfil my prayer. So I have named this son Kaliprasad. When Kaliprasad was six months old, I took him to Kalighat and offered him to the feet of the Mother Kali and I offered blood taken out of my breast after having worshipped the Mother".

At the age of 1½ years I had dysentery. I suffered from that disease for about 2 years. There was no hope of my survival. I was put under various kinds of treatment but in vain. My body was gradually reduced to skeleton. Rice prepared out of old *dadkhani* rice boiled in slow heat of cow dung cakes with *gugli* soup was prescribed for me. At last I was cured by Kaviraji medicine mixed with extract of the bark of *Kurchi* boiled in water.

From my childhood I had immense respect for my mother. If I was offered any food, I would first give it to my mother and tell her, "Mother, keep a portion for yourself. Then I shall eat the remainder". My maternal uncle was a fairly rich man. He used to love me very dearly and he would send various kinds of food for me from time to time.

CHAPTER III

THE BEGINNING OF MY EDUCATION AND THE CONDITION OF CALCUTTA IN THOSE DAYS

When I was five years old, my education began with the ceremony of *hatekhari* (pen in hand). I was admitted in Govind Seal's *Pathsala* (primary school) in Lahapara. In those days students in Hindu Pathsala used to practise writing on palm leaf with pen. Slate and pencil were not in use. I studied in that Pathsala for two years and every year I got prizes for merit. My father, was, therefore, very pleased with me.

At that time there was no ripe water, gas or electricity supply in the City of Calcutta. In every house there was a ring well as the source of water supply for bath, cooking and other household purposes. In every house there was a well-latrine which used to be cleaned once in six months. There was no underground sewer, instead there were large drains on the roadside. There was arrangement for burning oil lamps in lanterns on the roadside. Match-sticks were not in use then. Charcoal cakes were ignited with sparks obtained by striking flints and sulphur sticks were then ignited from the charcoal cakes for lightings lamps. All household work and studies were done in the light of the lamps at night. Kerosene oil has not yet been introduced in India; castor oil was in use, a piece of cloth-roll dipped in castor oil used to serve as the wick of the lamp. Kerosene came into use long afterwards. I used to study in the light of a lamp. From the Hindu Pathsala I was later admitted in Jadu Pandit's Bengal School. I studied there for three years. That school was at that time located in Brindaban Basak Lane. Every year I got prizes for high merit. One of my class-mates in that school was Baburam Ghosh who subsequently became one of the Sannyasin disciples of Shri Ramakrishna, and was known as Swami Premananda.

My mother was very devout and pious and was an ideal of Hindu motherhood. Everyday after bath and daily worship

she would read one chapter of Krittivasa's *Ramayana* and Kashidas's *Mahabharata* and she should take nothing before having finished all this. I would sit by her when she would read *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and I would listen attentively.

Whenever there would be *Ramayangana* or *Sree Krishnaleela-jatra* (musical opera in which stories from the *Ramayana* or Sree Krishna's life were depicted) in the neighbourhood, my mother would take me along with her for listening. Thus I was able to appreciate the strange characters of *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* and the ideals of Hinduism at an early age.

When the Prince of Wales, the eldest son of Queen Victoria (later Edward VII) came to visit Calcutta, Wellington Street, and Dharamtala Street of Calcutta were decorated with flags of many colours for according welcome to him. In the evening both sides of the road were illuminated with chains of light in empty glass phials. I was then aged seven or eight years. I was thrilled with joy to see the huge procession with the Prince along the illuminated road with my mother sitting on the terrace of a two-storeyed house in Hridayagram Banerjee Lane in Bowbazar where my maternal uncle's place was located. That magnificent sight made with such a deep impression on my mind that even to-day I have not been able to forget it.

At that time Kalighat, the *Pitha* of the Divine Mother Kali, was the principal place of pilgrimage for the Hindus of Calcutta. Although my parents were Vaishnavas by initiation yet they used to go to Kalighat once a month along with myself for worshipping the Mother Kali. There they would bathe in Adiganga and would take *Prasada* after *darshana*, and worship of the Goddess and after evening they would return home.

In those days it would take three to four hours to go to Kalighat from Ahiritola in a hackney carriage. During the journey across the *maidan* from Chowringhee the doors of the carriage would be closed for fear of British soldiers, for the soldiers of the British regiments would come running if they would see a lady in a carriage and they would snatch away gold ornaments from the body of the lady and escape. For

this reason a journey to Kalighat was not at all easy in those days. On arrival at Kalighat, my parents would take on rent a rest shed made of *golpata* (a kind of leaf used in constructing huts) mean for pilgrims and after meals they would go to see the Chetla market. Thus in my boyhood I gathered experience about the duty of pilgrims in holy places. When the old Howrah Bridge was built (1873-74 A.D.), I was eight years old. My parents took me in a hackney carriage to show me that wooden bridge. I was astonished to see that bridge across the Ganges. When tram service was first introduced in the City of Calcutta, the service was extended from Beadon Street to Lalbazar. Two horses used to draw the tram car along rails. I too travelled in tram car and had a new experience. How much all that has changed now.

CHAPTER IV

EDUCATION IN AN ENGLISH SCHOOL AND IN A SANSKRIT *TOL*

At the age of ten I left the Bengali School of Jadu Pandit and got admission in the Oriental Seminary. Every year I would get double promotion and prizes of merit. At that time Becharam Chattopadhyay was the Secretary of that Seminary. He, Ardha Babu master, Bishnu master, Heramba Pandit, Abhoy Pandit and others used to speak highly of my intelligence and they used to treat me with love and affection on account of my success in studies. I was of modest and amiable nature when I was in school. I had special aptitude for Mathematics in which I got high marks and was awarded a silver medal. When I started reading Sanskrit Grammar, Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar's *Upakramanika* and *Kaumudi*[1] it seemed as through impressions of my previous birth were awakened in me and having finished these grammars in a short time I began to study the *Mugdhabodhā Vyakarana* at home. In those days Heramba Pandit had a *Tol* in Hatibagan. I used to go to that *tol* in the evening to study the *Mugdhabodha-Vyakarana.* In that *tol* I finshed study of Sanskrit text books, starting from the *Hitopadesha* and later I read Kalidas's *Raghuvamsha, Kumara-sambhaba* and *Sakuntala* and *Bhattikavya* at home. At that time I could very well translate English into Sanskrit and having learnt the rhythmic pattern of *anustup-chhanda* I would compose Sanskrit verses by translation in that *chhanda.* Abhoy Pandit Mahashaya, the head teacher of Sanskrit in the Oriental Seminary, on having seen my proficiency in *anustup-chhanda,* gave me a copy of the *Chhanda-manjari* for reading in order to teach me other rhythmic patterns. From that book I learnt with great facility various other rhythmic patterns in a short time. In those days Ahiritola and Baghbazar were regarded as cultural centres of old Hindu citizens of Calcutta. Competition used to be held always between Ahiritola and Baghbazar in music, *Haf-akhrai* (verbal duel in verse), amateur *jatra* (opera),

wrestling, sports and entertainments, etc. I was specially interested in witnessing these competitions.

My interest in physical culture too was not inconsiderable. In order to strengthen and harden my muscles I used to swim at the time of bathing in the Ganges. I had learnt swimming from my companions. There were gymnasia of physical culture societies in various places of Ahiritola and Baghbazar at that time. In one of these gymnasia I used to learn exercises regularly everyday. One day on reading Herbert Spencer's "Education" I came to understand that the brain and thinking power of those who do too much of physical exercise are weakened and atrophied. I was inclined in favour of anything that would help the growth of the thinking power of my brain. So I stopped going to the gymnasium lest my thinking power was weakened due to increase of physical strength.

While reading a school text book on Indian History (Wilson's *History of India*) I came to know of Sankaracharya and became greatly attracted to him and I had a great desire to know about his life and writings. I do not know why my regard and adoration for Sankaracharya kept on increasing day by day. When I learnt that Sankara was unsurpassed as a savant of non-dualistic Vedanta and that he had held high the victory flag of non-dualistic Vedanta in the whole of India after having proved the fallacy of the Buddhist School of thought everywhere. I was specially attracted to non-dualistic Vedanta and a desire grew in my heart that I would be a great philosopher.

A drawing class had already been opened in the Oriental Seminary. I joined that class in order to learn art and diligently applied myself to learning the art of drawing. After one year's training I learnt to sketch natural scenery and to paint with sepia colour and I was awarded a prize after examination. The Drawing Master was very pleased to see my skill in the art and began to teach me other subjects of drawing with greater affection and care than other students.

The question arose in my mind whether I would be a painter or a philosopher and I could not solve this problem. One day suddenly I told the Drawing Master, "Sir, I shall not come to your drawing class again". When he enquired about

the reason I said "after much deliberation I have come to the conclusion that it is better to be a philosopher than to be a painter, so I shall not learn painting any more." At this, the Drawing Master said, "But, Kaliprasad, in my view it is better to be a painter than to be a philosopher, for an artist is greater than a philosopher." On hearing this I said firmly, "No, Sir, a painter studies the surface of things but a philosopher goes below the surface and studies the cause of things, so I would like to be a philosopher." At this the Drawing Master said, "Very well, in that case why not become both a philosopher and a painter?" In reply to this I said "one man cannot serve two masters." The Drawing Master became silent having failed to counter my argument.

At that time I was fond of listening to the lectures of famous orators. I would attend the lectures of Surendranath Bandyopadhyay, Rev. Kalicharan Bandyopadhyay, Keshab Chandra Sen, Pratap Chandra Majumdar of Brahmo Samaj, Lalmohon Ghosh and other reputed speakers whenever, and wherever, such lectures would be held.

In 1882, on the occasion of the Brahmo festival, Keshab Chandra Sen came to Beadon Square singing devotional songs through the streets and delivered a lecture. I went to attend that lecture. In course of his speech Keshab Chandra Sen said, "I see Hari everywhere. Lo, Hari is there! I see Him in every leaf and branch of yonder tree." The words of that fiery speech are indelibly etched in my heart. Keshab Chandra's facial expression and movements gave me the impression that he really visualised Shri Hari.

Surendranath Bandyopadhyay delivered a lecture in English at Salkia on the life of Mahaprabhu Chaitanya Deva. I attended that lecture. On having heard that lecture deep reverence for Chaitanya Deva grew in my mind. Later when his lectures were published in the form of a book I bought and read it. When Surendranath Bandyopadhyay was put in prison Lalmohon Ghosh, the orator of extra-ordinary eloquence returned from England. A big meeting was held in Girish Chandra's newly built Star Theatre (which was subsequently named as Manmohan Theatre) to welcome him. I attended that meeting in order to hear fiery oration of Lalmohan Ghosh. When his English speeches were later pub-

lished in book form I used to buy and read them. Every Sunday afternoon Rev. Kalicharan Bandyopadhyay used to speak about Jesus Christ in Beadon Square.

I used to attend his lectures also and I acquired experience of public speaking by hearing the exposition of religion and preachings of Rev. Dr. McDonald and other missionaries.

Pratap Chandra Majumdar, the leader of Brahmo Samaj delivered a lecture in English on "Tour round the World" in the hall of the Medical College after his return from America. On having heard that lecture I realised that the Americans were more advanced than other European nations in all respects. Mr. Majumdar said after having described many things concerning America that huge two or three-storeyed buildings were hauled from along the streets from one place and set up in another place at a distance. At the time of removal the inmates of the house continue to live there and no household work is suspended. On having heard this a curiosity to see America grew in my mind.

Since my boyhood I used to put various kinds of questions to my father in order to have knowledge of various subjects. On hearing my questions my father used to say, "I have not seen a child being so inquisitive at such tender age." In order to acquire experience of all things my elder brother and myself reared pegions, bulbuls, mainas and other birds in our house. I could exactly imitate by seeing once the art of angling, playing cricket, buying good things from the market at reasonable price, cooking, making bread, *luchi, parata,* carpentry, book-binding, gardening, etc.

Since my boyhood my concentration of mind was very sharp. My memory also was wonderful. I would not forget what I would hear once and I could grasp and understand the cause and secret of everything with little effort. I used to read books of all kinds in order to learn various subjects. I used to buy those books for reading by saving my school tiffin expenses. I had a passion for reading since my boyhood which remains unabated even at this mature age. Having seen a copy of the *Bhagavat Geeta* (with Sanskrit text and Bengali translation) in my father's library, I began to read it at the age of 14 or 15 years. One day my father, on having seen me reading the *Bhagavat Geeta,* snatched away the book

saying, "this book is not suitable for boys. You will become mad if you read 'Geeta' at this age." He hid the book. Then, like a snake relieved of its jewel, began to ransack every room of the house for the book with an anxious mind and having failed to find it I despaired. At last some-one whispered into my ears that it was behind the almirah. I immediately looked for it there and got it. Then my joy knew no bounds. I then hid that book and late at night when everybody would be fast asleep I would light a lamp and read it with great joy after having shut the door of my bed room. My father did not bother about this any more.

CHAPTER V

SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

In 1882-83 A.D., Pandit Sasadhar Tarka-Chudamani attracted the admiration of Hindus by delivering a series of lectures in simple Bengali language on the scientific bases of Hinduism in Albert Hall under the Presidentship of Bankim Chandra Chattopadhyay. At that time there was a small Albert Hall situated in the same place in College Street where the present Albert Hall is located and the school of Keshab Chandra Sen's Brahma-Samaj was established there. I used to go to that Hall regularly to hear the lectures of Pandit Sasadhar Tarka-Chudamani. In those lectures the identity of evolution theory of Sankhya philosophy and the evolution theory of Western science was pointed out. The gist of his lectures used to be published in the daily newspaper named *Bangabasi.* I used to try to understand the spirit of those lectures by reading *Bangabasi.*

Moreover, in the same Hall Tarka-Chudamani gave beautiful exposition of the Yoga-Sutra of Patanjal philosophy and the practice of Yoga. I heard those lectures and became very eager to learn Yoga and to study the *Patanjal-darshan.* I saved the money which was given to me for school tiffin and with that I purchased a copy of the *Patanjal-darshan* and started reading that. Although I could understand Sanskrit yet having failed to understand the deeper meaning of the Yoga aphorisms I one day went to meet Sasadhar Tarka Chudamani. The Chudamani was at that time living as a guest of Bhudhan Chattopadhyay in the upper storey of Gurudas Chattopadhyay's book shop in Cornwallis Street. I met the Chudamani and asked him, "Sir, I have a desire to study the Yoga aphorisms of Patanjali. If you would kindly explain these aphorisms then my desire would be fulfilled". The Chudamani said, "My boy, I am very glad that you have the desire to study Yoga aphorisms at this tender age. If I would have time, I would have gladly taught you. But at present I am very busy with my lectures. Moreover, many gentlemen come to meet me.

For these reasons I shall not have time. If, however, you go to Kalivara Vedanta-Bagish for taking lessons, he will gladly teach you. You should tell him that I am sending you to him". The Chudamani gave me address of Vedanta-Bagish's house. Thereupon I did ovations to him and went to meet Vedanta-Bagish. I met him. Vedanta-Bagish was glad to hear me and to see my ardour and said, "At present I have been translating *Patanjali-darshan* into Bengali and so I have not the least leisure. If, however, you come to me just before my bath when my servant massages my body with oil, then I can explain the meaning of Yoga aphorisms to you". Having no other alternative, I agreed to this proposal and everyday between 8 and 9 a.m. I used to go to him to take lessons of aphorisms of *Patanjali-darshana.*

When I was studying *Patanjal-Darshan,* I had a strong desire to read other books of Yoga philosophy. I then bought Siva-samhita and started reading that. In this book the methods of Hatha Yoga, Kundalini Yoga, Pranayama, and Raja Yoga are explained in details. After having read Siva Sanghita I resolved to do Yoga-Sadhana and to practise *Khechari-mudra* and to remain merged to *jada-samadhi* by closing the passage of breath with the tip of my tongue. But in Siva-samhita and other books of Yoga it has been stated that Yoga has to be learnt from a preceptor who has attained realization through Yoga. Practising Yoga by reading books does not yield happy results. Anxious thoughts arose in my mind, where could I find a Yogi preceptor. In that anxiety I even lost sleep and appetite. Yet I could not express my mind to anybody.

I had heard from my father about a Hatha Yogi. The officers of the Raja of Bhukailash of Kidderpore in South Calcutta had seen that Hatha Yogi in a state of *samadhi* in a deep forest of the Sunderbans.

He had lost all physical perception and sense of the body. He was seated in the posture of *padmashana.* Through the space between his feet a tree had grown up to a considerable size. Having seen the Hatha Yogi in this state, the officers realised that he had been in that posture of *padmasana* for a long time. Having found it impossible to remove him without cutting the tree, they at last cut it and brought that Hatha Yogi

in that state of *samadhi* to Bhukailash. Hundreds of men and women began to come to have a *darshana* of that Yogi. The materialistic physicians tried to bring him to physical sense in various ways. During low tide in the Ganges, he was kept tied with a post placed near the water. When the next tide came, the water level arose above his head and drowned him Even this could not bring him back to consciousness. At last a doctor, an Englishman, opened the mouth of the Yogi by means of a tong and pulled out the tongue. As soon as he did so, he regained consciousness. The English doctor then poured wine into his mouth. Thereupon the Hatha Yogi cried and said, "I was quite well. Why did you awaken me ? What has happened is the result of action of my previous birth. I have no desire to live any longer." After this he voluntarily gave up his body.

CHAPTER VI

VISIT TO DAKSHINESWAR

Having heard the story of that *Hathayogi* from father I had a desire to remain seated in a similar state of *jada-samadhi* through the practice of Yoga. Since then I used to demonstrate the posture of *padmasana* to my father, mother, brother, and others, and I used to say "like that Yogi I shall stick my tongue into the post-nasal canal and remain seated in inert *samadhi*." At this all members of the house would laugh and cut jokes at me. I paid no heed to that. I became restless thinking where I could get a Yogi fellow and dear friend Jagneswar (Jajneswar Bhattacharyya). Jajneswar used to love me as his brother and he always used to accost me as "brother Kali." I called him in secret and enquired of his "brother, I have a strong desire to practise Yoga, but where can I get a Yogi preceptor Jajneswar said in reply "Yes, I know. A strange Paramahansa Yogi lives in the Kali temple of Rani Rashmani in Dakshineswar. He has no false pretensions. He is really a great Yogi. Many respectable people go to him and he too occasionally comes to Calcutta. Perhaps he can fulfil your desire to learn Yoga." My joy knew no bounds when I heard this from Jajneswar. I at once resolved to go anyhow to the Kali temple of Rani Rashmani at Dakshineswar to see the Yogi Paramahansa. But where is temple of Rani Rashmani and how to get there ? These thoughts made me restless. Jajneswar had told me that his address was in Ramkanta Bose Street, Baghbazar, but I did not know the number of his house. So, having no other alternative, I one day enquired of my mother where Rani Rashmoni's Kali temple in Dakshineswar was located. She asked, why ?" I said "I have a desire to go there. Can you tell me how to go there?" My mother was not aware of these particulars, so she could not answer my query definitely. What to do then! My longing to see the great Yogi Paramahansa gradually became stronger. Throughout the day and night I was haunted by the thought how to go to Dakshineswar to see the Paramahansa there. At last one day

at the time of morning walk I set out from our house without having informed anyone and started walking along Chitpore Road towards Baghbazar. Having reached Ramkanta Bose Street near Baghbazar I began to search for the house of Jajneswar. As I did not know the number of his house all my attempts to find out the house failed. I did not know then that Jajneswar was the son of Guru of Balaram Basu, the householder devotee of Ramakrishna Paramahansadeva. He used to live in Balaram Babu's house at 57, Ramkanta Basu Street and this Paramahansadeva used to visit that house frequently.

However, having failed to meet Jajneswar I became very anxious to meet the Paramahansadeva in the Kali temple of Rani Rashmani at Dakshineswar. At last I decided to find out the way myself by asking people. I began to walk towards Dakshineswar in despair, asking wayfarers on the way. I crossed the Baghbazar canal by the bridge and walked without break northwards along the Barrackpore Trunk Road. After having travelled for I enquired of a passer-by which way to go to the Kali temple of Rani Rashmani in Dakshineswar. He said in reply "It is not in this direction. It is on the bank of the Ganges. You have missed way." Then I took the road pointed out by him and began to go towards the Ganges. At last after a long detour I reached the northern gate of the Kali temple through Ariadaha village and went to the temple yard passing by *Beltala* and *Panchabati*. I came to know by enquiring of an employee of the place that the Paramahansa lived in a room in that Kali Temple. But that day he had gone to Calcutta and his room was under lock and key. It was then about 11 a.m. and I was tired after having travelled barefooted in hot sun since the morning. On having heard that the Paramahansadeva was out, I sat on the stairs on the northern side of the room in despair with my head resting on my hand and began to think how to return to Calcutta. I was afflicted with hunger and thirst, my body was exhausted after the journey, I had no money with me. I had not taken permission of anyone in the house before coming, I had no acquaintance at Dakshineswar and I did not have the strength to travel back immediately to Calcutta. With these thoughts I began to cry and wistfully looked around to find out if any benevolent person was visible. As I looked towards the gate

of the garden a youngman with an umbrella in hand came and asked me "Is the Paramahansa in ?" I said, "no he has gone to Calcutta." The youngman was slightly disappointed to hear me. We two then talked to and got acquainted with each other. On having seen my plight and at the proposal of my returning to Calcutta, the youngman solaced me saying, "Why should you return to Calcutta just now ? You should now bathe in the Ganges, take *prasada* and you may return to Calcutta later.' I said "I had not told anyone in the house that I could come here." In reply to this the youngman said "I too have come here from Calcutta on foot without telling anyone in the house. What would it matter if the parents were in slight anxiety. Come with me for a bath in the Ganges." I said "I have no change of cloth or napkin with me." The youngman said "one spare cloth may be available here." The youngman had come to Dakshineswar and had met Paramahansadeva twice or thrice before and he had got acquainted with Ramlaldada, other priests and employees of the temple. So I had no difficulty for bath and food. Having met this youngman I had solace in my restless heart and all my worries disappeared. My heart was immersed in an ocean of joy to think of the boundless mercy of Sree Sree Paramahansadeva.

On enquiry I came to know that the youngman's name was Sashibhusan Chakravarty and that he was a college student. I was glad to have acquaintance with this youngman. This Sashibhusan later came to be known as Swami Ramakrishnananda, a Sannyasin who had renounced everything.

Since that day Sashibhusan used to love me as if I were his uterine brother and I shall not be able to forget his love in my life.

However, I felt contented after having taken bath in the Ganges and *prasada* of the Mother Kali with Sashibhusan. I made up my mind to return to Calcutta in the afternoon. Sashibhusan then said to me "You should not return home without having seen Paramahansadeva. Is there any certainty if such an opportunity will come to you again in your life time ? When you have come here with so much difficulty to see him it is better for you to wait." "Do you mean to say that Paramahansadeva will come?" I asked, "but what in case he does not come today ?" Sashibhusan

said, "He will certainly return from Calcutta after evening. He does not spend the night at anybody's place in Calcutta..' I began to think I never go anywhere like this without asking my parents. I have come so far without having told them. They must be anxiously searching for me and having failed to trace me they are perhaps crying. I have spent the whole day here, I should now return home. It would be causing great pain to my mother's heart if I would spend the night here. Many such thoughts and fancies greatly disturbed my mind and I could not come to any firm decision as to what to do. It occurred to me that I had come out in search of a Yogi preceptor for learning Yoga and that I would have no place in my heart if I could not find a Yogi preceptor. So if after having advanced so far I would return home without having met Paramahansadeva then I would perhaps have to come again to meet him. None can tell however when such an opportunity will come again and there may be many obstacles on the way. It has been said in the scriptures that "the way to the good is beset with many obstacles", so what should I do ? Should I return home to relieve my parents of anxiety or should I spend the night in the Kali temple in order to see Paramahansadeva ? Various thoughts like this caused wavering of my mind. Having failed to make up my mind I sank in deep contemlation. My condition was like that of Arjuna in Kurukshetra. In the midst of a great dilemma I kept on thinking silently—what to do ? Sashibhusan, having realised my mental state said, "Brother, why should you have so much of worry ? Look, I too have come without asking my parents. I shall stay here tonight. Your condition is similar to that of mine. Parents will be a little upset with anxiety, afterwards when they will get you in their midst they will be happy again. When you have spent the whole day here, why should you return home without waiting a little longer. You should return home tomorrow morning after having spent the night here. Stay together with me in this holy place tonight."

At the advice of Sashibhusan my anxiety regarding my home and parents subsided and I made up my mind not to return home without having met the Yogi Paramahansa, whatever might befall my fate. Thereafter I waited in peace

in order to see Paramahansa. Gradually the sun set and darkness of the evening enveloped the earth. The bells of the *aratrika* started ringing in the temples of Gods and Goddesses at Dakshineswar. Sashibhusan took me along to see the *aratrika* of Bhabatarini in the Kali temple. I felt unprecedented peace and bliss in my mind and heart to see the *aratrika* of Mother Kali who was so life-like. *Aratrika* over. I prostrated before Mother Kali and accompanied Sashibhusan up to the verandah in front of Paramahansadeva's room and rested there. Sashibhusan began to discuss various topics with me. After sometime Ramlal-dada, the priest of Mother Kali gave Sashibhusan and myself two *luchis* and a little sugar out of the *prasada* of *sitalbhoga* and asked us to take it for supper. Having had *prasada* we two lay down in the temple.

CHAPTER VII

FIRST MEETING WITH SHREE RAMAKRISHNA AND SPIRITUAL INITIATION

Uptill then I had seen Sannyasins clad in loin cloth and saffron coloured robe with head full of plaited locks of hair, body covered with ash and *chimta* (tong) in hand. I began to fancy that Paramahansadeva was perhaps a Sadhu like that with plaited hair, loin cloth, *chimta* in hand and covered with ash. Having a notion like this I had great fear that he might hit me with *chimta* or scare me away if he was annoyed. Various thoughts and apprehensions began to arise in my mind. At that time having heard the rattling sound of the wheels of a cab at a distance Sashibhusan and Ramlal-dada said, "Now, a cab is bringing Paramahansadeva. He never spends the night in any householder's place at Calcutta." All of us then awaited the arrival of Paramahansadeva. Gradually the cab came and stopped by the side of the staircase on the north-east of Paramahansadeva's room. Sashibhusan, Ramlal-dada and myself stood up. My heart throbbed within me. I stood speechless. Paramahansadeva. Gradually the cab came and stopped by the side staircase of the northern verandah and passed through the door that led to the southern verandah he uttered, Kali, Kali, Kali, three times in a deep voice. Thereafter he sat on a small bedstead in his room. He was followed into the room by his attendant (Latu Maharaj) who carried his napkin and *batua* (a bag containing cardamom and other spices). Paramahansadeva's nephew Ramlaldada (priest of Mother Kali) and Sashibhusan entered the room and having done prostrated to him gave him the information about my coming. I was then standing on the verandah in awe and reverence. No question was then arising in my mind though I was thinking of many things. Ramlaldada then came to me and said 'Paramahansadeva is calling you.' Thereupon I timidly advanced and entered the room and prostrated to Paramahansadeva putting my head on his feet. All my physical

discomforts instantly disappeared and it seemed as though I was filled with a current of ineffable bliss. Paramahansadeva asked me affectionately to sit on the mat and enquired, "Who are you ? Where is your home ? What is your name ? Why have you taken so much pain to come ? What do you want ?, etc." With my voice choked with devotion I said, "I have a desire to learn Yoga. Will you teach me how to practise Yoga?" At this Paramahansadeva remained silent for a while and then said, "It is a very good sign that you have the desire to learn Yoga at this tender age. In your previous birth you were a great Yogi.. A small part of (*sadhana*) remained to be completed. This is your last birth. Yes, I shall teach you Yoga. Take rest tonight and come again tomorrow morning." I was consoled to hear this and having done *pranama* many times at the feet of Paramahansadeva I came out to the verandah from his room. I saw that Paramahansadeva had neither anything striking in his dress and attire nor any pomp, he was quite ordinary and simple. Having noticed this I began to think in wonder, "Strange, I do not find any plaited hair, saffron-coloured cloth nor *chimta*, etc., on him. His head is not shaved also. Rather he has a slight growth of hair on his head, he has beard, and he has red-bordered cloth in is wearing, slippers on his feet and he has put on an upper garment and the front end of his cloth is thrown over his shoulder.

On the bedstead in his room there was a mattress and pillow. In my bewilderment I could not come to any conclusion. In the meantime Sashibhusan prostrated to Paramahansadeva came out to the verandah and lay on the mat along with Ramlaldada and myself. The goddess of sleep would by no means descend on my eyes. I spent the night in silence overwhelmed with thoughts of various kinds. Gradually in the morning everyone woke up with the chirping of birds. After having finshed morning oblations I began to meditate on Paramahansadeva in the small hours of the morning (*brahma-muhurta*) and longed for the moment when I would meet him again. A flood of purity and ineffable joy was then flowing through my mind.

Sri Ramakrishnadeva's first Teaching to Me

After sometime Ramlaldada asked me to go to Paramahansadeva's room. I entered the room and having prostrated at his feet I sat on a mat as asked by him. Paramahansadeva looked at me and enquired, "How far have you read?" I said, "Sir, I am reading in the Entrance class."

Paramahansadeva : "Do you know Sanskrit? Which of the scriptures have you read?"

Myself : "I have read *Raghuansha, Kumarasambhava,* and other *Kavyas* (poetical works), *Bhagavat-Geeta, Patanjal-darshan, Shiva-hamhita,* etc."

Paramahansadevi said, "Very good" and blessed me. Thereafter he took me to the verandah on the northern side of his room. A bedstead was placed there, he asked me affectionately to sit on that. As I sat in the posture of Yoga, Paramahansadeva asked me to take out my tongue. When I took out my tongue he wrote a *mulamantra* (*vija-mantra*) with his right middle finger on the tongue and stimulated power in me and having attracted the power upwards by putting his hand on my chest he asked me to meditate. I did so. In course of meditation I lost sense-consciousness. Absorbed in deep meditation I sat motionless like a log in *samadhi* and felt a strange bliss which I had never experienced before. I forgot all about the world. I do not know how long I remained in that state. After sometime Paramahansadeva placed his hand on my chest and made the serpent power (Kundalini-sakti) descend downwards. I then regained sense-consciousness and my body was filled with a current of joy of immense purity. Having observed me in that state Ramlaldada and Golap Ma said 'how wonderful, as soon as you were touched you became absorbed in meditation like a log.' However, when Paramahansadeva asked me what I had experienced in deep meditation I told him everything. On having heard that he smiled with joy. He then enquired, "Have you got any intention to marry?" I said, "No". Then Paramahansadeva said, "Do not marry." He then taught me how to do meditation and said,

When will you sleep in the Divine chamber
with the clean (good) and the unclean (evil),

When the two co-wives will be reconciled to each other Mother Shyama will be within your reach:

शुचि अशुचिरे ल्ये दिब्यघरे यबे शुबि।
दुइ सतीने पीरित हले तबे श्यामा-माके पाबि॥

'The merciful Paramahansadeva thus initiated me into divine ideals and asked me to meditate everyday in the morning and at night on the bed before going to sleep. Thereafter Paramahansadeva asked me to go to the temple of the Mother Kali and to meditate there. When I returned from the temple he gave me sweets of *prasada* and asked me to take that for breakfast. After breakfast I began to think how to return to Calcutta. Paramahansadeva having understood my problems said, "You should come here again". Then he told me how to come in boat or in hackney carriage. He also told me the fares up to Dakshineswar. I said "but if I fail to collect the fare what should I do?" Paramahansadeva said, "Your fare for journey both ways will be paid from here." In the meantime a devotee arrived at Dakshineswar from Calcutta in a hackney carriage. Then Paramahansadeva asked me to return to Calcutta in that carriage.. I bowed down to his order and having prostrated at his feet I took leave of him. I took my seat in the coach-box of the carriage and started for Calcutta and all the way I thought of the boundless compassion and affection of Paramahansadeva. I returned home in the forenoon. The joy of mother and others of the house knew no bounds when they saw me.

The Condition of My Parents before My return Home

When I did not return home by Sunday noon a commotion started in the house. My mother cried aloud, "Search for him, why is Kali not coming yet? Where has Kali gone?" When father failed to get clue from the neighbours he became restless with anxiety and searched for me in all directions. None, however, could give any information about me. He apprehended that perhaps I had been drowned in the

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That is, when the idea of difference between the individual soul and the universal Soul is replaced by the knowledge of the identity of them, their Divine realization comes.

Ganges. Hours passed and night set in but no information about me was available. At last my mother remembered that one day I had enquired of her where Rani Rashmoni's Kali temple was. Perhaps I had gone to the Kali temple of Rani Rashmani, so thinking, she entreated my father to go to Dakshineswar and make enquiries about me. My father could not disregard my mother's request. Next morning he set out for Dakshineswar. I too had then started for Calcutta in a hackney carriage after bidding good-bye to Paramahansadeva. However, when on reaching Dakshineswar he anxiously enquired about me Paramahansadeva said, "He has just left."

Father was consoled. While returning to Calcutta from Dakshineswar he made a special request to Paramahansadeva saying "Kaliprasad is my son. You will kindly advise him so that he marries and becomes a man of worldly ways." Paramahansadeva said in reply "Your son is a great Yogi, when he does not want to marry will it be of any avail to compel him to marry ?" My father said "to serve parents is the highest religion." Paramahansadeva was very glad to hear this. My father did not realize then that Paramahansadeva had adviced me the way to serve the Father of the universe. However, my father at last started for Calcutta after bidding good-bye to Paramahansadeva.

In the meantime I had returned home. My father was in great joy to get me back as if lost wealth had been recovered. My mother said to me, "I surmised that you had gone to the Kali temple of Rashmani, and so I asked your father to go to Dakshineswar. Now, I find that my surmise was correct." Two or three hours after this my father returned and he was extremely glad to see me. Others of the house too were relieved of anxiety and all trouble was over. Fortunately on this occasion my father met the Great Yogi, Paramahansadeva and became blessed. It is as a result of many acts of piety that one can directly meet Shree Ramakrishna, the incarnation of God in this age. Paramahansadeva also used to say, "Those who are in their last birth, will surely come here" I had great joy to think that my father had seen Paramahansadeva.

CHAPTER VIII

SPIRITUAL REALIZATION

After having seen Paramahansadeve the desire to see Him gradually gathered strength in my mind. I began to feel a strong attraction for going to Dakshineswar. I used to feel as if Paramahansadeva was pulling me. According to Paramahansadeva's direction I used to meditate sitting on my bed at night after closing the doors of the bedroom before going to sleep. My mind would no longer settle down in studies. I had increasingly strong desire for meditation I was not in a mood to do any household work. Having found me so unmindful, my parents forbade me to go to Dakshineswar. I, however, used to go to Dakshineswar surreptitiously without telling anybody by paying a fare of one anna in boat from Ahiritola Ghat. Paramahansadeva also would ask me to go to him frequently and occasionally he would collect boat from Ahiritola-Ghat. Paramahansadeva also would ask me to go to him frequently and occasionally he would collect boat fare for me. He would tell me, "My heart pines for you if you do not come and if I do not see you. I have a longing to see you everyday". I would say in reply, "My parents forbid me to come here." He would say, "You should come surreptitously without telling anybody. If you do not have money to pay the fare, you should take it from here." Tears would swell up in my eyes. On hearing the affectionate words of Paramahansdeva I used to think, "Oh, how kind He is and how wonderful is His love! Even the love of parents is mixed with self-interest but there is no self-interest in Paramahansadeva's love. He loves me and always wants to see me for my own welfare and spiritual upliftment." I have not got such selfless love from anyone else.

Gradually Paramahansadeva tied up my heart with His rope of love and disinterested affection. My mind would find no peace at home. I would constantly have the desire to live with Paramahansadeva. So, whenever, I would get opportunity, I would flee to Dakshineswar. One day I began

to feel a terrible attraction for going to Dakshineswar. But my father would not let me leave the house in any way. I began to think what to do. I was in an unusual predicament. Having observed my movements and intentions, my father kept me confined by putting the gate under lock and key that day. Being helpless I waited for sometime and thought that after all the gate of the house could not be kept under lock and key very long and that I would escape as soon as I would find it open. It was afternoon then. My father thought that perhaps I would not go out. He opened the gate. After having waited for sometime I slank away and ran to Ahiritola Ghat and having found a boat, boarded it and reached Dakshineswar. Paramahansadeva was elated with joy when He saw me. I put my head on His feet and did obeisance to Him and told Him in details what I had seen and felt during meditation at home. My heart was then calmed. On hearing me Paramahansadeva said, "It is all right. You should do like this. Whatever you will see or feel, you should come and tell me". I used to do so. Having stolen out of home, I would go to Dakshineswar and tell Paramahansadeva whatever vision I would have during meditation at home. That night I stayed with Paramahansadeva at Dakshineswar, I then forgot all about my home.

One day while meditating at home I had a vision of the omnipresent eyes of God — दिबिव चक्षराततम् — Those open eyes were all-pervading like the limitless sky. Thus everyday in the morning and before going to sleep I would be absorbed in deep meditation and I would see the divine forms of various gods and goddesses and I used to go to Dakshineswar, and describe these visions. Later when I would go to Dakshineswar, I would massage the feet of Paramahansadeva with His permission. On the north of the garden of Dakshineswar there was a powder magazine and a row of Casuarina trees. Paramahansadeva would go to the bank of the Ganges under the Casuarina trees for answering the call of nature. Occasionally he would ask me to carry the water pot (Garu) and accompany Him and He would put his hand on my shoulder and go under the Casuarina tree beyond Panchabati, giving me spiritual instructions. I would wait at a little distance with the water pot. Thus

Paramahansadeva would walk putting his hand on my shoulder sometimes in Panchabati and sometimes in the garden as if I were his intimate companion. He would tell me the stories of Balaram of Baghbazar, Suresh, Girish, Ram Babu, Mahendra Master and other lay devotees ; he would ask me to visit their houses and to get acquainted with them. He would also tell me about Narendranath and Baburam and other young devotees. One day having coming to know my home address he said, "There is a devotee in the neighbourhood of your home, named Deben Majumdar. He is fairly advanced. You should get acquainted with him. He comes to Dakshineswar quite frequently. He also invited me to his house. When they will take me to the house of Balaram Bose in Ramkanta Bose Street of Baghbazar and to the house of Ramchandra Dutta in Simla, you should go there and talk to them".

As I kept on visiting Dakshineswar, I gradually got acquainted with the lay and young devotees. On 15th June, 1884, a Mahotsava was held in Suresh Babu's garden. I attended that Mahotsava. One day when I went to Dakshineswar, I was surprised to find there my class fellow Baburam Ghosh (Swami Premananda). In great joy I asked me, "Hallo, you are here ?" Baburam replied, "Hallo, you too are here ?" Both of us were in great joy. Since that day a relationship of spiritual brotherhood was established between Baburam and myself for ever. According to the instruction of Paramahansadeva I used to enquire when he would go to which lay devotee's house and I would wait there to meet him. When he would visit the houses of Balaram Ghosh, Ram Dutta, Suresh Mitra, Girish Ghosh, and other devotees in Calcutta, I would be present there and I would talk to and get acquainted with the devotees.

One day I went to Balaram Babu's house on having heard that Paramahansadeva had come there. There I met my class fellow Jagneswar Bhattacharyya and enquired in surprise, "Hallo, you are here ? What are you doing ? " Jagneswar was pleased to see me. He said, "I live here". He told me that day that he was the son of Balaram Babu's Guru.

CHAPTER IX

CAR FESTIVAL OF THE LORD JAGANNATH IN BALARAM BABU'S HOUSE

Third July, 1884. Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni came to Balaram Basu's house that day. Images of Jagannath, Balaram and Subhadra were installed in Balaram Basu's house and everyday daily *puja* and *aratrika* of these deities were held with offering of rice. Paramahansadeva would not take rice in anybody's house in Calcutta, only in Balaram Basu's house he would take rice offered to the deity. That was the day of Car festival. On this day the image of Jagannath Deva would be placed on the Car (Ratha) and it would be pulled around along the verandah of the first floor. That day on having heard that Paramahansadeva would come to Balaram Babu's house, devotees came and assembled there to meet him from all around. Having got the information I went there in the afternoon and found Ramchandra Datta and other lay devotees, Narendranath and other young devotees singing *Sankirtana* (devotional song) with the accompaniment of *khol* and *kartala*, and Pramahansadeva sitting in a state of trance, devoid of physical consciousness. Gradually the time for pulling Car came. Paramahansadeva began to dance in ecstasy in front of the Car. He asked Narendranath and others to dance. I too joined that party and danced. The pleasant memory of that delightful festival is still imprinted unforgettably in my heart.

Shree Ramakrishna's Divine Play on certain Occasions witnessed by Me

When Paramahansadeva went to the Star Theatre of Girish Ghosh accompanied by his devotees to see the *Chaitanyaleela* and *Prahlad-Charitra* plays, I too went with them. Every Saturday and Sunday the devotees would gather at Dakshineswar to meet Paramahansadeva. Gradually every Saturday

afternoon with other devotees. Thus I began to be acquainted with everyone of the lay and young devotees.

I would really feel immense bliss in my heart to hear the teachings of Paramahansadeva. Sometimes he would laugh in ecstasy, sometimes he would be in a state of *asamadhi* (Godconsciousness). Again at times he would sing in a sweet voice the songs composed by Ramaprasad, Kamalakanta, and other Sadhakas (seekers of God) and would remain enraptured. Occasionally he would sing *Kirtan* (devotional songs) depicting the Divine play of Radha and Krishna in Vrindavan. Sometimes he would sing the *padavalis* composed by Vidyapati. Chandidas, and other great saint-composers and intoxicated with rapture he would add new *akharas* (new lines introduced) in a devotional song for elaborating the basic idea of the song) to the songs. Sometimes he would describe the divine play of Seeta and Rama, the manner of Tulsidas, the great Vaishnava and he would, in his ecstasy, sink into the ocean of Supreme bliss. The spirit of harmony of all religions used to be reflected in Paramahansadeva's everyday life and he would teach everybody the liberal and universal ideal that there are "as many paths leading to God as there are religious faiths" Realization of those teachings would give me profound joy. Once after I had got acquainted with Mahendra Master he said to me, "You should write down the teachings of Paramahansadeva as you hear them. I record them in my diary, but I remain busy with various kinds of work of the household and teach in School and so I do not find time to come everyday. You spend more time with Paramahansadeva. For that reason I tell you to write down his extraordinary teachings." At this I started writing down the nectar-like words of Paramahansadeva. But subsequently I thought—of what avail would it be to write down all this on paper if I could not build up my life according to the teachings! Since then I began to record the teachings on the screen of my heart instead of writing them on paper so that his teachings might remain imprinted for ever. I was present during most of the occasions described in the *Kathamrita* of Shree M—but my name was not mentioned in all places of 'Kathamrita' perhaps because I was young in age and so I got lumped with "et cetera". Of course I mentioned this to Shree M—

many a time when he was alive, but for some reason unknown to me the Master has left me within the bounds of 'et cetera'.

Occasionally Chikanjiva Sharma (Tailokyanath Sanyal) of Keshab Babu's Brahmo Samaj used to come to Dakshineswar and with the accompaniment of an *Ektara* he used to sing to Paramahansadeva songs newly composed by him. One day he sang,

On my mind, travel on to your own abode.
Why keep rambling aimlessly in the garb of a foreigner
in the foreign land of this world?
The five senses and elements are strangers to you,
None of them is you kin.
Why do you lose yourself in the love of strangers
And forget your own kindreds ? etc.[1]

Fortunately. I was present that day. Paramahansadeva went into *samadhi* (Godconsciousness) on hearing the son. Thereafter when Trailokya Babu sang,

In the midst of thick darness, Oh Mother,
flashes by immense formlessness, etc.[2]

This song was composed by him in Bageshree Raga. Paramahansadeva again went into a state of ecstasy losing all physical consciousness. I too along with the other listeners became absorbed and felt the presence of the Mother of the universe. Tailokya Babu's voice was sharp and sweet as a result of practice. After sometime Trailokya Babu finished the song singing the last line.

The lightening of love plays at thy feet of fearlessness,

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[1] मन, चल निज निकेतने ।
संसार-बिदेशे बिदेशीर बेशे । भ्रम केन अकारणे ॥
विषयपञ्चक आर भूतगण, सब तोर पर केह नय आपण ।
परप्रेमे केन हये अचेतन, भुलिछ आपन-जने ॥
—इत्यादि

[2] निबिड़ आंधारे मा तोर
चमके अरूपराशि ।
ताइ योगी ध्यान धरे
हये गिरिगुहाबासी ॥
अभय चरणतले प्रेमेर बिजली खेले ।
चिन्मय मुखमण्डले, शोभे अट्ट अट्ट हासि ॥

And loud laughter brightens up thy face of pure consciousness.

Then Paramahansadeva, in his mood of rapture said smiling, "Well, you do not accept the view that Gods and Goddesses can have form, but I do not understand how you think of the forms of the 'feet of fearlessness' and 'face' of the formless Divine Mother." Trailokya Babu could not answer. He remained silent.

One day Pratap Chandra Majumdar, the preacher of the 'Brahmo Samaj' founded by Keshab Babu came to Dakshineswar and did obeisance at the feet of Paramahansadeva. I was present at that time. On seeing Pratap Majumdar, Paramahansadeva raised many questions regarding the theories of form and formlessness of God and explained these. Pratap Babu, with his head bowed down, listened to these teachings. Later, he published those teachings of Paramahansadeva in English in *Theistic Review*, an organ of the Brahmo Samaj. Keshab Chandra Sen also, in course of a lecture delivered in the Town Hall, spoke publicly about the high spiritual eminence of Paramanhansadeva. It may be said that in the city of Calcutta Paramahansadeva was first introduced to the public through the speeches of Keshab Babu.

Since then whenever I would get opportunity I would slink away from home to Dakshineswar and there during the night, I would have the opportunity to massage the feet of Paramahansadeva. One night when I was softly massaging the feet of Paramahansadeva with my hand I felt as if Paramahansadeva was suckling me in the form of the Mother of the universe. I remember that at that time I sank into an ocean of beautitude devoid of all sense of worldly things. I can never forget that strange experience in my life.

I have already mentioned that everyday during meditation at home I used to have vision of Gods and Goddesses. One night during the small hours when I was in meditation I lost sense-consciousness and it seemed as though my soul came out of the cage of the body and begun to roam about in the sky above like a free bird. Gradually it flew high towards infinity. While viewing scenery of great beauty I entered that place and I was astonished to see images arranged in rows depicting the ideals of various religious sects. I was

charmed to see the different ideals and emblems of Shakta, Shaiva, Vaishnava, Ganapatya, Christianity, Islam, and other sects. Gradually, as if charged with inspiration by some disembodied spirit, I entered into a big hall and saw all the Gods and Goddesses, all Incarnations of God and founders of religion, namely, the ten divine incarnations of the Hindus, Shree Krishna, Jesus Christ, Zarathustre, Mahommed, and the rooms and in the centre of the hall Paramahansadeva was standing. I was looking at this strange scene when Paramahansadeva's form became luminous and assumed immense proportions and all gods and goddesses, all incarnations (Fish, tortoise, Shri Ramachandra, Buddha, and others of the ten incarnations) Shree Krishna, Jesus Christ, Zarathustra, Nanak, Shree Chaitanya Mahaprabhu, Sankaracharya, and others left their respective altars and started entering into Paramahansadeva's body. Having failed to understand the significance of that vision I hastened to Dakshineswar and narrated the whole story to Paramahansadeva. On having heard me Paramahansadeva said, "You have had vision of Vaikuntha (the heavenly abode of God). You have reached the last limit of vision of Gods and Goddesses. From now onwards you are uplifted to the stage of the formless." It is strange that I ceased to have any vision of Gods and Goddesses during meditation after the vision narrated above and my mind would remain calm and in a state of *samadhi* all through meditation. Later on, I described my experience of this strange vision of 'Baikuntha' in the *Ramakrishnavatara* which I composed in Sanskrit.

A youngman, named Purna Chandra Ghosh, one day came to Dakshineswar. Thoughts of Gopala arose in the heart of Paramahansadeva when he saw him. Paramahansadeva would find great delight in feeding him. Purna was then reading in Oriental Seminary. Having come to know that the Seminary was close to my house Paramahansadeva one day said to me "a boy, named Purna comes here. He is a very good boy. He reminds me of Gopala and I have a desire to feed him. After the schools is over you will call him to your house and on my behalf you will feed him with the *sandesh* which I shall give you. Will you be able to do that?" I said, "Yes, I can do that." Paramahansadeva was very glad and with a

smile on his face said, "You will act as the messenger 'Brinda' (*Mrindeduti*) on my behalf." Then he handed over to me a *fuzli* mango and some *sandesh*. I came home from Dakshineswar with mango and *sandesh* in obedience to his order. After the school was over I met Purna Chandra and called him to our home at Nimu Goswami Lane, seated him in my room and with my own hand I fed him with mango and *sandesh* given by Paramahansadeva. Purna was glad to eat and said? "Ah, how kind and affectionate Paramahansadeva is. His affection and love are even greater than those of parents. He has put you to so much trouble just for feeding me!"

Purna said this with his eyes glistening with tears. Since then I became friendly with Purna. On the following day I went to Dakshineswar and told Paramahansadeva all about Purna. He was glad and he said to me affectionately, "With the coming of Purna my circle of devotees has been completed. Almost all those who belong to the inner circle of my kindreds have come. How much I have cried for you. Now the Divine Mother has brought all of you here." He said these words in such a way as if divine love was mixed with deep emotion.

CHAPTER X

WITH SREE RAMAKRISHNA AT DAKSHINESWAR

One day I went to Dakshineswar. It was about 2 p.m. At that time Girish Chandra Ghosh came to see Paramahansadeva almost completely drunk in a hackney carriage. All those who were present including myself were frightened to see Girish Chandra in drunken condition. But Paramahansadeva was not in the least perturbed to see Girish Babu in that condition, rather He addressed him as a partial manifestation of Bhairava and a Veer Sadhaka (a seeker after truth of the Veer School of Sadhana) and began to sing a song of Ramprasad,

"I do not drink wine but I take Sudha by chanting the glory of Kali—I make my drunkard mind intoxicated and I call them drunkards who get intoxicated by taking wine," etc.[1]

Girish Babu with his head on the feet of Paramahansadeva and crying plaintively said, "Save me through your grace". Paramahansadeva went into ecstasy and in that state began to say, "Mother, Girish being a devotee of the Veer School will not be able to do all that". Gradually his sense-consciousness returned. He stared at Girish Babu and asked him to give him *bakalama* (power of attorney). At the behest of Paramahansadeva, Girish Babu gave Him *bakalma.*[2] Girish Babu's intoxication also disappeared instantly and he began to talk to the devotees assembled there in a normal way. Before this when Paramahansadeva had gone to his theatre to see a play Girish Babu had got drunk and had abused him in filthy language like (Jagai-Madhai). But Paramahansadeva instead of having minded that had bestowed His Grace on Girish Babu in a larger measure. Paramahansadeva having realised sincerity of Girish Babu's devotion and faith, used to tell the devotees that "Girish's faith was superhuman. It

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[1] सुरापान करि ना आमि सुधा खाइ जय काली बले ।
आमार, मन-माताले माताल करे, सब मद-माताले माताल बले ॥

[2] Here *bakalma* means full resignation to Sri Ramakrishna.

would measure 25 annas (5 Sikas and 5 annas) if the limit of human faith measured 16 annas". Really Girish Babu's devotion and faith in Paramahansadeva was unfathomable.

One day the devotees of Calcutta assembled in the house of Ramchandra Dutta in Madhu Roy's Lane in Simla when they got the information that Paramahansadeva would come to that house. When I arrived there with Paramahansadeva from Dakshineswar, I found a large gathering in a room awaiting the arrival of Paramahansadeva. Ram Babu welcomed Paramahansadeva and made him seated on a seat laid down for Him in the midst of the assembly of devotees in his parlour. Paramahansadeva looked around and said, "But I do not see Naren. Where is Naren?" Ram Babu said, "Naren is suffering from cerebral disease and so he has not been able to come. He lies down in a dark room in his house putting a wet napkin on his head. He cannot even open his eyes to light. He has been suffering a great deal". Paramahansadeva was distressed to hear this and became very anxious to see Narendranath and said, "Call him here". So Niranjan, myself and four or five others went to Narendranath's house. We saw Narendranath was restless due to pain in the head and he was tossing about on his bedstead in his room in the ground floor where he lay with doors and windows closed and with a wet napkin on his head. Niranjan, myself and others said to Narendranath, "Paramahansadeva has come to Ram Babu's house. He is distressed for having not seen you there. So He has sent us to take you there. You will have to go with us immediately". At this Narendranath said, "I have great pain in my head. I cannot even open my eyes. The pain in the head increases in light. So, how can I go? Give Paramahansadeva my respects and tell Him that I do not have the ability to go". But we were not the people to let him off We told Narendranath obstinately, "When Paramahansadeva is eager to see you, you will have to go. We shall carry you there". Narendranath said, "I canot even open my eyes. So tell me how I can go". We said, "You keep your eyes closed and come with us. We shall hold your hands and take you". Narendranath at last agreed and with a wet napkin on his head stood up. We held his hand and slowly took him to Ram Babu's house through a lane. Parama-

hansadeva was at that time surrounded with devotees and he was talking to them with a smile on his face. The room was filled with people. There was quite a big crowd in the outer hall also. We took Narendranath through that crowd and came to the presence of Paramahansadeva. Narendranath prostrated himself to Paramahasansadeva and sat in front of Him. Paramahansadeva's joy knew no bounds when he saw Narendranath in front. He affectionately caressed Narendranath's head and enquired, "What has happened to your head"? Surprisingly the very moment Paramahansadeva's lotus hand touched Narendranath's head, all his pain disappeared. Narendranath having recovered said, "Sir what have you done that all my pain has gone"? Paramahansadeva smiled on hearing this. Then Narendranath opened his eyes and found that he was sitting in the midst of an assembly of people packed in the room. Paramahansadeva affectionately asked Narendranath to sing a song. Narendranath was overwhelmed with joy and started singing in his sweet voice with the accompaniment of a Tanpura which was in front of him from before. The gathering of devotees assembled there were charmed to hear the sweet song sung in Narendranath's deep voice. Paramahansadeva slowly lost his sense-consciousness in ecstasy and sat still. Surprisingly, Narendranath was not tired even after having sung for three hours in that assembly. All of us wondered to see the strange power of Paramahansadeva.

After the meeting was over Narendranath said to us, "I cannot express in words how terrible my headache was. I felt as if someone was digging into my head with a knife. But the terrible pain disappeared instantly with the touch of Paramahansadeva's hand. What wonderful power! *Thus I have witnesed the most wonderful power, which our Great Master Sree Ramakrishna possessed. But he seldom used the power!*

Thus the whole afternoon passed unawares in great joy. Sankirtan (devotional songs) started in the evening. The principal singer began to sing songs regarding the divine play in Brindaban known as the *padavali* of *Mathur* :

If the moon of Gokul does not come to Braja,
Then my life which is like a touch stone becomes a

brittle as glass.
I shall become a mendicant for the dearest one of my heart.
I shall put on saffron cloth and ear-rings of conch shell,
And I shall go in that garb where the cruel Hari has gone.
I shall search for him in every house of Mathura,
And if I find the dearest of my heart anywhere,
I shall bind him with the skirt of my cloth.
I shall not let him go because he is dear to me.
But how shall I find one who is so young and tender.
I shall importune him by holding his feet,
And I shall keep him in my company".[3]

When Paramahansadeva heard this devotional *pada-kirtan*, he went into ecstasy. The devotees who had assembled were also enraptured. Paramahansadeva's face gleamed with a strange glow and smile of delight. Thereafter when another song started namely, "Nadia is tossing on the wave of the love of Gouranga".[4] Paramahansadeva stood up and having wrapped the loose end of his cloth round his waist he began to dance like a mad lion. The dance was vigorous but a smile and a mood of delight lit his face. This reminds one of what the devotees of Sree Chaitanyadeva said on seeing his dance. They said "Our Gora is a mad elephant" (गोरा आमार माता हाती) That day we were filled with joy to see Sree Ramakrishna dancing like a mad elephant.

Another day. Suresh Chandra Mitra made arrangements with Bengal Photograph Company of Radhabazar for taking a photograph of Paramahansadeva in the standing posture and he requested Paramahansadeva to go there one day. Paramahansadeva kept the request of Suresh Babu. The day Paramahansadeva went to the photograph studio in a cab. I accompanied him in the same cab to Radhabazar and I was present when the photograph was taken (according to *Kathamrita*, the date was 30-6-1884). I was also present on the day when Sasadhar Tarka-Chudamani went to Dakshines-

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[3] यदि गोकुलचन्द्र व्रजे ना एल। —प्रभृति

[4] नदे टलमल करे
गौरप्रेमेर हिल्लोले।

war to see Paramahansadeva. These recollections are still vivid in my heart.

After I had vision of Baikuntha in meditation, Paramahansadeva asked me to meditate on his own form and said, "Within my body there are Mother Kali and all other gods and goddesses. So meditation on my form would be tantamount to meditation on all gods and goddesses". These words of Paramahansadeva are reminiscent of the words of the *Gita,* "Take resort in me alone after relinquishing all religions".[4] Or "In whatever way one worships me, I accept his worship in that way".[5]

The Yogis meditate on the flame of a lamp. The outer portion of the flame is gross but after the gross portion there is a portion which is subtle beyond which the flame is in the causal state. Meditation should start from the gross state and go from gross to the subtle state from the subtle state to the causal state. One day while meditating thus on the flame of a lamp I could realise the bliss which is Brahma, the primordial cause of the world.

One memorable day. Paramahansadeva was sitting in his small room in Dakshineswar and I was sitting on his side massaging his feet. He looked at me and said, "Can Brahma Jnana be attained easily?" I said "In the *Patanjala-Darsan* there is an aphorim : तीव्र सम्वेसानामासन्नः * * That is to say, those who have very strong urge attain God-consciousness quickly. He smiled and gave me hope saying, "You will attain the Brahman-knowledge". Thereafter he strongly pinched into the *ajna-chakra* between my eyebrows with the nails of his fingers and said, "Fix your mind here". *Nyangta* (Totapuri) pierced a bit of glass into my forehead and asked me to concentrate my mind at that point. When I did so, I went into *nirvikalpa-samadhi.* In that state all sense-consciousness is lost. I was in the state of *samadhi* for three days and three nights. Having seen my meditations *Nyangta* observed, "What divine Maya! You have achieved *nirvikalpa-samadhi* in three days for which I had to do *sadhana*

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[5] सर्वधर्मान् परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
ये यथा मां प्रपद्यन्ते तां स्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ॥

for forty years. Paramahansadeva then asked me to do meditation under Panchabati. At that time an attendant named Harish came. I made over charge of attending on Paramahansadeva to him and having prostrated to Paramahansadeva, I went to meditate in Panchabati. I do not know for how long I was in a state of *samadhi* having lost sense-consciousness after having concentrated my mind between the eyebrows. But when my sense-consciousness gradually returned, I came and prostrated on the feet of Paramahansadeva. He put His hand affectionately on my head and blessed me. It was thus that I applied myself to building up my spiritual life by visiting Dakshineswar and following the advice of Sree Ramakrishna Paramhansadeva. Even today, when along with these recollections, I think of the boundless mercy of Paramahansadeva on me, I am overwhelmed with joy.

Visit to Nilkantha's Jatra

One day Paramahansadeva heard from a devotee that Nilkantha was a *Sadhaka* in the path of devotion and was a great devotee. His Krishna *jatra* would be held in the Baroaritola of Hatkhola. When Nilkantha appeareing in the role of Brinda Duti sings, the audience is moved in tears. Having got this information Paramahansadeva became disconsolate like a child for hearing Nilkantha's *jatra*. So all arrangements were made for his attending the jatra. In the morning a cab was hired from Dakshineswar. Paramahansadeva along with his attendant Latu and myself went in the cab to Hatkhola Baroyaritola. The *jatra* had started by that time and was attracting rapt attention of the audience. The gathering for hearing the *jatra*, was so large that it was almost impossible to go into it. Somehow, Latu and myself made our way through the gathering and gave the message to Nilkantha that Sree Ramakrishna had come from Dakshineswar to hear his jatra. Having heard about Paramahansadeva, Nilkanta went in a hurry and brought him by holding his hand and making way through the gathering to the proximity of the stage and having seated Paramahansadeva in front, continued his song.

He kept on singing moved with joy "Who created the three letters of *piriti* (love).[6] Overwhelmed with love of Sree Radha, he was uttering the word *piriti* again and again and at that time Paramahansadeva's lips began to shake. When Nilkantha continued to repeat the song in a sweet voice and with great emotion, Paramahansadeva stood up in ecstasy. How wonderful was his face! Nilkantha also in a rapturous mood touched the feet of Paramahansadeva with both hands and went on taking the dust of His feet again and again. Sometimes after when sense-consciousness returned, Paramahansadeva sat down and kept on hearing the musical play. He then looked like an ordinary man. The listeners began to ask one another, "Who is this man ? Where does this Great Man live ? We have not seen such a wonderful appearance before". Along with Nilkantha's songs. Paramahansadeva was occasionally adding *akhara* (similar to a *tana* in classical *khyal*). The audience was charmed to hear that. The *jatra* show was over at about 10 in the morning. We then hired a cab and started for Balaram Babu's house in Baghbazar with Paramahansa. On the way we reached Beadon Square. In those days the mystic symbols of Free Masons were beautifully carved in cement of many colours within the flower hedges in that Square. Paramahansadeva went there to see those symbols. Putting his hands on the shoulders of Latu and myself, he walked about in the Square looking at the symbols. As far as possible, I explained to him the meanings of those symbols. At last having arrived in Balaram Babu's house we three had rest and lunch. In the afternoon the devotees came from many places and the day was spent in spiritual discourses. At last after evening we took light tiffin and in hired cab Latu and myself started for Dakshineswar with Paramahansadeva. That day I did not return to Calcutta. I spent the night at Dakshineswar and returned home next morning.

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[6] पीरिति, ए' तिन आखर के सृजिल रे ।

CHAPTER XI

PARAMAHANSADEVA'S TEACHINGS REGARDING RELIGION

Paramahansadeva would often teach us to utter 'haribol' 'haribol' with clapping of hands. When someone enquired inquisitively about the reason for clapping of hands he said that just as birds sitting on the branch of a tree fly away with the clapping of hands so the birds of sin perched on the tree of our body fly away with the uttering of the name of *Hari* along with clapping of hands. In Dakshineswar we observed that every evening Paramahansadeva would sit on his bed facing the north and would say aloud 'haribol' 'haribol' again and again with clapping of hands and for sometime he would repeat the words, 'Hari is my Guru, my Guru is Hari', 'Ah Krishna', 'Oh Krishna', 'Oh Govinda my life and soul', 'Not I, not I', it is thou', it is thou',[1] 'I am the instrument, thou art the player",[2] and he would go into ecstasy. In that state he importuned the Mother Kali, but that would not be audible to us. In astonishment we would observe with wonder his strange condition and we would think that Paramahansadeva was in communion with Mother Kali and was talking to her, that he would put questions to her and get answers, that Paramahansadeva was surely not a man—he was a god—these thoughts occured in our minds again and again.

Japa and Meditation

Paramahansadeva would teach us to do *japa* (muttering the *vijamantra*) and *dhyana* (meditation) everyday regularly in the small hours of the morning and in the evening. He would tell us about the meditation of the Nyangta (naked) Totapuri. The Nyangta used to say that if the Tota (water pot) is not

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[1] নাহং নাহং—তুঁহু তুঁহু ।

[2] আমি যন্ত্র, তুমি যন্ত্রী ।

polished everyday dirt settles on it, likewise if the mind is not cleansed by meditation every day filth accumulates in it

By the way Paramahansadeva would also often tell us about his own *sadhana* as a lesson for us. He used to say, "During meditation I would become motionless like a stone image. Birds would perch on my head, I would not even feel that". Truely, when the mind becomes motionless and still there is no sensation even if flies and mosquitoes sit on the body. He used to say that there are sgins of concentration of the mind.

Totapuri's Vedantic View

Paramahansadeva used to say, "Nyangta had attained *Brahmajnana* (knowledge of the ultimate Reality) through discrimination saying "not this, not this" in the Vedantic way. The Nyangta would not however accept Sakti (Power) of Brahman as a reality. He would say that Sakti of Brahman was an illusion (*maya*), and was unreal (*mithya*), and with this idea he would trifle with Shakti. But during his eleven months' stay here Mother Kali taught him the truth of non-duality, namely that Brahman and *mayasakti* (the power of producing delusion) are identical. Likewise Brahman and Sakti are identical."

Maya is the P'wer of Brahman

Acharya Sankara has described the true nature of *maya* thus : The Sakti of the Supreme God is known as 'Avyakta' (inexpressible). She is the beginningless supreme *avidya* (power of delusion) consisting of three *gunas* (attributes of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*). She is *maya* who is to be inferred as the cause of her works by sages and by whom the whole universe is produced. She is neither differentiated nor undifferentiated nor both, She is neither with limbs nor without

limbs nor both; Her nature is mysterious and indescribable".[3]

Brahman and Maya

Shree Ramakrishnadeva would explain to us the deeper significance of Brahman and *maya* in simple language with illustrations. He used to say, "Brahman is devoid of *guna* (attributes) and also endowed with *guna*. Do you know how absolute Brahman is? He is comparable to a snake which is coiled up and asleep, again the same snake is comparable to Brahman with attributes (*saguna* Brahman) when it is winding its way. *Nirguna* (attributeless absolute) Brahman is comparable to a calm sea which is one vast expense. There is no wave nor any movement in Him. He is motionless and firm like Mt. Sumeru. The power of *maya* remains dormant in Brahman. In that state the universe with the earth and all beings remain unmanifested in *mahapralay* (dissolution). With the awakening of the power of Maya waves are generated in the sea of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. In Vedanta philosophy that state is called *saguna* Brahman. At that time there is an imbalance of the *gunas* in *maya* or *Prakriti* which consists of three *gunas* and then the process of creation starts. This *saguna* Brahman has been designed as 'Ardha-nariswara' or 'Hara-Gouri' in scriptures. Sree Ramakrishnadeva's knowledge of, and faith in this School of Vedanta philosophy were wonderful.

Theory of Creation

Brahman under the influence of His own Power of *maya* appears as *saguna* Isvara (qualified Godhead with attributes) who is the author or creation, preservation and dissolution. एकोऽहं, बहुस्याम्' "I am one, I shall be many"—as soon as

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[3] अव्यक्तनाम्नी परमेशशक्तिरणाद्यविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा ।
कार्यानुमेया सुधियैव मायया, यया जगत् सर्वमिदं प्रसूयते ॥
सन्नाप्यसन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो, भिन्नाप्यभिन्नाप्युभयात्मिका नो ।
साङ्गापनङ्गा हुमयात्मिका नो, महाद्भुताऽनिर्वचनीयरुपा ॥
—विवेकचूड़ामणि १०८—१०९

this resolution arises in *saguna* Brahman, His power is manifested and the universe with living and non-living things is evolved. The *saguna* Brahman with His power of *maya* produces this universe out of His own *maya* or Prakriti (nature) and enters into that : 'तंसृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राबिशत्।' The phenomenal world is only a mutation of *maya*. Prakriti is mutable but Brahman is immutable.

Two Powers of Maya

Maya has two powers, to cover and to delude. The covering power veils *nirguna* Brahman whose true nature is limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, and the deluding power makes the one non-dual entity appear as diverse. This idea has been expressed by a Sadhaka (seeker) in his song :

"Thou are the one Prakriti who veils Brahman, and as the great *maya* thou deludest the three worlds."

Thou art the cause of creation, preservation and destruction", etc.[4] Although the three attributes of *maya* are unmanifested in *nirguna* Brahman yet the one limitless entity appears as limited. Therefore, Sree Ramakrishnadeva used to say, "The knowledge that Reality is one is true knowledge, knowledge of diversity is ignorance and so it is an illusion, it is false. He used to call this knowledge of oneness" (knowledge of non-duality) and moreover he used to say, "Tie up *advaitajnana* at the end of your skirt and do whatever you like. That is to say if after having attained *advaitajnana*, one goes about all worldly activities then that knowledge (which is called *Brahmajnana* or knowledge of the Absolute destroys the ignorance produced by *avidya* and the bondage thereof and he attains emancipation (*mukti*). The sense of 'I' and 'mine' is ignorance. Shree Thakur used to say, "When will emancipation come?—When 'I' will go." 'All trouble will be over when 'I' will die." In the *Shastra* it is

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[4] तमेका प्रकृति ब्रह्म-आच्छादिनी
महामायारूपे, त्रिजगतमनोमोहिनी
सृजन-पालन-निधनकारिणी।

written 'भ्रान्ति बद्धो भावजीवः भ्रान्तिमुक्तः सदाशिवः' i.e. one who is bound in ignorance is a *jiva* (individual being) and one who is free from ignorance is *Sadasiva* (cosmic being). Just as the illusion of a snake is imposed on a rope so the illusion of the world is imposed on Brahman. When *Brahmajnana* is attained, *maya* which has the power to cause strange delusion, is dispelled just as when a rope is recognized as a rope the illusion of snake is dispelled.

Even though Brahman is devoid of attributes and is not limited by space, time and causation, yet under the influence of *maya*, it appears as if it were limited as the *saguna* Isvara who dominates over *maya*, or as individual being or as the world. With *maya* under His control the *saguna* Isvara in His turn is displaying a magic show: 'इन्द्रो मायाभिः पुरुरूप ईयते' (*Brihadaranyka Upanishad*, 2.5.19). That is to say by dint of the power of *maya* the *Paramaesvara* (*saguna*-Isvara) assumed the form of every thing. In order to manifest His own form He manifested all forms. He appears in many forms through the false sense of individuality caused by name and form. When He is subject to *maya* He is *jiva*, when He is in control of *maya* He is Isvara (God). When the *jiva* who is in bondage attains knowledge of his true nature—the effect of ignorance is dispelled and know himself to be identical with limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss he attains fulfilment and spiritual emancipation (*moksha*).

'ब्रह्मबिद्ब्रह्मैव भवति' i.e., the knower of Brahman becomes Brahman, and to become Brahman is the same as to know Brahman. Sree Ramakrishnadeva used to say "Brahman cries in distress being ensnared in five elements". Even though Nyangta Totapuri was a man who had attained *Brahmajnana* yet when he was attacked with blood dysentery, he went to drown himself in the Ganges restless with pain. How infinite is the power of *maya*!

Jiva and Brahman

In reality, man or an individual being (*jiva*) is not different from Brahman. It is only due to ignorance that he regards himself as one having a body of five elements and thinks

that he is separate from his true self and so he suffers by undergoing birth, death, disease, grief, pain and sorrow. But the moment he realises that he is the eternal soul free from sorrow, he is restored to his Self of Bliss.

The Power of Maya

Paramahansadeva would often sing songs of Ramprasad in sweet voice. One day he sang :

The delusive power of *Mahamaya* is
so inexorable and She has cast such a charm
That even Brahma and Vishnu have been enchanted ;
how can individual beings know the reality ?[1]

That is to say even Brahma, Vishnu and Siva are deluded by *maya*. What to speak of individual beings ?

One day someone asked Shree Ramakrishnadeva, "Sir, what is *Brahmajnana* ?" Paramahansadeva said in reply, "It is not possible to express through speech what *Brahmajnana* is. It is like the dream of a mute person. All knowledge inculcated in Shastras has been defiled by the tongue, *Brahmajnana* is never defiled." At that time I was present there. These words reminded me of a couplet (*sloka*) of *Jnanasankalani-Tantra*. The couplet is :

उच्छिष्टं सर्वशास्त्राणि सर्वविद्या मुखे मुखे ।
नोच्छिष्टं ब्रह्मनो ज्ञानं अव्यक्त चेतना मयम् ॥

None can express in words what Brahman is. So, the Brahman is never defiled by the tongue. Whatever is uttered is defiled by the tongue. It is said in the *Upanishad* 'यतो बाचो निवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह', that is to sal, the Bliss (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss) which words and mind cannot reach and having failed to reach return in discomfiture that is Brahman.

Of course in the Vedas and in the *Puranas* as much has been said about the Brahman as can possibly be expressed. In *samadhi*, Brahman is directly apprehended that is to say

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[1] एम्नि महामायार माया रेखेछे कि कुहक करे ।
ब्रह्मा बिष्णु अचैतन्य, जीवे कि ना जान्ते पारे ॥

knower and knowledge are merged into one. All judgement then ceases, speech and mind become motionless. If a doll of salt goes to fathom the depth of a sea it gets dissolved, likewise with realization of the Absolute Brahman all vital process in man stops. He is then unable to determine the real nature of the Absolute with the help of speech and mind. Again a man cannot remain long in the state of *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (Godconsciousness in which the ego is totally effaced). He descends from that high level to the world of senses for guiding others. This is called the *Brahmajnana*. Paramahansadeva used to say that a Sadhaka can remain in that high state of *samadhi* for twenty-one days. Thereafter his body perishes.

The Nyangta Totapuri's teaching to Shri Shri Thakur in regard to remaining merged in (the true nature of) Brahman was this : Merge your mind in *buddhi* and merge *buddhi* in the *Atman*, then you will remain merged in your true self. The *Geeta* and the *Upanishad* enjoin that the purpose of the Jnani is to know the *Atman* which is his true Self. In fact, the individual self *jiva* and the supreme Brahman are one, but the true nature of self cannot be known on account of the veil of *maya*. When the veil of *maya* is removed, the sun of the Brahman becomes manifest of itself.

Both Avidya and Vidya are within the ambit of Maya

Avidya keeps man under the charm of the world. Attachment to women and gold arises from *avidya* and as a result man gets into worldly bondage. From the power of *vidya* come discrimination, renunciation, detachment from women and gold, faith, devotion, knowledge, love, etc., which lead to God and spiritual emancipation (*mukti*). If the power of *vidya* is worshipped and propitiated then *avidya* is dispelled. That is why rituals for worship of power are prescribed in the *Tantras*. Rituals are prescribed for worshipping power in many ways. God can be attained if spiritual practices are performed by adopting the mood of a servant or of a *veera* (one who bravely confronts his senses) or of a son, etc. Paramahansadeva would say, "I did *sadhana* for two years in

the mood of a maid servant and of an intimate friend. I never performed worship in the mood of a *veera*, for my mood is that of a child. I regard a woman's breast as mother's breast. The worship of Sakti (power) is an exacting spiritual practice. It cannot be performed through short-cuts. Self-control is needed for worship of Sakti. The purpose of worshipping Sakti to be in communion with Sakti and Siva."

"Gouri Pandit said that true knowledge leads to realization of the identity of Kali and Gauranga. The One who is Brahman is also Divine Energy (Kali) and the same One is Sree Gauranga in a new form".....

Sree Ramakrishna used to say, "The Divine Incarnation primordial Energy. It is the Energy that incarnates. Whatever is done by the Avatara is manifestation of the power of the Divine Mother. God is the juggler and all the world with individual beings are these tricks. But it is the juggler that is true, his tricks are like dreams. So, the tricks are neither true nor permanent. One who has realized God can see the totality of God (the juggler) individual beings, world, *maya* and all. All these are His tricks. These are both existent and non-existent. All these exist so long as the ego exists. When discrimination is applied nothing stands except the Brahman alone. Even the ego becomes the trick of the juggler. So long as there is the slightest trace of ego it is within the domain of *maya* and the play of *maya* continues. The Brahman is beyond the play of *maya*.

After the end of the iron age (*Kali-yuga*), the *Kalki-avatara* will arise. A Brahmin's son, innocent of everything, will appear on horse back, sword in hand. Paramahansadeva used to sing,

When I was in mothers womb I was in the state of Yoga.
On my birth I touched earth
The midwife cut my umbilical cord
How can I cut the bonds of *maya*?

Hathayogi and Rajayogi

Hathayogis practise some physical exercises only. Their object is to acquire some *siddhai* (psychic powers) such as

eight *siddhis* life long life, etc. But God cannot be attained if even one of the *siddhais* or psychic powers is manifested. Power can be gained with *siddhais* but the source of power cannot be attained. The object of the Raja Yoga is to attain devotion, love, knowledge, renunciation. So Raja Yoga is better than Hatha Yoga. The six *chakras* (plexii) of Raja Yoga correspond to the seven planes of Vedanta. The first three *chakras* are *muladhar, swadhisthan* and *manipur*. While in these three *chakras* the mind rests at the anna, gentials and umbilious. These are the first three planes of Vedanta. When the mind at the fourth plane, viz., the Anahata-padma, the seeker has vision of light. When the mind ascends to the fifth plane, viz., *visuddha-chakra* the seeker likes to talk about God. The sixth plane is *ajna-chakra*. When the mind is however, still beyond reach just as the flame within a lamp cannot be reached because it is separated by a chimney. The seventh plane is attained after the six *chakras* have been passed through. There the mind dissolves and the individual soul and the cosmic soul merge into one in *samadhi*. All sense of separateness then disappears and knowledge of diversity is dispelled. If discrimination is done by saying, "Not this, not this", then the substance of pure knowledge is realized.. Shree Ramakrishna used to teach us all these things.

The Vedantic View of Shree Ramakrishna

Shree Ramakrishnadeva used to say, "Brahman and Sakti are not separate from each other. The world seems to be unreal without power (Sakti). Myself, yourself, house, home, family—all such concepts appear to be unreal then. So, the world stands because the primordial Energy exists. She has become the individual being, the world and the twenty-four *tattvas*, so how can you leave out the individual being and the world ? If you do so then the total content will be reduced to that extent. If from a *bel* fruit you leave out the seeds, the karnel and the husk then you will not get the full weight of the *bel*."

Truthfulness is the highest form of spiritual practice in Kali Yoga. Devotion ripens into *bhava* and *bhava* (ecstasy)

ripens into *mahabhava* (God-intoxication). The next stage is divine love and then realization of God. Shri Gauranga attained this kind of God-intoxication and divine love. When divine love arises the world is forgotten and the seeker becomes unconscious even of the physical body which is so dear. Shri Gauranga had such divine love. That is why he jumped into the sea taking it to be the river Yumuna.

The individual being does not get *mahabhava* (God-intoxication). The utmost that he may get is *bhava* (ecstasy). Shri Gauranga used to get into the states of ecstasy, semi-consciousness and consciousness. In the state of ecstasy he would remain merged in Godconsciousness, in the state of semi-consciousness he would dance and in the state of consciousness he would sing *nama-sankirtana* (the glory of God's name).

Maya

It is woman and gold that constitute *maya.* Do you know what Yoga is? The cosmic soul is like a magnet and the individual soul is like a needle. Yogi is the union caused by attraction of the needle by the magnet. If, however, there is a coating of mud on the needle it is not attracted by the magnet. It is attracted only if the coating of mud is removed. Attachment towards lust and gold is like the coating of mud. If this coating is cleared then Yoga is automatically attained. If tears are shed in earnest longing then the mud of worldliness is washed away by the water of renunciation. If one can shed tears for God then he can realize God and enter into the state of Godconsciousness. If tears are shed in earnest longing for God then the breath is automatically regulated in the form of *kumbhaka.* That is followed by God-consciousness. Do you know what happens in meditation? The body is like a vessel and mind and intellect are like water contained in it in which the sun of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is reflected. It is the reflection of the true sun. Through His grace a direct vision of the true sun is obtained by meditation.

One day someone asked Paramahansadeva, "Is the world unreal?" Paramahansadeva said, "Why unreal? It is a mode

of discrimination. At first when discrimination is done by saying 'not this, not this' the seeker has to ratiocinate that the reality is neither the individual being, nor the world nor the twenty-four *tattvas* (categories) and so to him all these become as unreal as dreams. Thereafter the process of deductive reasoning starts. It then appears that He has manifested Himself as the individual being, the world and all. So long as the ego exists the individual being and the world all exist. When God-vision is attained or Brahman is realized everything seems to be infilled with Divine presence. When I went to the sanctuary of the Kali-temple, I found that the image, the altar, the *koshakushi,* the door frame, the marble stone all were infilled with the Divine presence. In that state even the cat seems to be charged with the Divine presence and one realizes that the Mother has assumed all diverse forms.

"According to Vedanta the whole world is unreal and is like a dream. But according to the *Puranas* or devotional lore God has become the twenty-four *tattvas* and all and so He is to be worshipped both internally and externally."

One day after dusk Paramahansadeva was talking to the Mother. He was telling Her, "Mother, I do not want knowledge of the Absolute! Do not make me unconscious by giving me the knowledge of the Absolute. I do not understand Vedanta nor do I like to understand it. Mother, if I get you then Veda, Vedanta, etc., remain far below. A thousand salutes to the knowledge of the Absolute, you may vouchsafe it on others as you please. I am your son, I want my Mother. Mother is all joy (Anandamayee)."

Those who are of the *nityasiddha* rank (who are predisposed to detachment from worldly things) do not get entangled in the world because their earthly desires are extinguished from birth. According to Vedanta one should know oneself but no progress is possible unless the ego is given up."

One day I asked Paramahansadeva, "What the difference was between *jiva* and Brahman. He said. "If you hold a stick across the surface of a flowing river it will look as though the water were divided into two sections but the water beneath remains the same. In the same way the stick of the ego produces the impression as if *jiva* and Brahman were

different; but, in reality, there is no difference. When knowledge of Brahman is attained all differences go."

The ego is like a stick. The stick has, as it were, divided water and consequently you and I appear as different entities. We think "I am so and so, I am learned, etc." So the ego is to be given up. Of course, there is no harm in having the ego which is purified by *vidya* (God-vision). Sankaracharyya retained such ego for teaching mankind.

Signs of a Sannyasin (*Mendicant*)

Sree Ramakrishna used to say,

"However great a devotee, a Sannyasin may be,
However strong may be his control over the senses,
He should not sit and talk with a woman."
However cautious one may be in a soot chamber
One cannot get out of it without some stain;
However careful one may be in the company of a young women.
Some sensual desire is bound to arise[1]."

After knowledge of the Brahman is attained discrimination regarding food no longer remains. Even ham is then considered to be sacred. Discrimination of food is necessary for those who are at a lower stage of spiritual development. Those who are spiritually advanced are mindful of the end rather than of the means. Discrimination of food is a means, but the end is realization of God.

Teachings on Yoga

One day Shree Ramakrishnadeva was teaching Mahimacharan on Yoga. Paramahansadeva said, "On the whole Yoga is of two kinds, Karma Yoga (Yoga through work) and Mano

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[1] काजल कि घरमे येत्ता सेयान् होय
थोरा दाग लागे पर लागे।
युबतीके साथमे येत्ता सेयान् होय,
थोड़ा काम जागे पर जागे॥

Yoga (Yoga through conception of the mind). Karma Yoga is to be practised in the first three of the four stage of life *brahmacharya* (life of continence in early youth), *garhasthya* (family life), *banaprastha* (retirement into seclusion), *sannyasa* (renunciation). The Sannyasin practises Yoga with a *danda* (staff), a *kamandula* (a wooden waterpot) and a beggar's bowl as his only possessions. Those who are in family life purify their mind by selfless work and thus ultimately they attain knowledge of the Absolute."

"In the stage of true renunciation all rituals like worship, *japa*, *tarpana* (offerings to departed souls), etc., drop out. The only motives which remain are thinking of God and fixing the mind on Him along with a desire for the welfare of mankind. This happens in the case of the *Avataras* (Divine Incarnations)".

Mahimacharan quoted from the *Narada-Pancharatna* : "If Hari (God) pervades the inner and the outer worlds what is the necessity of spiritual practice? If Hari exists neither in the inner nor in the outer world, what is the use of spiritual practice?" Then I chanted, "She is the background on which this illusion is superposed and the world is conjured like a phantom, etc.", and I recited from *Nirvanashtka* : "Aum, I am not the mind nor the intellect nor the ego nor am I the chitta (the instrument of feeling, pleasure and pain), etc.". I then found that Mahimacharan was uttering "I am Siva", "I am Siva" and every time he said to Paramahansadeva was saying, "not I, not I, it is thou, it is thou, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss." That was an enjoyable scene. Its memory is still fresh in my heart.

The Noumenon and Phenomena

Paramahansadeva used to say, "The noumenon and phenomena are of the same stuff just as the terrace and the stairs leading to it are of the same material. The noumenon is Brahman who is the limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. He is both with attributes and without attributes. It is He who is the noumenon as well as phenomena. Phenomena consist of His sport as the Supreme Being, God, man, universe, etc.

In His sport as man He appears as Divine Incarnation. It is God who appears as man by way of divine sport and it is He who incarnates as *Avatara.* The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss has become individual beings of diverse forms and it is He who is at play in the form of man—this faith leads to integral knowledge. Do you know what the divine sport as man is like? It is like a pipe through which rain water drains out from the terrace with force. The power of the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss comes through a channel or a pipe."

Paramahansadeva used to say, "Continence is necessary for realization of God. Sukdev and others had full self-control. If full self-control or continence is maintained for twelve years then a nerve known as *mehānadi* grows in the system. One can then remember everything. He then acquires the power to attain all knowledge."

"If householders do not offer money to the monks, how can the latter subsist? All people come here to Paramahansadeva as nothing is to be offered to him."

Once a Tantrika asked, "Why is it that Tantrik rituals produce no results now-a-days? Ramakrishnadeva said in reply, "The rituals are not performed whole-heartedly and with devotion. That is why no result is produced."

God is formless and with form

Paramahansadeva used to say, "He who is formless assumes form. One should also know the forms of manifestation of God. The spiritual seeker gets vision of the form on which he concentrates his mind or meditates. The form thereafter merges into limitless Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. Then the form dissolves into formlessness."

Paramahansadeva used to tell those who were his companions for divine sport and his intimate devotees that he was a full Incarnation of the Divinity *(Purna-Avatara).* He would say, "God incarnates Himself in order to inculcate true knowledge and love to mankind. What do you think of me?" He himself replied, "My father had gone to Gaya. There Lord Gadadhar appeared to him in dream and said, 'I shall be born as your son'. In his dream my father said, "Lord I

am a poor Brahmin, how can I serve you ? Lord Gadadhar said, 'There will be no difficulty'. You understand ?" We looked at him with wonder when we heard him. There was a smile on his face.

Harmony of all Religions

Paramahansadeva used to say, "People of different denominations have extolled their respective faiths. The Vaishnavas try to belittle the Shaktas and the Shaktas decry the Vaishnavas. The Vaishnavas say that it is impossible to cross the ocean of the world without being initiated with *Krishna-mantra* (name of the Lord Krishna which has saving powers). The Lord Krishna is the ferryman of the world-river. To this the Shaktas say, "That is true of course—but our Mother is the Sovereign above the king of kings. She has appointed Shri Krishna to operate the world ferry". But I find that it is all the same. The Existence-Knowledge-Bliss is the goal of all faiths. He who is formless is also with form and it is to Him that all the diversity of appearances appertain:

He who is without attributes is my father;
He who is with attributes is my mother;
Whom to praise and whom to decry
Both sides of the scale are evenly balanced.

He who is capable of harmonizing between different religious faiths is a true seeker. All the rest are monotonous. He who is called, "*Aum* Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss in Tantras and Aum Krishna, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss in *Puranas*. The Vaishnavas admit that Krishna assumed the appearance of Kali. In fact all these are different manifestations of the same Existence-Knowledge-Bliss. There are as many paths of realization as there are faiths. Many paths lead to God but the goal is one and the same.

Ramakrishna in the house of Balaram Babu in Baghbazar

Mahotsava ceremony was held in the house of Shri Suresh

Chandra Mitra on the 15th July, 1884. I was present on that occasion. Pratap Majumdar and other Brahmo devotees had also gone there.

3rd July, 1884, Rathajatra day. Paramahansadeva came to Balaram Mandir on the Rathajatra day. On having got information I went there and found Paramahansadeva, surrounded by his devotees, talking to Pandit Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni in the hall of the first floor. Balaram Babu's father, Dr. Pratap Majumdar, the homoeopathic physician, Ramchandra Datta, Mahendra Master and others were in the assembly listening to the discussion. I too sat on one side and heard the discussion of the two. Paramahansadeva said to Sasadhar Pandit, "The signs of Jnanin (one who has attained divine knowledge through the path of discrimination) are that he is of quiet temperament and he is modest. The Vijnanin (one who has realised divine presence in all objects of the world) behaves like a child or a mad man, or an idiot or a ghoul. Sasadhar Pandit remained silent as he heard this. He was a scholar, well-versed in scriptures. Paramahansadeva had not read scriptures but he had realized the ultimate truths described in the scriptures. On having observed and heard all this the Tarkachudamani was struck with wonder and he became speechless.

Three kinds of Devotion

Paramahamsadeva used to say, "Devotion is of three kinds—*sattvik*, *rajasik* and *tamasik*. The *sattvika* type of devotee performs spiritual practices in secret. He will perhaps do *japa* and meditation sitting inside the mosquito curtain so that others may not know. When devotion becomes purely *sattvik* God-vision is near at hand. In the *rajasika* type of devotion there is a tendency to be showy ; for instance worship is performed with sixteen items of offerings and external pomp. Therefore, Ramprasad said, "If worship is done with attractive display then vanity arises in the mind". There is chance of vanity arising in mind if worship is done with pomp. In the *tamasik* type of devotion there is aggressiveness—for example the cry of "Hail Mother", "Hara Hara Bom

Bom", etc., by Saktas and the Saivas. In the devotion of the Vaishnavas there is a spirit of meekness. They do *japa* in rosary and say with tears, "Oh Krishna have mercy on me. I am the lowest of the low and a sinner, save me". They do not have such burning faith as to think, 'I have taken God's name once, so all my sins have been destroyed'. The Jnanins say, "Where is the stain of sin in me?" So saying, Paramahansadeva began to sing in a sweet voice, made with divine love. Tears of divine love flowed from the eyes of Sasadhar Pandit and everybody sat there speechless and spell-bound. The wonderful scene of that day is still impressed in my heart.

CHAPTER XII

BEGINNING OF THROAT DISEASE (24th April, 1885)

Paramhamsadeva's days in the company of devotees thus passed through an intensified spell of joy. Suddenly one day I found on having gone to Dakshineswar that he had pain in his throat. Like a child he was showing his throat to everybody and he was trying to follow whatever advice was being given to him. He was fond of ice cream. It was very hot then in the month of *Baishakh*. One devotee had given him a potful of ice cream at Dakshineswar and he had taken plenty of that in order to quench his thirst. In consequence of this pain had started in his throat. The pain gradually increased. It would not subside by any means. He had difficulty to gulp, to speak and even to eat.

One day Golap-ma told Paramahamsadeva that Dr. Durgacharan of Calcutta was a reputed physician and that he could perhaps prescribe proper treatment, if consulted. Thereupon Paramhamsadeva resolved to go and consult that doctor. That night I was at Dakshineswar. Latu and Golap-ma were also at Dakshineswar that night. It was decided that in the following morning we would go to Kumartulighat in a boat. A boat was also hired. Later, Golap-ma and myself started for Calcutta with Paramahamsadeva. On landing from the boat he decided to go to the doctor's house in Beadon Square in a hackney carriage. He kindly made me sit by his side. Latu and Golap-ma took their seat on the opposite side (the account given in the 'Ramakrishna-Puthi' is erroneous). Paramahamsadeva did not sit with Golap-ma on the same bench nor did he make her drink water from the palm of his hand (as described in Ramakrishna Puthi). In Beadon Square he supported himself on my shoulders and walked around. I pointed out and explained to him the Franciscan emblems. His throat was examined by the doctor who gave a regular prescription in writing. Then we took a boat from Ahiritola Ghat and started on the journey back to Dakshineswar. It was about 1-30 p.m., none of us had any food. I found that

Paramahamsadeva too was very hungry. He asked the boatman to take the boat alongside Pramanikghat in Baranagore. The market was close to the ghat and he asked me to buy some food from a shop. Golap-ma had only one anna with her. With that money I at once bought *chhanar murki* in a leaf container and gave that to Paramahamsadeva. He ate the entire quantity of *chhanar murki* with great satisfaction and threw the leaf into the Ganges and having drunk water with the palm of his hand he belched. Now, we three were very hungry. Paramahamsadeva knew that. But he ate all the *channar murki* without having given us any share. It is strange, however, that as soon as Paramhansadeva belched all our hunger was sated. We looked silently at each other. Paramahamsadeva laughed on seeing this and cut jokes with us like a child till we reached Dakshineswar. The boat stopped at the ghat of the Kali temple of Dakshineswar and all of us disembarked there. We discussed among ourselves and wondered how our hunger had been sated and we understood that it was a miracle. That day we could directly apprehend the significance of the strange *leela* (divine sport) of Shree Krishna and the meaning of the saying, "The whole universe is satisfied when He is satisfied".

Mahotsava Ceremony at Panihati

Every year on the thirteenth day of the waxing moon in the month of Jaistha *mahotsava* ceremony is held at Panihati with *chira* (flattened rice). Paramahamsadeva used to attend the ceremony every year. That year he had pain in his throat but in spite of that he decided to go to the ceremony. A boat was hired. Latu, myself and a few other devotees accompanied him. Paramahamsadeva, Latu and myself were in one boat and the other devotees started in another boat. On arrival at the *Mahotsava* at Panihati, Paramhamsadeva got absorbed in *sankirtan* (devotional song) and started having fits of ecstasy frequently. Occoasionaly he was dancing in ecstasy. It was a wonderful sight. In the evening we all returned to Dakshineswar in boats. The pain in Paramhamsadeva's throat aggravated due to exposure during the journey.

2ND ASWIN, 1885 A.D.

From that date Paramahamsadeva lived in the house at Shyampukur for three months. Ramchandra Datta, Suresh Mitra and other lay devotees rented a house at 55, Shyampukur and brought him in a cab from Dakshineswar for treatment of his throat disease. Latu and I came in that car. At first before the house was rented Paramahamsadeva had stayed in Balaram Babu's house for about a week. Golap-ma, the devoted attendant of Paramahamsadeva, came to the house at Shyampukur in order to cook food for Paramahamsadeva and ourselves. After a few days Ram Babu and other devotees proposed to bring Sree Ma (the Holy Mother) there. On having heard that proposal Paramahamsadeva said, "What will people say? They will say that a great gander is living here with a great goose." The devotees, however, made a special request saying that there were lapses in nursing. If Sree Ma would come and take charge of nursing then he would feel no difficulty and the devotees too would be relieved of anxiety. At last he agreed. Shree Ma was brought from Dakshineswar to the house in Shyampukur. It was precisely then that I too left home for good and engaged myself in serving Paramahamsadeva. I would always attend on him. At that time Narendranath also used to be in constant attendance on Paramahamsadeva and so we would be addressed by others as "personal attache to His Holiness Shree Ramakrishna.

I used to go to Dr. Pratap Majumdar, Dr. Mahendra Sarkar and others every day and having given daily reports regarding his throat disease I would get medicines, etc. Dr. Mahendra Sarkar was so much attracted towards Paramahamsadeva that whenever he would come to see him he would stay for four or five hours, listen to his teachings and he would discuss and debate with Girish Chandra Ghosh, Narendranath and others about religion, doctrine of divine incarnation, etc. I would attentively listen to those discussions and debates. These points are also mentioned in "Shree Ramakrishna-Kathamrita".

One day Paramahamsadeva was sitting motionless like a wooden statue having lost his sense consciousness in the state of *samadhi.* Dr. Mahendra Sarkar felt his pulse and found no throbbing and with his stethoscope he got no heart sound.

The doctor was astonished to find that no response came even when his open eye-balls were touched with finger. After some time when Paramahamsadeva's state of *samadhi* passed he once more began to discuss spiritual topics with Dr. Sarkar. Narendranath would not accept the doctrine of divine incarnation in those days. Girish Chandra Ghosh was a believer in the doctrine of divine incarnation and so hot debates would take place between Narendranath and Girish Chandra. One day Paramahamsadeva said regarding Narendranath "Narendra's faith in the formlessness of Divinity is inborn. At first we would not accept the Gods and Goddesses with form. He would call Kali by uncomplimentary names. Being annoyed I one day said to him, "Blackguard, you should not come here any more". He then started preparing tobacco in the hubble bubble for me. He did not protest. Do you know that if a person who is intimate is rebuked he does not protest?" Paramahamsadeva implied that Narendranath was very intimate and dear to him. So, even when taken to task he would not protest or take that to heart. From this, one can understand how limitless was Paramhamsadeva's love for his disciples, devotees and dear children!

In the House at Shyampukur

A Christian of the quaker sect named Mr. Misra one day (31st October, 1885) came to see Paramahamsadeva in the house at Shyampukur. I remember that Mr. Misra was in European dress. He was a devout follower of Jesus Christ. He said that Jesus Christ was not the son of Mary, he was God incarnate. He then began to describe the supernatural power and glory of Jesus Christ. While listening to him Paramahamsadeva lost his sense-consciousness and stood up in ecstasy. It seemed as though Mr. Misra who was a devout quaker had a vision of his Lord Jesus Christ when he observed the calmness in the face of Paramahamsadeva and the pose of his hand. He began to pray. At last he addressed the devotees assembled there and said : "You do not recognise who he is. He and Jesus Christ are one. Jesus Christ used to be in such state of ecstasy as you have seen in his today. I have already seen Jesus Christ and Paramahamsadeva in vision. He is the present Jesus Christ." We marvelled to hear this.

One day Bejoykrishna Goswami unexpectedly came from Dacca to the house at Shyampukur to see Paramahamsadeva. I was then sitting by the side of Paramhamsadeva. Bejoykrishna Goswami said to Paramahamsadea, "There (at Dacca) I have seen you in flesh and blood. Did you go there?" Paramahmsadeva said with smile, "You saw me out of your devotion." So saying Paramahamsadeva went into ecstasy and placed his right foot on the chest of Bejoykrishna. Bejoykrishna then went into a state of ecstasy, flooded with tears, having the foot of Paramahamsadeva on his chest. We witnessed that sight in astonishment. We thought that this was really divine sport.

In the 'Sri Ramakrishna-Leela-prasanga', Vol. V, by Swami Saradananda at page 315 (Thakur's own view and Narendranath) it is written "Sri Ma would send messages downstairs from time to time through Swami Advaitananda (since

deceased) and Swami Advaitananda. In fact the old Swami Advaitananda used to come to the house at Shyampukur occasionally, but he was never in the position of an attandant of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Ma used to send messages to Sri Sri Thakur through Latu or through me. Sashi, Jogen, Sarat, Narendra, Rakhal, Baburam used to live in their respective houses. They would come occasionally to see Paramahamsadeva. Tarak-da (Sivananda) and Nityagopal also would occasionally come with them. Of course when the throat trouble aggravated Narendra would come daily and stay with Paramahamsadeva nursing and taking care of him.

One day after dusk Kalipada Ghosh (Kalidana) brought the actress Binodini dressed in suit in order to take the blessings of Paramahamsadeva and the dust of his feet. Benodini used to act in the role of Sree Chaitanya in 'Chaitanyaleela'. On having observed European dress we were taken aback and we informed Paramahamsadeva that a *Sahib* had come to see him. He then became alert and began to wrap cloth all over his body. Thereafter when he came to know that the person in European costume was no other than Benodini he began to laugh. We too were relieved. This kind of fun and pranks also used to take place in presence of Paramahamsadeva at times.

Paramahamsadeva's Stay at Shyampukur

So long as Paramahamsadeva was in the house at Shyampukur Sashi, Sarat, Jogen, Narendra, Rakhal, Baburam and Buro-Gopal used to come from their respective houses to nurse and attend on Paramahamsadeva. Of course Niranjan Ghosh (Niranjanananda) would come every day and he would remain with us as the Gate-keeper. Niranjan would not take any heed of his own body because his health was quite good. One day he brought a tin of pure ghee and hid that in a corner of the house at Shyampukur. Sri Sri Thakur with his spiritual insight understood the intentions of Niranjan and said to us. "Snatch away that tin of ghee. If he takes too much of ghee he will not be able to hold so much of energy. He will then turn to women, etc." We began to share that ghee with rice.

Paramahamsadeva expressed his happiness when he heard this. I have already mentioned that Golap-ma used to cook food for the devotees in the house at Shyampukur.

On the Day of Sandhi Puja

On the Mahastami day during *Saradiya-Puja* at the time of Sandhi-Puja after dusk Sri Sri Thakur suddenly stood up in ecstasy. Narendranath, Latu, Niranjan, myself and other devotees offered flowers at his feet with joy. Sri Sri Thakur remained in the state of Godconsciousness. Later when he regained sense-consciousness he said "I saw a path of light. That path extended from here up to the temple house of Surendra (Suresh Chandra Mitra). I saw Surendra on one side of the image of Mother Durga, he was crying, "We stood silently in astonishment to hear this.

That night myself and other devotees had an invitation in Suresh Babu's house. When we went there we heard from Suresh Babu himself that having been deeply hurt by the rebuke of his elder brother, he had been expressing his wounded feelings to the Goddess Durga when all on a sudden he had seen Paramahamsadeva standing on one side of the image and blessing him. This strange vision had brought solace to his heart. When we heard this from Suresh Babu we marvelled to observe the truth of what Sri Sri Thakur had told us in his state of ecstasy. His having appeared before Bejoykrishna Goswami at Dacca and the incident at the time of *Sandhi-Puja* made us think that these two instances proved that Shri Ramakrishna could project his double and appear at a distance. This is one of the powers of Yoga. Of course Sri Sri Thakur would not indulge in manifestation of yogic powers.

Kali Puja at Shyampukur

Devendra and other devotees had a wish to do *puja* (worship) by getting an image of the Goddess Kali. On the previous day Sri Ramakrishnadeva had said in course of his

talks with the devotees "Mother Kali should be worshipped tomorrow. Make simple arrangement with requisite ingredients for *puja*." The devotees then began to think of getting an image for *puja*. Arranging a *puja* was, however, not a simple affair. Moreover Sri Sri Thakur was ill and the excitement of the devotees might cause him further exhaustion. So thinking the devotees collected the material for *puja* with five ingredients, viz., scent, flower, incense, oil lamp and *naibedya* (offering of fruits and sweets) and put these in front of Sri Sri Thakur. After dusk Sri Sri Thakur was sitting still on his bed. The devotees were wondering how Kali Puja would be performed and they were awaiting instructions from Sri Sri Thakur. At that time Sri Sri Thakur asked for incense. In the meantime he offered flowers and the ingredients of *puja* to the Divine Mother within himself and he asked th dvotees who had assembled there to meditate. When the devotees were meditating on the image of Paramahamsadeva instead of the Mother Kali he went into the state of Godconsciousness with his face turned to the north and his hands in the posture of giving boon and fearlessness. There was a strange effulgence in his face at that time. Suddenly Girish Chandra Ghosh the great devotee who was sitting on one side cried out "The Mother Kali is present before us in living form. Come, let us worship Him. Worshipping Him will amount to worshipping Mother Kali." Having said so he took garland flower and sandalwood paste and offered those at the lotus like feet of Sri Sri Thakur saying 'glory to the Mother'. Sri Sri Thakur accepted the offerings of Girish Chandra in a state of ecstasy. Niranjan, myself and other lay devotees also offered flowers at the feet of Sri Sri Thakur, saying 'Jai Ma' (Glory be to the Mother). Sri Sri Thakur then made *prasad* of the sweets (by taking a little of them) which were distributed to the devotees. Everyone was glad to get *prasad*. Girish Chandra and other devotees then chanted prayer to the Mother of the universe in chorus. That incident is still fresh in my memory. We shall never be able to forget that wonderful sight in our life.

Throat Disease of Sri Sri Thakur

It may be asked why Sri Sri Thakur had throat disease. It

is really difficult to answer this question. While staying in the house at Shyampukur Sri Sri Thakur said, "The Mother has taught me that I have to take the sins of those, who, after having done sinful acts, are purified by touching my feet and in consequence of that I have to suffer this throat disease." This is called vicarious atonement which Jesus Christ suffered in his life. One day Narendranath also said, "All this will appear like a dream in our lives, only its memory will remain with us." The words of Narendranath are still ringing in my ears.

From Shyampukur to the Cossipore Garden House

When the throat disease instead of abating under the treatment of Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar at Shyampukur went on aggravating the doctors advised Sri Sri Thakur to change the place. After considerable search the devotees rented the big garden house of Gopal Chandra Ghosh at Cossipur on a monthly rent of Rs. 80 for Sri Sri Thakur. Surendra (Suresh Chandra Mitra) the devotee undertook the entire responsibility for the rent of that house and took lease of the house for nine months (for six months first and three months afterwards). On 27th Agrahayan (11-12-85) which was an auspicious day Sri Sri Thakur was shifted to Cossipore from Shyampukur. As his attendants Sri Sri Ma, Golap-ma and we came with him to Cossipore Garden House. One day Sri Sri Thakur told me and the disciples present there, "This sore in my throat is merely a subterfuge. It is ecause of this that you have gathered together."

CHAPTER XIV

LIFE AT COSSIPORE

At first two or three of us used to nurse and look after Sri Sri Thakur, Sri Ma used to cook the diet of Sri Sri Thakur. Golap-ma and Lakshmi-didi used to assist her. Golap-ma used to cook food for the attendants. Gradually the number of attendants increased and then a Brahmin cook and also a maid-servant were appointed.

Having spent sometime in Cossipore Garden House after the change from the stuffy atmosphere of Calcutta, Sri Sri Thakur's throat troubles abated to some extent. The rotunda on the first floor of the house was made the bed room for Sri Sri Thakur. On the south of that was the open terrace over the portico He would stand there and observe the trees and creeper of the gardens. The free air of the place proved to be beneficial for his health. This raised a hope in the minds of the devotees that he might completely recover.

One day, thinking that he was all right, Sri Sri Thakur came downstairs and walked about the garden. The devotees were glad to see him walking like that and they thought that if he could take a walk like that everyday he would come round soon. Due to exposure, however, his pain in the throat aggravated on the following day and he became very weak. The physicians prescribed nutritious diet for him and advised that he would be given soup of tender mutton in order that he might regain strength. On having heard their advice Sri Thakur said to his attendants, "Look, you should not buy mutton from a butcher's shop where there is no image of butchers' *Kali*. Buy mutton from a shop where there is image of butchers' *Kali*." The devotees according to his instruction, would deliver mutton to Sri Ma who should boil the same for a few hours and strain out the soup for Sri Sri Thakur.

The attendants shared among themselves all work, e.g., cleaning the house, cleansing the utensils, marketing, etc., by turns. So, gradually services of a larger number of attendants

became necessary for nursing and taking care of Sri Sri Thakur. Then the intimate disciples Narendranath, Rakhal, Jogen, Sarat, Sashi, Burogopal, Baburam, Hutkogopal and others came and began to assist Latu and myself. By and by they came to stay in the garden house at Cossipore.

At that time Tarak-da used to live in the house of the devotee Ram Dutta. Nrityagopal would occasionally come to the garden house at Cossipore to see Sri Sri Thakur. Tarak-da also would come with him. One day having found Tarak-da alone Sri Sri Thakur said to him "why do you go about with Nrityagopal? He is not of this circle. You should stay here with the boys." At this Tarak-da was a bit embarrassed as he was not prepared to leave his home suddenly and come over to stay in the garden house at Cossipore. Subsequently one day Narendranath having come to know of the instructions and desire of Sri Sri Thakur said to Tarak-da forcefully when he found him alone, "Why hesitate further? Come here and fulfil the purpose of life by serving Sri Sri Thakur." (As Tarak-da was elderly we used to address him as dada or elder brother). Tarak-da could not ignore the request of Narendranath. His mental attitude changed. Gradually he severed connection with Nrityagopal and began to live in Cossipore with us as an attendant of Sri Sri Thakur. At first Tarak-da could not mix freely with others and so he would often remain silent and withdrawn within himself.

As desired by Sri Sri Thakur Narendranath took the lead and divided among the young attendants the work of serving Sri Sri Thakur according to which everyone of them nursed and attended on Sri Sri Thakur by turns day and night. Each of the twelve attendants was to watch Sri Sri Thakur for two hours. I used to attend on Sri Sri Thakur for two hours in the day and two hours in the night. At mid-day I would rub oil on Sri Sri Thakur's body and seating him on a low stool in the terrace I would bathe him. At the time of bath and thereafter he would tell me many things and explain to me deep spiritual truths. One day he etched on the sand of the wall a beautiful picture of a sitting bird with a small stick. I was astonished to see that the bird looked lively. Sri Sri Thakur said "in my boyhood I would draw pictures much to the surprise of painters." While attending on Sri Sri Thakur

I would watch him till late hours at night every day. Narendranath and others used to attend on him regularly in the same way for two hours by turns. This went on for sometime. On the other side a large number of devotees started coming. The doctors had forbidden him to speak, but he would not listen. He would not refrain from giving spiritual guidance for the benefit of all.

On the 1st January, 1866, Sri Sri Thakur became a fulfiller of wishes like the mythical wish fulfilling tree..
As it was a holiday for all offices Girish Ghosh and other lay disciples came in the afternoon to the Cossipore Garden house. That day Sri Sri Thakur felt better and without having asked the young attendants came downstairs alone and began to walk in the garden. The lay devotees bowed reverently to him and took the dust of his feet. Sri Sri Thakur lost his sense-consciousness and stood in ecstasy. Afterwards on having regained sense-consciousness he blessed all of them and said, "Be illumined; be illumined." He opened the spiritual eye of some by touching and fulfilled the prayers of everyone saying, "You will have that."

Brother Bhupati prayed for Godconsciousness. Sri Sri Thakur graciously said to him, "You will attain Godconsciousness." Upendranath Mukhopadhyaya (of Basumati Sahitya Mandir) who was very poor and greatly distressed due to pecuniary want prayed for money. Sri Thakur graciously said, "You will have money." To Ramlal-dada, Baikuntha Sanyal and other lay devotees he said mercifully, "Your prayer will be fulfilled!" Girish Chandra called Ramchandra and other devotees saying. "Come all who are about Sri Sri Thakur has become a *Kalpataru* (wish fulfilling tree) and is giving boons to all." The young attendants were then busy in the room of Sri Sri Thakur and so they were not in the garden downstairs. Afterwards Sri Sri Thakur said to Ramlal-da, "There is a burning sensation all over my body as a result of my having taken over the sins of all these devotees. Bring some Ganges water to smear on my body." When Ramlaldada brought Ganges water he took it and sprinkled it over his body. That relieved him of the burning sensation. After this incident the pain in his throat again began to increase. The doctors then prescribed snail soup. As Sri Ma was hesitating to cook snail soup Sri Sri

Thakur said, "I shall take it, you will cook it for me, there will be no harm in doing so. The boys will collect snails (Gugli) from the tank and prepare them for cooking, you will then cook." That was how it was done. Since that day I would collect snails from the side of the tank and havin decrusted and cleaned them I would give them to Sri Ma. Sri Ma would prepare soup by boiling them and serve that to Sri Sri Thakur alone with rice paste. At that time he could not swallow anything but liquid food. At night he would take a little boiled suji or vermicalli with milk. Sometime passed in this way. The merciful Sri Sri Thakur appeared to teach and impart spiritual inspirations to his attendants and devotees throughout the day and night as before.

Narendranath in Cossipore

1886 A.D. That year Narendranath was preparing for the B.L. Examination. For that reason he was living at Calcutta and he would occasionally come to Cossipore. Now, having found that the disease of Sri Sri Thakur was gradually aggravating the desire to attend on Sri Sri Thakur also grew strong in him. Narendranath then made up his mind to bring his law books to the Cossipore Garden house so that he might attend on Sri Sri Thakur and also read law books regularly. The intention of passing the law examination was still firm in his mind. On some days it so happened that having been busy in reading law books he could not go upstairs to see Sri Sri Thakur. On one such day at dusk Narendranath went upstairs to see Sri Sri Thakur. After having prostrated when he sat down Sri Sri Thakur asked him affectionately, "What happened to you, why did you not come to me?" Narendranath said, "Sir I have been preparing for the law examination, I was busy in reading books and so I did not find time to come upstairs." At this Sri Sri Thakur said, "Look, if you become a lawyer I shall not be able to take water from your hand." Narendranath was much perplexed to hear this. I was present at that time. I found him motionless and thinking deeply of something. The question that arose in his mind was 'should I do any thing on account of which Sri Sri Thakur will not be able to take water

out of my hand? That can never be. Absorbed. in thought and with gravity on his face he came downstairs to the small room adjoining the hall, shut the law books and said to us, "Perhaps I shall not appear at the law examination." We were surprised to hear this. This, however, came true. Gradually Narendranath's intention to appear at the law examination completely disappeared from his mind. He tried to remain merged in Japa, meditation and spiritual practice during the spare time after attending on Sri Sri Thakur. The twelve attendants attended on Sri Sri Thakur by turns throughout the day and night and whenever there would be leisure they would mutually discuss scriptures, do *japa,* meditation, discrimination and sing devotional songs and thus they began to spend their days in great joy.

One night Narendranath was in great anxiety as the condition of Sri Sri Thakur was not improving. Walking with us (Sarat, Niranjan and others were present) in the garden he said, "The disease of Sri Sri Thakur is so serious that it is difficult to understand what his intentions are. Perhaps he has resolved to give up his body. Come, let us nurse and serve him with our heart and soul and simultaneously engage ourselves in Japa, meditation and spiritual practices." After having walked for sometime Narendranath along with all of us sat under a tree of the garden. It was quite cold on that night of the month of Pous. All of us felt cold. Finding a heap of dry twigs in front Narendranath set fire to it and said "Sadhus light fire (Dhuni) in order to keep off cold. Let us also light fire and meditate here." We collected twigs from the surroundings and put them into the fire saying, "*Agnaye Suaha*" (we offer these oblations to fire) and in our mind we thought that we were offering our passions to the fire of Truth (Brahman). Merged in these contemplations we meditated and the night passed in enjoyment of pure delight. Since then every night we would light fire after having finished our respective duties as before and we would meditate, discriminate in the Vedantic way, chant Gita and discuss scriptures by the side of the fire. We would recite 'Sankaracharya's', 'Mohamudgar', and 'Nirvanastaka' and meditate on their significance. It was thenceforth Sarat (Saradananda) and myself became specially attracted to Narendranath and we would be with him

like his shadow. Narendranath gave Sarat and myself the nickname "Bhulua" and "Kelua". Ashtavakra-samhita" and "Yogavashishta" would be read out sometimes and sometimes "Gopi-Gita' would be recited. Narendranath would keep up spell bound by singing in his sweet voice Ramprosad's songs, Brahma Sangeet and the songs which Sri Sri Thakur used to sing.. Sometimes we would dance in rapture, singing "Hail Radha' (*Jai Radha*).

With Narendranath

Narendranath was older than myself by about four years henceforward I used to love Narendranath as my elder brother. Narendranath also used to love me as his younger brother. Moreover, I not only loved him but also did all work in obedience to his instructions. In short I would always be with Narendranath like his shadow and I would do unquestioningly what he would do. Whatever Narendranath would ask me to do I would do at once without any hesitation.

Narendranath and myself would discriminate saying 'not this, not this fololwing the path of realization through knowledge and we were ardent advocates of the non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy. Narendranath was well versed in Western philosophy and logic, science and other branches of knowledge. Through discussions with him my thirst for knowledge further increased day by day. Moreover, in these respects I would imitate Narendranath to such an extent that when Narendranath would sit to meditate, I would also do likewise. I would recite 'Mohamudgar', 'Kaupina-panchaka', 'Vivekachudamani', 'Ashtavakra-samhita'. etc., in the same way and in the same time as Narendranath would do. We two were very intimate with each other and that intimacy remained in tact all through.

Breaking of Prejudices

One day while discussing about realisation of the self or

Brahman, Narendranath put forth before us strong arguments against the prejudices of the Hindus regarding food. Sarat, Jogen, Tarak-da and myself entered into discussion with him on this subject. Narendranath said, "After realization of Brahman food can be taken from anyone's hand. Then one does not hate anyone. So long as prejudices persist Brahman is not fully realised." None of us had taken food cooked by any Muslim up till then. But Narendranath, like Brahmos, would not accept caste distinction, his views also were liberal and so he had taken food cooked by all and sundry. That day Narendranath said to us, "Come, let me break your prejudices today." I at once agreed to Narendranath's proposal. Sarat and Niranjan dittoed me. At dask Narendranath took us from Cossipore to Piru's Restaurant in Beadon Street (where the Minerva Theatre is now located). Narendranath ordered fowl curry and we silently waited on the bench. When fowl curry was brought we took a little with the idea that we were breaking prejudices and getting rid of hatred. Narendranath consumed almost the whole of it with great delight. We were satisfied with the little that we took and we watched Narendranath's activity and when he finished his meal we returned to Cossipore Garden in high spirit.

It was then about 10 p.m. On return I immediately went to Sri Sri Thakur to attend on him. I found him anxious as he had not seen any of us in Cossipore Garden for a long time. When he saw me he eagerly enquired, "Hallo, where did you all go?"

"To Piru's restaurant in Beadon Street",, I said.

"Who were with you?"

I named all. He again asked with a smile, "What did you eat there?"

I said, "F—curry."

He said, "How did you relish?"

"Sarat and I did not like it very much. So, we took a little just to break our prejudice," I said. Sri Sri Thakur laughed aloud and said, "Well done, it is good that you are rid of all prejudice." I was relieved to hear his heartening words.

Angling in Cossipore Garden

There were two tanks in Cossipore Garden house. Both were well-stocked with fish. One day Narendranath said pointing to one of the tanks, "Come, let us catch fish from this tank with fishing rod." At his words I got ready, for, while at home, I had learnt angling. Niranjan also was with us. We three went to catch fish with fishing rods. Narendranath and Niranjan did not have much previous experience of angling. So, by the time they caught one fish I could catch four or five. Gradually Sri Sri Thakur came to know of my skill in angling. One evening when I went to attend on him he asked me, "Is it a fact that you have been catching many fish with fishing rod?"

I said, Yes, Sir."

Sri Sri Thakur, "It is a sin to catch fish with fishing rod, for thereby living beings are killed.

I said, "But in the Geeta it has been said :

य एनं बेत्ति हस्तारं यश्चैनं मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न बिजणीतो नायं हन्ती न हन्यते ॥

He who thinks that the Self (Atman) is the slayer as well as he who thinks that the Self is slain is ignorant, for, the Self neither slays nor is slain. So why should it be a sin to catch fish?"

Sri Sri Thakur smiled and tried to make me understand this with various arguments. He said, "When true knowledge is attained not a single step falls out of rhythm." At that time he had a sudden fit of coughing. There was a trace of blood in his sputum. I was frightened and said, "Sir, your throat disease will aggravate if you talk too long. Please do not talk any more." Sri Sri Thakur who was an ocean of spontaneous mercy said, "You are one of the most intelligent among the boys. You will understand if you meditate on what I have said."

I then took leave from his presence and according to his instructions I began to meditate day and night. Having meditated continually for three days I realised the justification of his advice. I went to him and said, "I have now realised why it is wrong to catch fish. I shall not do this kind of thing again. Kindly excuse me." Sri Sri Thakur

was very pleased to hear this. He said, "Treachery is done in catching fish. To hide the hook inside the bait and to hide poison in the food offered to an invited guest are sins of the same kind." I accepted his teaching bowing my head and considered myself fortunate for his infinite Grace on me. Having observed my attitude he further said, "It is true that the Atman does not die nor is it killed, but he who has realised this truth is the Atman himself. So, why should he have the tendency to kill others? So long as the tendency to kill remains he is not identified with the Atman nor does he have Self-knowledge. That is why I say that when one attains true knowledge he does not take any step out of rhythm. You should realize that the Atman is beyond the body, the sense organs, the mind and the intellect and it is the witness of phenomena." I accepted what he told me with humility and meditating further on this subject I realized through his Grace the true nature of the Atman: 'साक्षी चेता केवल निर्गणश्च' (the witness, the knower non-dual and attributeless). When I went to him and described this he said, "This is called self-knowledge."

CHAPTER XV

FOREBODING OF FUTURE LIFE

During our stay at Cossipore Garden my desire for learning Western science, astronomy, Western logic and philosophy, etc., grew very strong. Having come to know that Girish Chandra Ghosh, the great dramatist, was attending the lectures of Dr. Mahendralal Sarkar in the Association for Cultivation of Science, I too went there on foot on several occasions from Cossipore to Bowbazar. My desire for studying science, philosophy, etc., was of course fulfilled. I devoted myself to studies with great interest. Gradually I had a thorough grasp of Ganot's Physics, Herschel's Astronomy John Stuart Mill's 'Logic' and Three Essays on Religion,' Lewis' 'History of Philosophy,' 'Hamilton's 'Philosophy', and other books. Sometimes I would be reading 'Logic' by Mill, the British philosopher, while attending to Paramahamsadeva at night. One day while I was reading Logic, Paramahamsadeva asked me, "What are you reading?" I replied, "Western Logic." Paramahamsadeva enquired, "What does it teach?" I said, "it teaches how to shift the evidence regarding existence of God by cogent arguments and discrimination." Paramahamsadeva said, "I find that you are introducing book-reading among the boys. You should know, however, that book-learning is of no value. If you want to kill yourself a nail-cutter can serve the purpose. If, however, you are to kill others then swords, shields and other weapons are required. Book-reading is necessary for that. Those who will be teachers of the people are to read books."

So saying he became silent. He did not forbid me to read books. Now, I realise that he intended to get me well-versed in all branches of knowledge and to put me to preaching work in future and that was why he did not forbid me to read books. By dint of sharp intellect I gained the admiration of all. Especially with Narendranath I used to have hot debates occasionally. On having heard about my intelligence Paramahamsadeva one day called me and said,

"Among the boys, you too are one of the most intelligent. Your intelligence ranks next to that of Narendranath. Just as Narendra can establish a point of view so you too will be able to do."

My Atheism

With the words of hope and blessings of Paramhamsadeva my mind would be filled with enthusiasm and strength in those days. I would think how infinite were the love and compassion of Paramhamsadeva. Then I was discriminating saying "not this, not this" in the way of non-dualistic Vedanta and was at the same time reading 'Ashtavakra-samhita' I would shatter the views of any one who would enter into debate with me. I would hear many arguments from many people regarding the existence of God, but through logical reasoning I would prove all of them to be fallacious. When the question of blind faith would arise I would introduce reasoning to prove its futility. Having observed this condition of my mind Buro Gopal (Swami Advivtananda) reported to Paramhamsadeva, "Sir, Kali accepts nothing. He has turned into a downright atheist."

Paramahamsadeva smiled to hear this. One day it so happened that when I went to attend on Paramahamsadeva there was none else in the room. Having found me alone he asked "Look, is it a fact that you have turned an atheist?" I kept silent. He again asked. "Do you believe in God? Do you believe in scriptures? Do you believe in traditional cults?" To all these questions I said only 'No' in reply. At this he said, "Had you said so to any other *Sadhu* (holy man) he would have slapped you on your cheek." I said. "You too may do the same, Sir; so long as I do not realise that God exists and that the Vedas are true how can I blindly accept these things. If you kindly enlighten me and open my spiritual eye (eye of true knowledge) then I shall accept them all." Paramahamsadeva was exceedingly glad to hear my reply and said, "A day will come when you will know everything and accept everything. Look at Naren, he would not believe in anything formerly but now he repeats "Radha, Radha" and

dances with *kirtana* (devotional song). You too will accept all these later." I said "Enlighten me. When I shall know I shall accept, otherwise not." I observed that the merciful Paramahamsadeva was very pleased to notice my frankness and sincerity. He said graciously, "A time will come when you will realise and accept everything. You should not, however, be monotonous. I do not like monotony." I bowed to all that he told me. In fact sometime after this Sri Sri Thakur opened my spiritual eye. I then came to realise the secrets of *sadhana* and started accepting everything. Up to this day my eyes are filled with tears when I think of the endless grace of Sri Sri Thakur.

My Spiritual Enlightenment

One day I went to Paramahamsadeva and earnestly prayed for *Brahmajnana* (Realization of the Absolute). He was pleased to observe my earnest longing and said "You will have true *Brahmajnana.*" Paramahamsadeva's words came true before long. One day during meditation I really attained the the ultimate truths. When I described this to Paramahamsadeva he said "This is true *Brahmajnana.*" All my doubts were then dispelled and I realised God as Cosmic Intelligence. The state of *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (Godconsciousness) and realized veil of ignorance which had caused atheism in me was then removed for ever.

Some Anecdotes

I recall one day. I was fanning Paramahamsadeva sitting alone when all on a sudden he asked me smiling like a child, "Among the boys some think that Narendra is greater than myself. I know you to be intelligent, what do you say?"

I said with fear, "He who thinks that Narendra is greater than yourself knows nothing. He has not been able to recognise you."

He said, "Why?"

I said, "Narendra is of your own making. It is through

your power that he has learnt whatever he knows. You are the God of his heart. If he were greater than yourself, why would he beg for knowledge by putting his head on your feet? It is through your grace that he has acquired all his knowledge. So, it is an absurdity that Naren is greater than or comparable to you."

Paramahamsadeva said with a faint smile, "You are very intelligent. What you say is true." That day I observed a childlike simplicity in him.

Let me recount what happened another day. I was attending on Sri Sri Thakur at Cossipore when he said, "Your father came today and said that your mother has been crying bitterly. 'Kindly ask Kali to go home once to see his mother.' I said to your father, "All right, I shall ask your son to do so. I am, therefore, telling you that you should go home to see your mother." I bowed to him saying, "all right, Sir." Then. having prostrated to Paramahamsadeva, I went to the house at Ahiritola on foot in the evening. My parents were very pleased to see me. With tears in her eyes my mother asked me to have supper and to stay for the night. My heart was however in confusion in half an hour. I felt as if I were in hellfire, my heart was restless and the recollection of Paramahamsadeva haunted me. My heart yearned to run away. I tried hard to check these feelings but in vain. I took sweets hurriedly, bade goodbye to my parents, returned straight to Cossipore and prostrated before Paramahamsadeva with my head on his feet. Sri Sri Thakur seemed to be surprised to see me and asked, "Did you not go home?"

I said, "Yes Sir, I went."

He said "Your parents must have asked you to stay at home. Why did you not stay?"

I : "I did stay."

Sri Sri Thakur, "How long did you stay there?"

I : "For half an hour only.."

Sri Sri Thakur, "But why did you return?"

I : "I went with the idea of staying at home tonight. My parents also entreated me to stay. But I felt a great agony when I was there. My mind hankered for returning to you. There I felt as if I were in hell. So I took a little sweet and hurried back here after having bid goodbye. My

mind was pacified only after I reached here.

With a faint smile Sri Sri Thakur said to me affectionately, "Well done! There is no doubt that you will have peace here."

In fact I used to have a feeling of peace and joy in mind when I would remain in the calm environment of Sri Sri Thakur. Parental affection would seem insipid in comparison with his great love. One afternoon when Sri Sri Thakur was lying, a man was walking over the grass in the compound. Sri Sri Thakur said to me, "Look, forbid him to walk on the grass. I am having great pain as if he were walking over my chest." I was astonished when I heard and actually saw this. I hurriedly went and forbade the man and then Sri Sri Thakur was relieved. Such an instance is without a parallel. Jesus Christ taught love among human beings. Lord Buddha identified himself with all beings and loved them, but Sri Ramakrishna realised the Atman everywhere from the Brahman to the inert objects like trees and creepers.

CHAPTER XVI

A MAD WOMAN IN COSSIPORE GARDEN

A mad woman used to come to Cossipore garden to see Sri Sri Thakur. She had a sweet voice. When she would sing Sri Sri Thakur would be in ecstasy. One of her songs was—

Come, O Mother, come once,
O' dearest idol of my heart.
All my life I have been looking for thee.
Thou knowest, Mother, how painful
The quest has been.
O' Mother open the petals of the lotus of my heart
And manifest thyself there.

Every time the mad woman would sing the song the listeners consciousness being enraptured.

But the mad woman was obstinate. Whenever she would have opportunity she would go upstairs and enter into the room of Sri Sri Thakur. Sri Sri Thakur would however forbid her to come to his room, because of her amorous attitude towards Sri Sri Thakur. One day having been annoyed he said to us, "Expel that mad woman from the garden. Do not permit her to stay here. I get frightened when she comes to my room." The mad woman would not go out of the garden—any way. Whenever expelled she would come back.. If the gate of the garden was closed she would squat on the road and she would re-enter if any one would open the gate and then she would make an attempt to enter into the room of Sri Sri Thakur upstairs. She would pay no heed even when Niranjan would threaten her with a club. I reported to Sri Sri Thakur how the mad woman had been behaving. He said, "Hand her over to the police at the Police Station." Niranjan and myself then dragged her to the Cossipore Police Station by holding her hand. The constable let her off after admonition. Having been released the mad woman again came to the garden after sometime and began to sing—

"O', Tara, thou causest me

So much agony that
I shall not address thee as Mother any more.
I was a householder, thou hast made me a mendicant,
Who knows what more mischief thou, with dishevelled hair,
Hast in store?
I would rather go about begging from door to door
Than go into thy arms calling thee 'Mother'."

When Sri Sri Thakur heard this song in her sweet voice he went into *samadhi.* The devotees were distressed at heart. Finding no other alternative Niranjan kept the mad woman confined in a room for sometime. Thereafter as soon as the doors were opened she made an attempt again to go upstairs. Niranjan then cut a portion of her long hair with a pair of scissors. The mad woman then went away never to return. After having seen this mad woman and heard her song Girish Chandra represented her in the character of a mad woman in his drama 'Vilvamangal'.

Sasadhar Tarkachudamani at Cossipore Garden

Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni had great respect and regard for Sri Sri Thakur. I one day saw the Tarkachudamoni crying with his hands on the feet of Sri Sri Thakur in Balaram-Mandir. Sri Sri Thakur was then without sense-consciousness in ecstasy. The Tarkachudamoni held the lotus like feet of Sri Sri Thakur on his chest and flooded his chest with tears.

On another day Sasadhar Tarkachudamoni came to Cossipore Garden to see Sri Sri Thakur when Sri Sri Thakur's throat disease had very much aggravated. The Tarkachudamoni said, "If only you put your mind a little to your body your throat disease will surely be cured." In reply Sri Sri Thakur said, "How can the mind which I have already surrendered to God be directed again to this body of flesh and blood?" The Tarkachudamoni said, "In that case kindly tell the Mother of the universe when you will talk to Her that the sore in your throat may heal up."

Sri Sri Thakur said, "When I see the Mother of the

Universe I forget about my body and the world. So, how can I tell the Mother about this insignificant body of flesh and blood."

The Tarkachudamoni sat dumbfounded. We too remained still. No one spoke a word. My work was always tidy and methodical. Seeing that Sri Sri Thakur would often praise my work. I, however, thought that it was He who was having His work done by me through His grace.

Senior Gopal Dada

Old Gopal Chandra Sur (our Dada) who was the senior-most of us used to live in Sinthee near Baranagar. After the demise of his wife a spirit of renunciation came to him. Mahendra Kaviraj of Sinthee first brought him to Dakshineswar. After that he would occasionally come to see Sri Sri Thakur at Dakshineswar. He could play on bayatabla (percussion instrument). When Narendranath would sing with the accompaniment of *tanpura* in the room of Sri Sri Thakur at Dakshineswar he would keep beats on *tabla*. Sri Sri Thakur loved him very much and treated him with affection on account of his maturity and sober judgement. When Sri Sri Thakur was ill in Cossipore Garden, Gopal-dada came and devoted himself to the task of attending on him.

Distribution of Saffron-coloured Clothes

The last day of the month of Pous was near at hand. The Gangasagar fair was to be held then. In that connection many Sannyasins had assembled in Jagannath Ghat at Calcutta. Gopal-dada had purchased twelve clothes of his own accord for distributing them to Sannyasins for protection against cold and he was dyeing them with *geri-mati* (a kind of chalk used for dyeing) He had also bought twelve rosaries for distributing to the Sannyasins.

On having got this information Sri Sri Thakur sent for Gopal-dada. When Gopal-dada came he asked, "What for are you dyeing clothes in saffron colour?" Gopal-dada said,

"Sannyasins have come to Jagannath Ghat on their way to the Gangasagar fair. I have a mind to give them saffron-coloured clothes. With this end in view I have bought twelve clothes and I have been dyeing them with *geri-mati*". At this Sri Sri Thakur said with a smile, "It would be a thousand times more pious act to give these saffron-coloured clothes to these children of mine than to give them to the monks in Jagannath Ghat." Where will you find Sannyasins so chaste as they! Each of them is equal to a thousand Sannyasins. They are thousand Sannyasins-in-one each you understand?"

Gopal-dada's attitude changed when he heard this. Thereafter Sri Sri Thakur Sanctified the twelve pieces of cloth and the twelve rosaries by touching them and uttering *matram* and he asked Gopal-dada to distribute these to eleven attendants at one piece of cloth and one rosary each. Gopal-dada gave us those saffron-coloured clothes and put the rosaries on our neck. Donned in saffron cloth we went to prostrate before Sri Sri Thakur. He was very glad to see us in the garb of monks. It was thus that he initiated us into monkhood. Since that day we started wearing saffron clothes. The names of the eleven attendants who got saffron clothes are Naren, Rakhal, Niranjan, Baburam, Sashi, Sarat, Kali, Jogin, Latu, Tarak, and Buro Gopal (Senior Gopal). Sri Sri Thakur wanted the remaining saffron clothes to be kept for Girish Ghosh. Later Girish Ghosh put it on his head and satiated his heart's yearning.

Our Mission of Mendicancy

When the lay devotees had brought Sri Sri Thakur to the house at Shyampukur, Calcutta, for treatment, Sri Sri Thakur had said to Balaram, "You should bear the expenses for my board. I do not like to live on subscriptions." Balaram, the great devotee, had agreed and had considered fortunate. Thereafter when the garden house at Cossipore was rented, Sri Sri Thakur said to Suresh Chandra Mitra "These devotees are poor clerks. They cannot afford to pay Rs. 80 towards the rent of the garden house. You

should pay this rent." Suresh Chandra said, "All right, Sir" with bowed head and undertook to carry out the order.

The number of attendants in Cossipore Garden gradually increased. More and more men were required for attending on Sri Sri Thakur and for watching him day and night. Ram Babu and other lay devotees then discussed the question of expenditure among themselves and asked Hutko Gopal to keep accounts of expenditure in an account book. Baikuntha Sanyal and other lay devotees would often have their meals at Cossipore and stay there for the night.

Later on Ram Babu and other lay devotees discussed among themselves the question of economising expenditure by reducing the number of attendants. They said that it would suffice if only two attendants would remain there, the others should stay in their respective homes. Sri Sri Thakur was annoyed when this reached his ears. He said, "I do not like to live here any longer. Should I draw assistance from Indranarayan, the Zemindar? No, you should call here that Marwari gentleman of Barabazar. Once that Marwari brought a large sum but I did not accept that. "Then he said, "No, you need not call anyone. The Will of the Mother of the Universe will be fulfilled." Narendranath and all of us were sitting there at that time. He said to us, "You should take me elsewhere. Will you be able to beg for me? I shall go wherever you will take me. Let me see how you can beg. Food and clothing obtained by begging are very sacred. I do not wish to eat the food of householders any more."

We said in one voice, "We shall certainly beg for you." On the following morning Narendranath, Niranjan, Hutko Gopal and I went to Sri Ma downstairs first for begging and said:

अन्नपूर्णे सदापूर्णे शंकरप्राणवल्लभे ।
ज्ञान-विज्ञान-सिद्धार्थं भिक्षां देहि मे पार्वति ॥

"O' Parvati, O Giver of Food whose store is overfull,
O' beloved of Sankara give me alms in order that I may attain knowledge and wisdom."

The merciful, Sri Ma, taken by surprise, gave us handful of

alms. Then we took the dust of Sri Ma's feet and went out to the road in order to beg. We had not done begging before and we did not know how to beg outside. Niranjan donned his saffron-coloured cloth on his head in the form of a turban and started begging saying (in Hindi) Mother, give us some alms' posing as a Hindustani mendicant. We started begging by saying in Bengali, "Give us alms". The ladies of some houses gave us rice, potatoes, green bananas, brinjals, etc., as alms. Some, however, admonished us in various terms. Some said, "Able-bodied blokes, can you not work? Why have you come to beg?" Some said, "They belong to a band of dacoits. They have come for collecting information." Others drove us away as members of a group of rowdies. We went from door to door patiently bearing all manner of chiding without retorts. At last we offered at the feet of Sri Sri Thakur whatever we had collected by begging. Sri Sri Thakur's joy knew no bounds when he saw that. He asked Sri Ma to cook that. Sri Ma prepared a gruel with the foodstuff collected by begging which she served to Sri Sri Thakur. Putting it in his mouth Sri Sri Thakur said, "Food obtained by begging is very sacred. It is not defiled by selfish desire of anyone. I am much pleased to eat it today." Then we ate to our satisfaction what was left after Sri Sri Thakur had eaten.

After this Jogin, Sarat, Sashi, Rakhal and others went out for begging one day by turns. As the number of people coming to see Sri Sri Thakur in Cossipore increased he had no rest of throat due to talking. The doctors, therefore, directed that none except attendants should go to him. We began to follow this direction as far as possible. Niranjan would guard the staircase with a club on his shoulder and he would not allow any one to go upstairs. One day some devotees came from a long distance to see Sri Sri Thakur. When Sri Sri Thakur was informed of their earnestness he was moved and he said, "Ah, they have come from such a distance to see me, why should you not allow them to come? Let them come." They left after having talked with Sri Sri Thakur for some time. The pain in Sri Sri Thakur's throat increased again due to prolonged talking with them.

SIVARATRI IN COSSIPORE

On Sivaratri day we (Narendranath, Sarat, Niranjan, Hutkogopal and I) fasted, abstaining even from drinking water and we kept up the whole night worshipping Siva and meditating. Narendranath sang the glory of Siva in sweet voice. At midnight when Sarat, Niranjan and Gopal Dada went out Narendranath and myself were meditating. Suddenly Narendranath's body began to shake. Narendranath said to me "Put your hand on my thigh and see if you feel anything." I then put my hand on his thigh and felt as if I had touched an electric battery and as if a magnetic current was causing a violent tremor in his body. Gradually this current became so strong that my hand too began to shake. It is a matter of regret that in "Leela-Prasanga" and in Swamiji's Biography this incident has been exaggerated and it has been said that Swamiji had infused power in me by touching me and had directed me to the path of discrimination. My spiritual eye had, however, already opened through the grace of Sri Sri Thakur and within a short time I had been blessed with self-realization. In fact Narendranath thought that this was how Sri Sri Thakur infused power in others and that like Sri Sri Thakur he too was capable of infusing power in others. In order to disabuse Narendranath of this illusion Sri Sri Thakur said to him later, "This is the time to gain power, not to spend it."

During Sivaratri Narendranath composed a song on Siva and began to sing :

"Absorbed in Himself He dances
with rhythmic beats of *Tathai. Tathai*
From His mouth emanates
The Sound *Bom Bom*
His *Domoru* is sounding *dimi dimi* and a wreath of skulls hangs from his neck.
In His locks of hair the Ganga surges and
His trident belches out fire.
He on whose forehead the moon shines
Has flames on his crown."

Narendranath had composed the song being absorbed in the spirit of Siva and he sang the song so surcharged with

emotion that it appeared as if Siva Himself were expressing His own glory. It was a solemn atmosphere. The memory of that deeply emotional song in the angelic voice of Narendranath is still vivid in my mind.

Assumption of 'Nirmanakaya' (Double Body) by Sri Sri Thakur

Late one night Sri Sri Thakur assumed a double body and strolled with Niranjan and other devotees in Cossipore Garden. Sri Ma Sarada Devi witnessed that strange incident. The incident was this. There was a date palm in the garden and everyday the gardener would attach an earthen pot to it for collecting date juice. Niranjan one day planned that we would steal the fresh juice and drink it. All of us agreed to this. At the dead of night Niranjan, Hutkogopal and others started searching for the date palm; but strangely, the date palm could not be seen. They thought that it must have been a sport of Sri Sri Thakur. At that time Sri Ma woke up and through the window she saw that Sri Sri Thakur was strolling in the garden with Niranjan and others. In fact Sri Sri Thakur was at that time lying on his bed and two attendants were nursing him.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi of Narendranath

One day Narendranath lost sense-consciousness while meditating. Actually this losing of sense-consciousness was *nirvikalpa-samadhi* (the state of Godconsciousness). Having been merged in *nirvikalpa-samadhi* he was in a flood of joy. After a short while his mind gradually came down and in spite of repeated efforts he could not restore that high state. He then went to Sri Sri Thakur and said, "Kindly let me remain always in that ocean of joy." With a faint smile Sri Sri Thakur said cheerfully, "Not now, later." Narendranath in his earnestness said insistently "I do not like anything, I have a desire to remain always in the state of *nirvikalpa-samadhi*." Sri Sri Thakur said, "The key of that

room is in my hand. You should now do my work, later, when time will come, I shall open the lock. Otherwise if you come to know your true self you will spit out this body of yours." Narendranath remained silent and after having prostrated to Sri Sri Thakur he came away.

Life of Buddha and our Visit to Buddha Gaya

Narendranath, Tarakdada (Swami Sivananda) and I would often read the life-story of Lord Buddha and we would talk about his renunciation and severe austerities. We had then learnt by heart the *gathas* (couplets) of *Lalita-vistar.* Sometimes we would recite 'इहासने शुष्यतु मे शरीरम्' (Let my body wither away in this posture), etc, and meditate. Gradually a desire grew strong in the three of us to see the place where Lord Buddha had performed austerities. One day Narendranath, Tarakdada and myself went to Cossipore Garden from Calcutta on barefoot before dusk. Our desire became so strong that we could not resist it. Narendranath said, "Let us go to Buddha-Gaya without telling any one." We did not tell even Sri Sri Thakur about our intention to go to Buddha Gaya. Narendranath collected the railway fare for three of us and got ready. We were ready with loin cloth, outer garments and blanket. In the month of April, 1886 we crossed the Ganga from the ferry ghat of Baranagar and made for Bally. We spent that night in a grocery shop on the roadside. We got up early next morning and took the train from the Bally Railway Station. We arrived at Gaya next day and after having seen Gayadham we went to Buddha Gaya. We entered into the temple at Buddha-Gaya and prostrated with joy before the image of Buddha. We three then recited 'बुद्धं शरणं गच्छामि' (I take refuge in the Buddha", etc., and sat for meditation. The atmosphere inside the temple was solemn and quiet. In such an atmosphere the mind naturally gets immersed in the ocean of *samadhi.* During meditation we had a strange foretaste of the bliss of *Nirvana* and a feeling of joy. Thereafter we three sat on the *cajrasana,* built in front of the Bodhi tree by Emperor Asoke, and began to meditate again.

Narendranath had a strange vision of light. A current of peace seemed to be flowing all over my body. Tarak-dada also remained merged in deep meditation. After two hours of meditation we three had bath in river Niranjana, and having done *madhukari* we had a light meal and then we rested in the *dharmasala* (rest house for mendicants). We spent the night also in that *dharmasala.* We did not have any warm clothing with us, so we did not have sleep at night due to cold. Moreover, at about midnight Narendranath had an attack of diarrhœa. Perhaps he could not digest what he had eaten. He had a few motions and he suffered from pain in the stomach. We became particularly anxious and could not decide what to do. Then we began to pray plaintively to Sri Sri Thakur. After some time we found that Narendranath was feeling better. We were then constantly reminded of the fact that we had come away without telling Sri Sri Thakur, that it had been wrong on our part to have left him during his illness and to have come away without his permission. Gradually our mind became restless. We felt as if we were under an attraction. Narendranath had not yet completely recovered from diarrhœa and there was none from whom we might get help. We found that we did not have money for the railway fare. In the circumstances we fell into great perplexity and we could not decide what to do. We thought that it was our duty to return to Cossipore quickly but we did not have passage money with us.

Then Narendranath said, "Let us go to the *Mohanta* (Head Monk) of Buddha-Gaya and beg some money from him. Tarakdada and myself agreed to the proposal. In the morning we crossed the sand bank of river Niranjana. The sand of the river bed was so cold that our bare feet seemed to burn. We did not know till then that cold could produce on barefeet a sensation like burning by fire. With much difficulty we walked across the river Niranjana and arrived at the monastery of the Head Monk. We talked to the *dasanami* monks of the Monastery. We sat with monks there in the same *pangad* (party) for noonday meal and had rest. When the Head Monk came to know that Narendranath was a conoisseur of music he requested him to sing. Although Narendranath had been weakened by diarrhœa yet the

vitality and the tenderness of his voice had not been affected. He sang a few devotional songs which the Head Monk was highly pleased to hear. Later, when we were bidding goodbye to him he gave us some passage money on having come to know that we did not have money to return. We then crossed the river Niranjana again and came to Buddha Gaya where we became guests in the house of a Bengali gentleman Umesh Babu in Gayadham. There Narendranath again sang classical and devotional songs. All listeners there were charmed to hear that excellent music. Umesh Babu took good care of us and made arrangements for our stay there for the night. On the following day we started for Calcutta by train and arrived at Cossipore Garden the next evening. Sri Sri Thakur who was very anxious for us was in great joy when he saw us back and he eagerly interrogated us. We told him all that had happened in Buddha-Gaya from the beginning to the end. He was much pleased to hear the full story and calmly said, "Well done."

CHAPTER XVII

VISITING A HATHAYOGI IN BARABAR HILL

One day Bejoy Krishna Goswami came to Cossipore Garden and spoke highly of a powerful Hathayogi, whom he had met in Barabur hill near Gaya. On having heard this I had a strong desire to see that Hathayogi. On the following day I collected the return train fare and started alone without having disclosed my intention to any one. Even Sri Sri Thakur did not know about this.

That was the first long distance journey that I undertook alone. I had a desire to go about the country alone like a wandering mendicant living on alms. I took the train from Bally and arrived at Gaya. After having travelled eight miles on foot across a hilly terrain I arrived at the village situated at the foot of Barabur hill. There was a pilgrims' rest house in the village where I spent the night. I made acquaintance with a monk of the Dashanami-Puri sect there. He had with him a book on the procedure of consecration to monkhood (sannyasa) and *viraja-homa.* I borrowed the book from him and copied out the *mantrams* of *viraja-homa* (Presha mantram, Math, Madi, Yogapatta, etc.), in a small note book which I had with me. Next morning I got ready to go to the Hathayogi in Barabur hill after having collected information from the villagers regarding the way to the cave of the Hathayogi. Everybody dissuaded me from going to that cave and told me that the disciples of the Hathayogi would not allow anyone to go to the Hathayogi and they would throw stones at anyone who would travel along the road to the cave. The villagers warned me and forbade me to go in that direction

However, I was not frightened by what they said. I made a firm resolve that anyhow I should meet the Hathayogi even at the risk of my life. On the following day in the morning I began to climb up the hill without fear along a narrow hill road (which led to the cave through jungles). I was going silently with great caution looking around to see if anyone was throwing stones. Suddenly I arrived right at the entrance

of the cave. A Hathayogi with his disciples was sitting there in front of smouldering fire (*dhuni*). They were startled to see me and they immediately stood up in order to beat me. I too was taken aback a bit to see them but instead of being frightened I did obeisance to them saying, 'नमो नारायणाय' (Om, salutation to *Narayana*) with presence of mind. Having seen me in the garb of a monk they returned the courtesy saying, "Om, salutation to *Narayana*." Thereafter, in order to ascertain if I was a genuine monk, they asked me about "Math, Madi, Preshamantram", etc. I have already mentioned that on the previous night I had learnt *preshmantram*, etc., from a *dashanami* monk. I then thought that all this was due to the Grace of Sri Sri Thakur who in order to save me had mercifully got that work done by me. So thinking I sent my salutations to him. As I could answer the questions correctly the Hathayogi affectionately gave me permission to sit by the fire place. His disciples too welcomed me as a genuine monk. After sometime I expressed my desire to them to learn *hathayoga*. They then asked me to go inside the cave. Although I was alone and I was not sure what they would do after taking me inside the cave, I suppressed my suspicion and entered into the cave. I saw another fire place (*dhuni*) smouldering there. At the bidding of the Hathayogi I sat close to his seat. I put many questions to him regarding *hathayoga*, *pranayama*, etc. The Hathayogi answered those questions and asked me to stay in that cave and to learn *Yoga* from him. I found that the cave was quite spacious and plenty of foodstuff was stocked there. A he-goat and a fowl were tied on one side. It became evident to me then that the *Sadhu* (Hathayogi) belonged to the *Aghora* sect. I found that one of the disciples was suffering from asthma. I realised that I too might be attacked with asthma likewise if I would take lessons in *pranayama* and *Yoga* from the Hathayogi. Having put many more questions I found that his knowledge of *Yoga* philosophy was very limited. He had merely read the book "Pavana-svarodaya" and had practised *pranayama* to some extent without having mastered the subject. So, I did not feel inclined to take any lesson from him. He, however, expressed great deal of interest to make me his disciple and to teach me *Yoga*.

At that time it so happened that the image of Sri Sri Thakur

suddenly arose in my heart. I was startled and I began to compare Sri Sri Thakur with the Hathayogi and found that the Hathayoga was merely *Sadhaka* (spiritual aspirant) with very limited knowledge. I saw Sri Sri Thakur looking at me compassionately. Tears then came to my eyes. I realised that Sri Sri Thakur was a Master of masters and an ocean of knowledge. I did not like to stay in that cave any longer. The Hathayogi gave me *dal* and bread for lunch and requested me to stay with him for a few days. So, I fell into a great predicament. I became restless with the thought how to get out of his reach and escape. That time the image of Sri Sri Thakur came to my mind persistently and I kept on praying to him plaintively that he might show me a way out. The fear that they might break my head by throwing stones in case I would attempt to escape in disregard of the Hathayogi's words also worried me to some extent. I asked for permission to go saying in Hindi, "I am going now." The Hathayogi did not agree and he forbade me to leave saying "It is a rare luck to get a disciple like you." This further accentuated my predicament.

At last in the evening I came out of the cave on the pretext of fetching water and ran down hill as fast as I could. I saw that the disciples of the Hathayogi were throwing big stones at me. I ran without looking in any other direction and reached the village at the foothill. From there I proceeded towards the Gaya Railway Station. My mind was then drawn very strongly to Sri Sri Thakur. Every moment seemed to be an age. I somehow spent that night in Gaya Station and took a train to Bally next morning. From Bally I crossed over to the other side of the Ganges and having returned to Cossipore I prostrated to Sri Sri Thakur putting my head on his feet. On having seen me back Sri Sri Thakur said with a faint smile, "Where did you go without telling me?" I narrated the whole story to him. He asked "How did you find the Hathayogi?" I said, "I did not like him. He is nothing compared to you. So I have hurriedly come back to the shelter at your feet.' He said "I know all *Sadhus* (monks) and *Siddhas* (men of enlightenment), however, great and wherever they may be. You may go about the four corners of the earth, you will not find anywhere what you see here

(he said putting his hand on his chest)". So saying he put his hand on my head and blessed me. All parts of my body were then soothed. Even if I had millions of months I would not be able to describe how profusely he showered his Grace on me every moment. He related the parable of the bird on th mast and explained to me that without comparing it is not possible to distinguish between great and small, good and bad. I said, "So, it was as well that I went to see the Hathayogi. I can now better appreciate your greatness." He smiled to hear this.

My Philosophical Ratiocination

At that time I used to discriminate saying "not this, not this" in the Vedantic way and study the *Astabakrasamhita* and so I would accept only what would stand logical analysis and reject everything else. I would critically examine and refute all reasoning and arguments regarding the existence of God that I would hear. I was then studying John Stuart Mill's Logic and Philosophy and his "Essays on Religion" (discourses on religion). At night when I would wait upon Sri Sri Thakur sitting at his bed-side, I would read English Logic. One day Sri Sri Thakur enquired "What book are you reading?" I said, "English Logic. It teaches how to cogitate on God." He said, "Good. It is you who have introduced book-reading among the boys. You know, a nail clipper is enough for killing oneself, but weapons like swords and shields are required for killing others. God cannot be attained through book-reading but for teaching humanity there is necessity of book-reading and scholarship." I could not properly understand the significance of the words of the merciful Sri Sri Thakur then, but now I realise that perhaps he did not dissuade me from reading books in order to get me equipped for the mission of preaching in future.

Human and Divine Categories (Jivakoti and Isvarakoti)

Sometimes Sri Sri Thakur would raise and discuss the

topic of human and divine categories. Neither I nor any of us could understand the meaning of these terms. We thought that Brahman, the Existence-Knowledge-Bliss, was present in everyone and so the idea of some one being smaller or greater than another was meaningless.

One day I was massaging the feet of Sri Sri Thakur when none else was nearby. Finding him alone I asked him about the basis of classification of men into human and divine categories. He was pleased and replying to my question he said, "It is true that Brahman is present in everyone but there are differences in the manifestation of power. It is the degree of manifestation of power that determines human and divine categories. One who belongs to the human category can achieve his own emancipation but he cannot save others from bondage. But he who can emancipate himself and then save others too belongs to the divine category. This is the difference between human and divine categories. Some are born with that power." I asked, "Is it not possible, then, for one of the human category to acquire that power? Can he not ever rise to the level of the divine category?"

Sri Sri Thakur said, "Yes, he can. If one who is of the human category prays to the Divine Mother of the universe for the power to save others then the Mother grants him that power." In this connection he related a parable. He said "there was a place in a forest enclosed by a high wall. Someone climbed upon the wall and having observed the inner beauty dropped inside with a loud laughter of joy. He was of the human category. But one who was gifted with special power climbed upon the wall, saw the things inside and then came to inform his companions and took them to that place. He was of the divine category." From that wonderful parable told by Sri Sri Thakur that day I could realise the difference between human and divine categories.

Another Day recalled

One day Sri Sri Thakur said, "Look, when I see your eyes, eyebrows and forehead, the face of Sri Krishna flashes in my mind. There is partial manifestation of Sri Krishna in you.

When this thought arises in me I get inspired with the spirit of Radha." I said, "You are the best judge of all that, what do I understand " I observed the play of extra-ordinary love in him in that state and he graciously explained to me the secrets of the philosophy of the divine love of Sri Krishna and Sri Radha. In fact, thenceforth, I became attracted to Sri Radha and began to have faith in Her Divine play.

Marriage negotiations of Narendranath

In the meantime one thing happened. Narendranath's mother had almost settled the marriage negotiation of her son. That information did not take long to reach Sri Sri Thakur. He at once arose and started for Calcutta from Dakshineswar in a cab to see Narendranath. When the cab reached the entrance of the lane in which Narendranath's home was situated he sent me from the cab to call Narendranath. On having heard that Sri Sri Thakur had come Narendranath ran to him in great haste. The merciful Sri Sri Thakur alighted from the cab, held his hand affectionately and said, "Is it a fact that your marriage has been settled?" Narendranath lowered his head and said, "Yes, Sir." Sri Sri Thakur then pressed Narendranath's biceps and said, "I say—your marriage will not take place." Narendranath looked at the face of Sri Sri Thakur in astonishment. Sri Sri Thakur again said, "Yes, I am telling you the truth." So saying Sri Sri Thakur hurriedly boarded the cab and asked the coachman to speed off. Gradually the cab disappeared in the direction of Dakshineswar. Narendranath stood stunned with astonishment for sometime and then slowly went back towards his house. It is strange that what Sri Sri Thakur has predicted regarding Narendranath's marriage came true. For some reason the marriage negotiations of Narendranath fell through. When we got this information later we were as much surprised as we were relieved.

CHAPTER XVIII

MAHASAMADHI OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

The day Sri Sri Thakur had hæmoptysis, Narendra, Niranjan, Rakhal, myself and others were sitting in front of him. He became very weak in consequence of this. A few days later on Sunday, the 31st Sravana which was a full moon day he passed away. All of us were sitting near him when this occurred at 1 a.m. that day. He suddenly went into *samadhi* as usual. His eyes remained fixed on the tip of the nose, Narendranath started chanting *'Aum'* A.U.M. aloud. We also chanted *'aum'* in chorus. Everyone cherished the hope that within a short while the state of *samadhi* would end and he would regain sense-consciousness, so thinking we waited for hours on end. When we found that the state of *samadhi* was continuing too long we consoled ourselves with the thought that once his sense-consciousness had not returned even after the lapse of three days and three nights and that might happen this time also. But even after the whole night passed his sense-consciousness did not return. We then lost hope and were in a fix. The Mother, Sri Sri Ma was informed. Sri Sri Ma came upstairs and sitting by the bedside of Sri Sri Thakur she started crying, "Mother; where have you gone." That scene seemed strange though heart rendering. We stood on one side and watched that sweet relation between the wife and the husband with wonder and thought that we had not observed ever before such a scene and such expression of love. In fact Sri Sri Thakur used to regard Sri Ma as the living image of Mother Kali and Sri Ma in her turn would address Sri Sri Thakur as Mother Kali. This sweet relation between Sri Ma and Sri Sri Thakur was wonderful.

The *mahasamadhi* (final dissolution in God) of Sri Sri Thakur occurred on the 31st Sravana, 1293 B.S. (16th August, 1886 A.D.—1.06 hours). Captain Viswanath Upadhyay of Nepal came quickly on having got information regarding *mahasamadhi* of Sri Sri Thakur and said that sense-consciousness would return if cow-ghee would be rubbed on the

back-bone. Sashi (Ramakrishnananda) immediately brought cow-ghee and began to rub it on the backbone in all earnestness. There was however, no sign of manifestation of sense-consciousness. On getting this information people came one by one and assembled there. Gradually the news of that calamity spread everywhere. At 10 a.m. Dr. Mahendra Sarkar came and after having felt the pulse and done careful examination, declared that Sri Sri Thakur had breathed his last, half an hour ago, and that rubbing would not be of use any more. He was in *mahasamadhi* this time. We lost all hope on having heard Dr. Sarkar's report: Gradually the body of Sri Sri Thakur started getting decomposed. Arrangements were then made for cremation of the divine body. Dr. Sarkar gave Rs. 10 for taking a photograph of that state (of *mahasamadhi*) and left with a heavy heart. At that time all of us felt ourselves completely helpless. We thought that all our source of strength and hope had come to an end. What to do now, and whom to rely in our day to day life!

1st Bhadra, Monday

It was a memorable day in our life. It was not perceptible that life had passed out of Sri Sri Thakur. There was a smile in his face though his body was slightly decomposed. It seemed as if a divine glow was emanating from the whole body. The Bengal Photographer Company was called to take photograph of that *mahasamadhi.* The body of Sri Sri Thakur was laid on a cot which was decorated all around with bunches of flowers. Flower garlands were put on Sri Sri Thakur's neck, his face was adorned with sandal-wood paste and flowers. Ram Babu stood in front of the cot and asked Narendranath to stand by his side. We stood behind silently on the staircase. The Bengal Photographer Company took two group photographs.

The gathering gradually swelled. In the meantime all materials required for cremation were collected. At 5 p.m. Sri Sri Thakur's divine body was taken through an immense concourse from Cossipore with chanting of *sankirtana* (devotional songs). All sides resounded with the sounds of *khol.*

kartala and *kirtana*. The holy body of Sri Sri Thakur was taken in a procession with emblems of various religions, viz., the figure representing *'Aum'*, pick axe, Cross, Crescent, etc., to the Cossipore cremation ground. The attendants and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna had already collected ghee, sandalwood, faggots, garlands, etc. Gradually Sri Sri Thakur's body was washed in the Ganges in the customary way and was then placed on the funeral pyre having been decorated with new cloth and garlands. The fire of the funeral pyre threw up flames with hundreds of tongues. The attendants and devotees showered flowers into the fire. The cremation ground resounded with the sounds of *khol, kartala* and *kirtana*. It was a wonderful scene that requires description. For the last time the children and devotee of Sri Sri Thakur had a glimpse of his divine body and they prostrated in deep reverence. Some of them chanted hymns.

Gradually the earthly body of Sri Sri Thakur was reduced into a heap of ashes. Two or three of us collected Sri Sri Thakur's body *asthi* (unburnt bits of bone) and put that in a copper urn and we returned to the Cossipore Garden with a heavy heart. That night we placed the *asthi* in Sri Sri Thakur's room and tried to assuage the sorrow caused by the passing away of Sri Sri Thakur by discussing his holy life and by keeping our minds engaged in meditation and *japa*. Narendranath sat in front and occasionally soothed us by telling us stories of Sri Sri Thakur's spontaneous and wonderful grace. In spite of all this, however, we felt ourselves helpless. We could not decide what to do next.

After Mahasamadhi

All of us considered then that it would be better for us if we could continue to stay in the Cossipore Garden. We were, however, worried with the thought as to why the owners of the Cossipore Garden would allow us to stay there without rent and who would arrange for regular payment of rent? Ram Babu and other lay devotees used to pay rent of the garden. But Ram Babu decided that rent would be paid only up to the end of that month. Having no other alternative we asked Ram Babu where we should go next. Ram Babu

said, addressing all of us, "You should go back to your respective houses." We asked, "Then where will the *asthi* of Sri Sri Thakur be kept?" Ram Babu said that he had his Yogodyana (a garden for Yogic practices) at Kankurgachi, Sri Sri Thakur's *asthi* should be interred there.

Narendranath and others among us were very sorry to hear this. We wondered how the tomb of Sri Sri Thakur could be set up in Kankurgachi Yogodyana instead of being built on the bank of the Holy Ganges. At last we told Ram Babu what we thought. Ram Babu would not listen to any argument. He decided to bury Sri Sri Thakur's *asthi* in his Yogodyana. He returned home that night after having told us of his final decision.

The night deepened. Narendranath and all the rest of us sat in silence around the urn containing Sri Sri Thakur's *asthi* as our thoughts rambled. At that time Niranjan (Swami Niranjananda) said, "We should not deliver the sacred *asthi* of Sri Sri Thakur to Ram Babu in any case." We too agreed with Niranjan. Narendranath dittoed whatever we said and added, "My view is the same as yours." Then we decided unanimously that the major portion of Sri Sri Thakur's *asthi* should be transferred from the urn to a casket which should be kept concealed in the house of Balaram Babu, the devotee, in Baghbazar, so that Ram Babu might not get scent of it in any way. Afterwards when Ram Babu would come, the urn with the remaining *asthi* would be handed over to him. Action was taken accordingly. That night almost all the *asthi* was transferred from the urn to a casket leaving only a small quantity of bone powder and ash mixed with Ganges clay in the urn. Narendranath then said, "Look, our bodies are living tombs of Sri Sri Thakur. Let us all sanctify ourselves by taking the ash of his holy body a little." Narendranath first took a small quantity of bone powder and ash from the urn and ate that saying, "Glory be to Ramakrishna". All of us then did likewise and felt ourselves blessed.

8TH BHADRA, 1293 B.S. (24TH AUGUST, 1886 A.D.)

That day Ram Babu came to Cossipore Garden and

wanted to take the urn to Kankurgachi Yogadyana. Narendranath and the rest of us agreed to the proposal. That was *Janmastami* day. Headed by Narendranath we started for Kankurgachi, carrying the urn on our heads and singing *Sankirtan.* Ram Babu accompanied us. Sashi (Swami Ramakrishnananda) held the urn on his head with care and went slowly with us. At last the holy *ashti* of Sri Sri Thakur was buried with great ceremony in Kankurgachi Yogodyana. All of us stayed that night in Yogodyana.

Sri Ma's Vision of Sri Sri Thakur

The day Sri Sri Thakur entered into *Mahasamadhi* (31st Sravana, 1263 B.S.) a strange incident took place. Sri Ma became almost unconscious when Sri Sri Thakur passed away. Overwhelmed with grief in her room she made up her mind to remove from her hands her gold bangles which were symbols of her husband being alive. What actually happened was, however, different. When Sri Ma was about to take off the bangles she saw with her own eyes that Sri Sri Thakur appeared in flesh and blood and forbade her to take out the bangles from her hands. Sri Sri Thakur caught hold of both her hands and said, "Do you think that I have gone elsewhere? I have only passed, as it were, from this room to the next." Even after having seen Sri Sri Thakur in person and heard his reassuring words Sri Ma was going to remove her bangles and the vermillion spot on her forehead, but she could not. She realised quite well that only the earthly body of Sri Sri Thakur had been destroyed and that he was always present in his divine form.

Since then she continued to wear red-bordered cloth as before, but she wore cloth with thin red-border only.

Of course it is not that at times Sri Ma would not be overwhelmed with grief, missing Sri Sri Thakur in flesh and blood. When Sri Ma was living in Lālā Babu's Kunja at Vrindavan she again tried to remove her bangles from her hands one day. Sri Ma told us that Sri Sri Thakur appeared before her in flesh and blood that day also and said to her, "You should not take off your bangles. One whose husband

is Sri Krishna is not destined to be a widow. She is with her husband for ever." On that occasion too Sri Ma had refrained from removing her bangles.

An exactly similar incident took place a third time. On her return from Vrindavan when Sri Ma went to live in Kamarpukur she said that for fear of public criticism she tried to put on the appearance of a widow once more by taking off her bangles. At that moment Sri Sri Thakur appeared before her in flesh and blood and forbade her to remove the bangles. My information is that since then Sri Ma was convinced that Sri Sri Thakur was always with her like a shadow and was guiding her.

CHAPTER XIX

SRI MA'S DEPARTURE FOR VRINDAVAN

Sri Ma started for Vrindavan on the 15th Bhadra, 1293 B.S. by the evening train. She had a desire to live there for some time. Jogen, Latu and myself, Gopal-ma, Lakshmimani-didi and Nikunja Devi, the wife of Sri M—accompanied Sri Ma. We first stopped at Deoghar and visited Vaidyanath and then took the next train for Kasi Sri Ma lived in Kasidham for three days witnessing the *aratrika* of Lord Visvanath and visiting Annapurna. Sri Ma said that Sri Sri Thakur had guided her out of the temple of Visvanath by holding her hands. She was then in trance.

From Kasidham we all proceeded to Ayodhya with Sri Ma. After having spent a day there we left for Vrindavan. Jogen-ma had been living in Sri Vrindavan since sometime before the passing away of Sri Sri Thakur. On the way, in the train, Sri Sri Thakur appeared before Sri Ma and said, "Why have you worn the gold amulet on your hand in that fashion? A thief can easily take it away." Sri Ma was awakened. She got up hastily and put the amulet in a tin box. Tarakdada (Swami Sivananda) who was called *dada* as he was the eldest of us in age) was already living in Kālā Babu's Kunja at Vrindaban.

Sri Ma's sojourn in Vrindavan

At Vrindavan, we along with Sri Ma, halted in Kala Babu's Kunja at Bansibat. One day during her stay there Sri Ma was absorbed in Sri Radha's mood of separation from the beloved. Just as Sri Radha would yearn for her beloved during separation so Sri Ma, yearning for reunion with Sri Sri Thakur, would shed tears of love while visiting various places associated with the divine sport of Sri Krishna such as Radharaman's temple near Nidhuban, the foreshore of the Jamuna, etc., and would often remain absorbed in ecstasy.

At that time Sri Sri Thakur bade Sri Ma "You should grant *Ista-Mantra* to Jogin (Jogananda)." Having had this bidding for three consecutive days Sri Ma one day went into a state of ecstasy during her prayers and initiated Jogin with *mantram*.

Sri Ma lived in Vrindavan for one year on that occasion. During this period she once visited Hardwar with Jogin-Ma and Lakshmi-didi and there she consecrated a portion of Sri Sri Thakur's nails and hair which she had with her to the Brahmakunda. After that they went on a visit to Jaipur and Pushkar-tirtha also. Later on her way back from Vrindavan she consecrated the remaining portion of nails and hair to the confluence of the Ganges and the Jamuna at Prayaga.

My Circuit of Vrindavan

After arrival in Kālā Babu's Kunja in Vrindavan, I put Sri Ma in the care of Jogen, Latu, Tarak and others and with a view to make a circuit of the forest of Vrindavana alone I made enquries of the Vaishnavas and then bid goodbye to Sri Ma.

At that time I would always wear the saffron-coloured cloth which I had received from Sri Sri Thakur. Two pieces of loin-cloth, a pair of saffron-coloured outer garment and a Kamandalu were my only belongings on the way. I did not have any blanket or bedding with me. I would not touch any money then. Once in the day I would beg from five houses of *Brajabashis* saying, "Narayana Hari" by way of *madhukari* and in the afternoon I would take the bits of *marua* (millet), bread, etc., which I would thus collect and then journey on foot with the *Bairagis* (mendicants of the Vaishnava School). At night I would spread the end of my garment under a tree and sleep there. I would wake up in the small hours of the morning and continue the journey with the *Bairagis*. I would walk till midday and then on arrival at a village, I would go on *madhukari* after bath. After lunch I would take a little rest and then resume the journey. A few days elapsed thus. The *Bairagi* mendicants would not talk to me as I was wearing saffron-coloured cloth. They used to look upon Sannyasins (mendicants) in saffron-coloured cloth

with great disfavour. Their idea was that Sannyasins were seekers of salvation through knowledge of "I am He", that they did not accept the divinity of Sri Krishna and so they were atheists. Having come to know of their attitude I would not talk to them and I would remain contained within myself as if I were under a vow of silence. On the way I would ascertain from them how the places were connected with the Divine sportive play of Sri Krishna. They would avoid my company as far as they could but I would remain with them and also follow them during *madhukari.* I would leave out the houses which they would go to for alms and I would get alms from other houses by way of *madhukari.*

One day absorbed in my own thoughts, I was singing the glory of Sri KrisKhna and I was reciting with intonation the Gopi-Geet of Rashpanchadoyaya of the Sreemadbhagavat saying, 'न खलु गोपिकानन्दनो भवान्। अखिलदेहिनां अन्तरात्मदृक्' (Thou art not merely the child of a milkmaid. Thou art the observer in the heart of all tiny beings. (which I had committed to memory). Impresed by my deep devotion to Radhakrishna they addressed me saying, "We find that you are a great devotee of Krishna. We did not realize this earlier. It has been our fault. Please excuse us. From today we shall serve you. You need not go for *madhukari* any more. We shall get alms and we shall take our meal after having fed you." In fact since that day I did not have to go out for *madhukari.* They used to get bread for me by begging. The *Babajis* (Vaishnav mendicants) would stop me if I would try to go for *madhukari* saying, "Where shall we get a *Sadhu* so deeply devoted as you are! We shall serve you and our prayer is that you will kindly accept our service."

Thenceforth, I would go about everyday in the company of the *Babajis,* making the circuit of Sri Vrindavan and visiting the places associated with the Divine sportive play of Sri Krishna with great joy and I began to realise the glory of Sri Krishna. Gradually the circuit ended. Having travelled over 168 miles my visits to the places connected with the Divine sport of Sri Krishna were completed. I then returned to Kala Babu's kunja at Vrindavan, and having prostrated before Sri Ma I related everything to her. I remained in Vrindavan with my brethren Jogen and Latu with joy. As I did not see Tarak-

dada I enquired where he was. Jogen said that he had gone to the monastery in Baranagore which Suresh Babu had set up. My delight knew no bounds when I heard that a monastery had been established at Baranagore.

My Return to Calcutta

My mind was really filled with great joy when I heard that a new monastery had been established at Baranagore. I expressed to Sri Ma, Jogen and brother Latu my desire to go to Baranagore monastery. Sri Ma gladly gave me permission to go. When I was about to start for the Railway Station after having prostrated before Sri Ma and bid goodbye to Jogen and brother Latu, Jogen said to me, "Sri Ma desires that you should take the wife of Master Mahasay (M.) to Calcutta as Master Mahasaya is very anxious." I was much perplexed to hear what brother Jogen told me for, Master Mahasay's wife had slight mental derangement and alone as I was it would be very difficult for me to take her up to Calcutta. Brother Jogen said, "It is the Mother's desire. "I had no power to ignore the Mother's desire. I got ready to take Master Mahasay's wife to Calcutta, though she was in a helpless condition, and started for Calcutta with the insane lady. I thought that whatever was in my destiny would happen but through the Mother's grace nothing untoward would take place.

We arrived at Mathura station where the Station Master was a Bengali. I had heard that he was a sympathetic gentleman. I requested him for help. Third class compartments were likely to be crowded, so it would be helpful if he would arrange to put two of us in a vacant compartment. He realised my difficulty when I explained that to him. He handed over to me a key of railway compartment saying. "Before the train reaches any big station you should close the door and lock it with key so that passengers may not crowd in the compartment." I paid my respects to the Station Master for his sympathy and boarded a compartment which was almost vacant along with Master Mahasaya's wife. After having spent two days in train observing the instructions of

the Station Master we arrived safely at Howrah Station. I had anxiety on the way lest the insane lady would do any mischief. Through the grace of Sri Ma and Sri Sri Thakur, however, the insane lady reached Howrah without any untoward incident. I felt relieved and realised that all this was due to the grace of Sri Ma and Sri Sri Thakur. They save their children who are wholly dependent on them from all fear and danger.

On arrival at the Howrah Station I reached Master Mahasaya's wife safely at her house in a hackney carriage.

Sri Ma's return to Calcutta

Having spent one year at Sri Vrindavan Sri Ma returned to Calcutta with Jogin, Maharaj, Latu, Golap-ma and Jogin-ma and after a few days' halt at the house of Balaram Babu of Baghbazar she started for Kamarpukur accompanied by Jogin Maharaj and Golap-ma. For want of money Sri Ma had to travel a long distance on foot and she suffered great hardship. Latu Maharaj came and stayed in Baranagore monastery. Jogin Maharaj left Sri Ma in Kamarpukur and on return to Calcutta he came to Baranagore monastery and together with Latu took the vow of Sannayasa by performing *viraja-homa* as enjoined in the scriptures. I read out to them the *presh-mantra,* etc. of *viraja-homa* and offered oblation in fire and by floating the *danda* (staff) in the Ganges, I had all the rites enjoined in the scriptures performed properly. They were renamed as Swami Jogananda and Swami Adbhutananda respectively. (Swami Vivekananda gave Latu the name Adbhutananda). Jogin Maharaj then started for Prayag for austerities (*tapasyā*).

Sri Ma's next Pilgrimage

Having lived in Kamarpukur for seven or eight months Sri Ma returned to Calcutta and stayed for some time in the rented house of Raju Gomasta on the bank of the Ganges at Belur. Then she came to Sri M-'s house at Calcutta, and according to the direction received from Sri Sri Thakur left

for Gayadham with Buro Gopal (Chaitra 1294 B.S.) to offer *pinda* in the name of her mother. After having visited Vishnugaya Sri Ma accompanied Buro Gopal (Swami Advaitananda) to visit Buddhagaya. Observing the great opulence of the Buddhagaya monastery Sri Ma earnestly prayed to Sri Sri Thakur for removing the hardship of her monastic children adding that they might have a beautiful monastery to live in. In future Sri Ma's prayer was in fact fulfilled and the Belur Math was established as a result of her prayer. I have heard Sri Ma saying, "It is through the will of Sri Sri Thakur that the Belur Math has been established."

Sri Ma returned to Calcutta after having performed the rites of *pindadana* in respect of her mother and lived in the garden house of Nilambar Mukherjee at Belur for six months (up to Kartik 1295 B.S.) with Golap-ma and Jogin-ma. At that time Jogin or Swami Jogananda nursed and attended on Sri Ma. It was then that I composed the Stotra dedicated to Sri Ma and read it over to Sri Ma and she was so pleased that she blessed me saying, "May Saraswati (the Goddess of Learning) take Her seat in your mouth". At that time I received a rosary (of *rudraksha*-beads) too from the hands of Sri Ma.

Sri Ma again went on pilgrimage to Puridham with Maharaj (Brahmananda), Sarat (Saradananda) and Jogin (Jogananda) and lived in Balaram Babu's Kshetrabashi-Math there (from Agrhayana to Phalguna 1925 B.S.). As Sri Sri Thakur had never been to *Sree-Kshetra* (Puri Dham) to see Jagannath, Sri Ma went with a picture of Sri Sri Thakur which she showed to Sri Sri Jagannath Jiu (the deity of Puri temple) and went into ecstasy. On her return to Calcutta she stayed for sometime in Balaram Babu's house at Baghbazar and then went to the house of Baburam Maharaj in village Antpur in Hooghly district. Jogin, Niranjan, Tulsi (Nirmalananda), myself and others accompanied her. Having lived in Antpur for a week Sri Ma, accompanied by all of us, went to Tarakeswar in bullock cart and from there to Kamarpukur, spent a few days there and then left for Jairambati. After about a year's stay at Jairambati and then at Kamarpukur she started for Calcutta towards the end of 1296 B..S. She lived for a few days at the house of Sri M- (Master Mahasaya)

at Calcutta and then went to the house of Balaram Babu at Baghbazar. Balaram Babu was then on death-bed. On the 1st Baisakh, 1297 B.S. Balaram Babu breathed his last and attained the eternal abode of Sri Sri Ramakrishnadeva. At that time I returned to Kasidham after having visited Kedarnath, Gangotri, Jamunotri, Badrinath and other holy places. I shall give details of this later. As a result of prolonged travels, however, I fell ill. Narendranath (Vivekananda) and Baburam (Premananda) were then at Kasidham. Finding me sick Narendra put me in care of Baburam before returning to Calcutta and from Calcutta he deputed his Sannyasin disciple Sadananda to Kasidham for nursing and attending on me. When I recovered to some extent Baburam Maharaj left for Calcutta.

Sri Ma lived for a few days in the house of Ghusuri (Jaistha, 1297 B.S.). At that time Narendranath would often entertain Sri Ma by singing songs in his sweet voice. Later he left with Sri Ma's blessings practising austerities and visiting the holy places of Western India. It was in the house at Ghusuri that Girish Babu had the privilege of meeting Sri Ma for the first time and of touching her feet. It was also in the same house that Durgacharan Nag Mahasaya, the saintly man, met Sri Ma.

CHAPTER XX

THE BEGINNING OF BARANAGORE MATH

(*MONASTERY*)

Baranagore Math was established in Aswin, 1886 A.D. After the *Mahasamadhi* of Sri Sri Thakur, the lay devotees would often visit Cossipore Garden where we continued to live for a few days. Suresh Babu (Suresh Chandra Mitra whom Sri Sri Thakur used to call 'Surendar' or 'Surendra) worried as to where the things used by Sri Sri Thakur would be kept and how Sri Sri Thakur's children would live after the Cossipore Garden would be vacated. Ram Babu was of the view that Sri Sri Thakur's children would go back to their respective houses. Narendranath and the rest of us, however, were not agreeable to that proposal. We intended to lead a life of renunciation in the name and in the service of Sri Sri Thakur. Suresh Babu, therefore, desired that the dedicated children should live in some monastery and lead a life imbued with the spirit and ideals of Sri Sri Thakur. He began to look for a house. Having come to know of Suresh Babu's intention Bhabanath (lay devotee of Sri Sri Thakur who was very dear to Sri Sri Thakur) who was a resident of Baranagore hired a house of Bhuban Dutta in Pramanikghat Road near Baranagore Bazar on a monthly rent of Rs. 19. The Munshis who were landlords of Taki were the real owners of Bhuban Datta's house. It was a dilapidated and condemned structure. People used to call it a deserted house. There were six rooms only in that deserted building. Suresh Babu took that on rent and agreed to pay the monthly rent of Rs. 10 himself.

Gopaldada and Latu who had no house of their own were the first to take up residence in the rented house of Baranagore Math. Tarakdada also began to live there. Narendranath, Sarat, Sashi and others used to live in their respective houses then and occasionally they would come to stay with us in Baranagore Math and jointly discuss the teachings and life of Paramahamsadeva at night.

Coming of the whole group to Baranagore Math

One day Narendranath came and wanted to take Hutko Gopal and myself to the house of Sarat (Saradananda). We complied and having gone to Sarat's house we asked him to live permanently in Baranagore Math. Sarat agreed to come with us. Sashi (Ramakrishnananda) too was living in the same house. We met and asked him also to come with us to live in Baranagore Math, which he agreed to do. So with Sarat and Sashi, Narendranath, Hutko Gopal and myself returned to Baranagore Math. Sarat and Sashi remained in Baranagore Math during the day. Narendranath also stayed there that night. Sashi refused to return home and continued to live with us in the Math since then. Though Sarat returned home at the end of the day he left his home after a few days and joined us in Baranagore Math. Gradually Narendranath, Jogin, Niranjan, Rakhal and others also left their homes for good and came to live with us in Baranagore Math. Our joy then knew no bounds. We realised later that the organisation of our monastic order started from Baranagore Math. All of us remembered that one night before *mahasamadhi* Sri Sri Thakur had called Narendranath and told him, "You should keep the boys together and look after them." We reminded Narendranath of that command of Sri Sri Thakur and made him our chief, we would obey his directions and we would spend our days in regular practice of meditation, worship, studies, devotional songs, etc. In fact, it was Narendranath who was the centre of our hope and faith, comfort and consolations at all times. Although our days passed through great hardship and penury yet, with Sri Sri Thakur as our only support and source of strength, we spent our days cheerfully. Of course there was considerable want of food and clothing. Tarakdada, Latu, Gopaldada, myself and others used to go out for begging and we would cook by turns the little rice that we could collect and appease our hunger with that. Sometimes we would not get any vegetables and then we would have to take rice with boiled *talakucha* leaves. Of course, we would have to be satisfied with only one meal a day. All of us did not have cloth. By tearing one piece of cloth we made loin cloths (*kavpin*) which we used to wear

keeping only one piece of cloth for use of anyone of us who would go out. It is difficult to describe those days of hardship and adversity. My mind is, however, filled with joy when I recall those days.

It is necessary to mention one point here. We often thought then of the need for a chapel. Suresh Chandra Mitra also used to tell us about that. Of course, when the premises of Baranagore Math were rented we brought the beddings, shoes and other articles used by Sri Sri Thakur to Baranagore Math from Cossipore Garden. It was Gopal (junior) and Gopaldada who brought the cot, beddings, etc., in a cart and kept them well arranged in a room. We used to consider that room as our chapel and we used to meditate and sing *kirtan,* etc., sitting in front of Sri Sri Thakur's bed. Suresh Chandra Mitra, Balaram Basu and other lay devotees would come occasionally and spend sometime with us, discussing the nectar-like teachings of Sri Sri Thakur and singing *kirtanas.*

Gradually Sashi (Ramakrishnananda) came and rearranged the cot, beddings, shoes and other used articles of Sri Sri Thakur in the same room more tastefully and having placed a photograph of Sri Sri Thakur on the cot began to do daily worship, *aratrik* and chanting of hymns, etc., regularly. All of us used to join in the chanting of hymns and singing of *kirtanas.* Gradually Sashi started attending on and taking care of Sri Sri Thakur's photograph in that chapel in the same manner as we used to nurse and attend to Sri Sri Thakur during his life-time. Having cooked the food collected by begging we would first offer that to Sri Sri Thakur and then we would cheerfully partake of the *prasada* together. During the evening *aratrikam* we repeated the words, "Jai Guru, Jai Guru" (Glory to the Master) and after *aratrikam* we would read out verses from the 'Guru Geeta' and then prostrate before Sri Sri Thakur.

At that time I used to lie down in the parlour and I would spend the major part of the night in meditation. Latu also used to do likewise. During interludes of meditation I would compose hymns of Sri Sri Thakur and read Upanishad, Geeta and other holy books. At night I would meditate lying down in the posture of *sabashana.* The whole night would pass unnoticed. The first hymn of Sri Ramakrishna composed

by me was in *anustubha-chhanda* (metre). In Baranagore Math we used to chant a few verses of that hymn after the evening service (*aratrikam*).

CHAPTER XXI

OUR ASSUMPTION OF MONKHOOD IN TRADITIONAL WAY

One day Narendra said addressing all of us, "What do you think of our assumption of Sannyasa (monkhood) in the manner prescribed in the *Shastras* (religious codes)?" I said, "I agree. We should perform *viraja-homa* in order to assume Sannyasa in the way laid down in *Shastras.* I have got with me the *mantram* of *viraja-homa.*" "How did you get the *mantram* of *viraja-homa*?", Narendranath enquired inquisitively. I then told him from beginning to end, how I had collected and recorded in a note book the *matha, madi, preshmantra,* etc. of *viraja-homa* from a monk of the *dashanami* order on my way to Barabur hill. Narendranath was elated with joy to hear this and said, "All this is due to the Will and Grace of Sri Sri Thakur. Then let us perform *viraja-homa* one day with *puja, homa* and other rites and take the vow of Sannyasa in the traditional way."

We all consented cheerfully. The date was also fixed. As far as I remember one day early in Magh 1293 B.S. we sat in front of the holy slippers of Sri Sri Thakur in the chapel of Baranagore Math, after having bath in the Ganges. Sashi performed the ritual worship of Sri Sri Thakur. Some *bilva* fuel-wood, twelve *dandas* (staffs) of *bilva* and ghee had been collected for *homa* (sacrifice). Fire was kindled. Under Narendranath's instruction I began to read out from my note book the *preshamantra* for *sannyasa* as the *tantradharak* (the director). At first Narendranath and then Rakhal, Niranjan, Sarat, Sashi, Sarada, Latu and others repeated *preshamantra* and offered oblation to the kindled fire. Afterwards I myself read *preshamantra* and offered oblation to fire. Of course, we had already had initiation in Sannyasa from Sri Sri Thakur. We had also received from Sri Sri Thakur twelve pieces of saffron-coloured cloth and rosaries from Sri Sri Thakur which Gopaldada had intended to distribute to *Sadhus* on their way

to the fair at Gangasagar. Our assumption of *sannyasa* with *Shastric* rites, however, took place in Baranagore Math.

Narendranath assumed the name of "Vividishananda" and he gave Rakhal, Baburam, Sashi, Sarat and others according to their respective traits, the names Brahmananda, Premananda, Ramakrishnananda, Saradananda, etc. I have already mentioned that in Baranagore Math I used to meditate day and night in closed doors. As I would study Vedanta philosophy and discriminate and defend the non-dualistic point of view in my discussion with others I was called *'Kali-Vedanti'*. On account of my severe austerities I was named by many as "Kali-tapasvi". As I considered knowledge of the non-dual Absolute as the highest and the Uultimate knowledge, Narendranath gave me the name "Abhedananda". Sashi used to be busy day and night with the worship and service of Sri Sri Thakur Ramakrishnadeva, so Narendranath named him as "Ramakrishnananda'.' Latu and Jogin took the vow of *sannyasa* later. Latu used to spend day and night in meditation. His renunciation and austerities were really wonderful and Narendranath gave him the name "Advutananda" (Advuta-wonderful). Tarakda (Sivananda) would often meditate lying in the posture of *shabasana* donned only in loin cloth. At first he did not participate in *viraja-homa* but he could not be persuaded for the time being. Of course he took the vow of *sannyasa* later. Subsequently we went to the Ganges and let our staves drift away in the current. Since then we became disqualified for performing *puja* and other rituals. According to religious codes, we then turned into *Paramahamsas.* Sashi (Ramakrishnanda), however, continued to perform daily *puja, bhoga* and *aratrika* following the path of devotion in spite of his having become a *paramhamsa.* In the beginning Narendranath did not approve of such daily *puja* after assumption of *sannyasa.* Occasionally he would have exchange of words with Sashi, about this. It so happened that one day when Narendranath was demonstrating very strongly against Sashi's daily *puja,* Sashi was annoyed and in a fit of rage he threw Narendranath out of the chapel by catching hold of his hair. We were stunned to see this. Of course, although Sashi had taken the vow of *sannyasa* with the ceremony of *viraja-homa* yet Sri Sri Thakur continued

to be the all and end all of Sashi. He had committed that act in a moment of emotional exuberance. He realised this later and being contrite for his act apologised to Narendranath. Narendranath was smiling all the time. He not only pardoned Sashi but instead of being perturbed at his behaviour in the slightest degree also praised Sashi smilingly for the utter steadfastness of his devotion to Sri Guru (the Master).

My lessons in Instrumental Music

It will not be out of place to mention here in this connection that during this period (of stay in Baranagore Math) when Narendranath would sing songs in *drupad* style none would be available for accompanying him on *pakhwaj*. Gopaldada could play on *tabla-baya*; so, when Narendranath would sing *kheyal, thumri* or *bhajan*, etc. Gopaldada would keep the beats on *tabla*. A desire to learn *pakhwaj* grew in me when I felt the need for accompaniment of *pakhwaj* with Narendranath's *dhrupad* songs. When approached and expressed my desire to Gopal Mallick, a famous *pakhwaj* player of Calcutta in those days, he gladly agreed to teach me *pakhwaj*. I noted down some *bol* and *paran* of *pakhwaj* from him in my note book and everyday I would practise them for sometime. My sense of rhythm was quite strong. Narendranath too used to praise me for that. In a few days I made good progress in *pakhwaj*. Of course, I had, for sometimes, taken lessons in *pakhwaj* from a disciple of Gopal Mallik also. After my lessons I used to accompany Narendranath on *pakhwaj* whenever he would sing *dhrupad* songs.

Once a session of Narendranath's *dhrupad* songs was arranged in Ram Babu's house. Ram Babu had invited Gopal Mallik, the *pakhwaj* player, for playing on *pakhwaj* with Narendranath's songs. I accompanied Narendranath to Ram Babu's house that day. Narendranath started singing and Gopal Mallik accompanied him on *pakhwaj* in wonderful style. Lest he would miss the rhythm during the high-flown music of Gopal Mallik, Narendranath asked me to keep the beats of *dhrupad* and *dhamar* in my hands. I cannot express in words how impeechable Narendranath's performance was that day.

Occasionally sessions of Narendranath's *dhrupad* songs would be held in the houses of Girish Chandra Ghosh and Balaram Bose in Calcutta. I used to be their guest along with Narendranath. Sometimes we would stay there for the night. It is needless to mention here that I learnt some *bol* and *paran* of *tabla* also from Gopaldada and for a few days I regularly practised *tabla.* I had also learnt to play on *khol* a little for accompanying *kirtana.*

CHAPTER XXII

TO PURIDHAM

That was 1887 A.D. Sri Sri Thakur's birthday anniversary was celebrated with ceremony this year also. Despite ill health Narendranath sang *dhrupad* songs for nearly three hours. Narendranath was then particularly busy and worried in connection with the suit regarding partition of his house.

That year after the birthday anniversary of Sri Sri Thakur I started for Puridham with Sarat (Saradananda) and Baburam (Premananda). In those days a ship used to go up to Chandbali and from there one could go to Cuttack in bullock cart. We travelled that way. We met Haraballav Babu and Nimai Babu, brothers of Balaram Babu at Cuttack. On hearing that we were going to Puri, Haraballav Babu gave us a letter to the *Mohanta* (Head Monk) of Achari Emar-Math of Puri. That helped us to get accommodation at Puri. We stayed in Emar-Math at Puri for six months. That year (1887 A.D.) we witnessed the construction of the chariot of Jagannathdeva. We pulled the chariot and also saw the dismantling of the chariot.

At Puri we three used to get the *prasada* of Jagannathdeva and we used to spend the whole day in meditation and *japa*. After taking the *prasada* of Jagannathdeva I would occasionally sit alone in one of the little *gofas* (temple like structures) or seats for austerities of Vaishnava monks on the sea-shore and spend the whole afternoon in meditation. I would take bath in sea and at the time of bath I would enjoy to see how the fishermen caught fish. One day Sarat and myself had a desire to know the taste of sea-fish and among ourselves we discussed how to fulfil this wish.

Baburam was a vegetarian. So, we thought we would not disclose our plan to him, but he came to know our intention. Of course, he did not stand on our way. We began to look for a secluded place and at last found one. On day Sarat, Baburam and myself were going to Konarak along the sea beach when we came upon the ruins of the wall of an

ancient building. Behind the ruins of the wall there was a secluded spot. We decided to fry sea-fish in an earthen pot there and fulfil our wish to take sea-fish. Sarat and I had already procured some sea-fish from fishermen at Puri beach and we had brought the same in an earthen pot. We had match box with us. We collected some dry leaves and twigs and fried the fish in that pot. Baburam did not partake of it. Sarat and I put it in our mouth once. We found it tasteful and fatty but it had a strong fishy smell like *Hilsa* fish. Our desire for taking sea-fish was quenched there.

After this we one day went to Chilka lake in a bullock cart. There were dunes on two banks of Chilka which gave the place the appearance of a desert. At a distance something like a mirage came to our view. We saw a reservoir of water and shade of trees at a distance but as we approached the place we saw that it was an endless expanse of sand.

Six months elapsed since our coming to Puridham. In the meantime Baburam (Premananda) was once attacked with typhoid. Sarat and I prayed to Sri Sri Thakur in great anxiety. After constant nursing Baburam came round. Then one day Sarat (Saradananda) had dysentery. When he recovered we considered it advisable to leave Puri.

To Khandagiri and Udaygiri

From Puri we came to Bhubaneswar. After having stayed for a few days in the house of a *Panda* we had a strong desire to see the Buddhistic caves of Khandagiri and Udayagiri. So we started for Khandagiri and Udayagiri from Bhuvaneswar on foot. On the way there was quite dense forest. We took a guide with us who was a resident of Orissa. Having reached the foot of Udayagiri and Khandagiri we first went up by the hill road of Khandagiri and then we ascended by the hill road of Udayagiri and we were struck with wonder to see the caves. Although the glorious relics of the Buddhist age were almost in ruins yet they bore testimony to the history of the past days. The Buddhist *Sramanas* (monks) used to live in the elephant cave, serpent cave and other caves and pursue their meditation, studies, etc., undisturbed.

We saw the edits of Ashoke inscribed on the hill side in Pali language. We could decipher some of these inscriptions. Our guide told us that even up to that time some Buddhist monks were living in some of the caves. We, however, could not trace out any even after a thorough search. Then the guide said that a monk was living in a cave in the jungle on the hill top. Having heard this we had a curiosity to go to that cave. Baburam did not like to go, he waited where we were. Sarat and myself started with the guide and after some searching in the forest about the hill we suddenly arrived in front of a big cave. We had a strong desire to enter into the cave. At the entrance of the cave, however, we found pug marks of a tiger instead of human footprints on sand. Shuddering with fright we drew back a little when we saw at a distance a shepherd boy who was collecting something on a leaf from the surface of a rock. We slowly approached him and saw that he was collecting condensed milk from the surface of the rock. When asked he said that it was tigress milk. He was collecting that as that was an ingredient of medicine. He said that a tiger and a tigress lived in the cave which we were about to enter. The tigress had given birth to cubs. The tigress suckled the cubs lying on that rock and milk which had dropped from the breast of the tigress had got condensed. He had observed from a distance the tigress suckling her cubs on many days. So, having seen condensed milk there he had come to collect that.

Filled with curiosity we requested him to give us a small portion of the tigress' milk in order that we might taste it. When he gave us a little condensed milk Sarat and I tasted it and found that it had the strong smell of the tigress' body. We thought it advisable to leave the place slowly after having taken a sample of the milk in a leaf to show Baburam.. Coming down hill a little we found Baburam waiting anxiously for us. He was relieved to see us back and was astonished and pleased to see the powder of tigress' milk. We then returned safely to Bhubaneswar with the guide on foot.

Next day we left Bhubaneswar for Cuttuck in a bullock cart. I used to cook on the way. Nimai Babu, brother of Balaram Babu was living in Kothar. I met him at Kothar. Later we left for Calcutta via Cuttuck.

It is necessary to mention here an incideent of 1888 A.D. in this connection. Jogen (Jogananda) had gone to Allahabad at that time and for sometime he lived there as a guest in the house of Govinda Chandra Bose. After some time he was attacked with small pox. Govinda Babu sent information to Baranagore Math. Narendranath immediately went to Govinda Babu's house at Allahabad with Mahapurush (Sivananda), Niranjan and myself. Jogen was still sick. He was pleased to see us. Narendranath and three of us nursed him and when he came round we started with him for Baranagore Math.

CHAPTER XXIII

TO KAMARPUKUR

1888-1889 A.D.: Sri Ma was staying in the house of a devotee named 'Naga' on her return to Calcutta on the 12th January, 1889 A.D. (29th Paus, 1295 B.S.) from Puridham. At that time she visited the Kali temple at Kalighat. After that Sri Ma decided to go to Jayrambati via Kamarpukur. She also made up her mind to visit the birth place of Baburam (Premananda) at Antpur, Hoogli, on her way to Jayrambati. Accordingly on 5th February (1889 A.D.) Sri Ma started on her journey to Antpur from Calcutta on foot. She was accompanied by Golap-ma, Narendranath, Niranjan, Sarat, Jogen, Baburam, myself, Tulsi (Nirmalananda), Master Mahasaya (Sri M-), Sanyal (Baikuntha Sanyal) and many others. Sri Ma stayed at Antpur for a week. Baburam's brother and relatives looked after and served Sri Ma and ourselves with special care.

After having spent a week at Antpur Sri Ma and all of us started for Kamarpukur. In those days the most convenient route to Kamarpukur was through Tarakeswar. So, we first went towards Tarakeswar. At Tarakeswar we got a bullock cart for Sri Ma near the station. We proceeded towards Kamarpukur with Sri Ma and Golap-ma in the cart, the rest of us travelling on foot. On the way we rested for a while at Arambagh and continued our journey from there. The vast fields Bhikdas lay on the way. The fields of Bhikdas were in those days infested with robbers and highwaymen who would often murder travellers by beating them with clubs in the fields. We, however, crossed those fields safely and reached Kamarpukur. Night had set in and all of us were exhausted by the journey. Many of us had sustained bruises in our feet for having walked bare-footed over stony path. The skin under my feet had become thin like the paper of a kite on account of friction with stones and was bleeding. After having spent two or three days at Kamarpukur we went to Jairambati on foot. By that time I had almost lost all power of movement. The information reached Sri Ma and being

very sorry she asked me to take rest for at least a week at Jairambati. I became almost bed-ridden. I, therefore, complied with the order of Sri Ma. Gradually my feet were cured.

On the way to Uttarakhand

Sri Ma resolved to spend sometime at Jairambati. It was also decided that Golap-ma would stay with Sri Ma for a few days. In the circumstances Narendranath, Baburam, Sarat, Niranjan, Master Mahasay and others got ready to return to Calcutta. I, however, made up my mind to go to Hardwar via Kasidam instead of returning to Baranagore and I told Sri Ma about my intention. Sri Ma was glad to know this and gave me permission and also her blessings. On having come to know of my intentions Tulsi (Nirmalananda) got ready to accompany me. So having taken the dust of Sri Ma's feet and having bid goodbye to Narendranath and other brethren Tulsi and myself started for Kasi along the Grand Trunk Road.

Tulsi and I made a resolve to travel penniless all over Uttarakhand on foot after having visited Kasi and Hardwar. We would not touch money on the way. For a Sannyasin touching of fire is a taboo. We, therefore, decided that we would not cook our food with our own hand. We would not spend the night in any house. We would not wear any shoes, socks, banyan or garment. We would take only our meal a day with whatever could be collected by *madhukari* in three or five houses. With this firm resolve in our mind we started on our travels with only two pieces of loin cloth, two outer garments, one blanket, one *kamandalu* (begging bowl) and one staff. We would walk twelve to fifteen miles in the forenoon and twelve to fourteen miles in the afternoon everyday and thus we passed through Burdwan, Ranigunge and the forest of Santhal-Parganas. There were small hamlets of Santhals on the wayside in Santhal Parganas. Occasionally we would go into those hamlets and mix with and talk to them to learn their manners and customs. We were then travelling through Sal and Mohagany forest where begging or

madhukari was not possible. Sometimes we would have to live on baked rice, baked gram, *mahua* flower or *mahua* fruits, etc. for the whole day. At night we would spread out our blankets under a tree and sleep there resting our head on a brick or on a stone. After dusk when we could not see the path in darkness we would halt and arrange to go to sleep and resume our journey in the small hours of the morning. Thus we would travel ten to fifteen miles till about 10 o'clock in the coolness of the morning. After some rest we would bathe in some neighbouring tank or river and thereafter both of us would have our meal with food obtained by *madhukari* in a village. Then having taken a brief rest under a tree, we would continue our journey till dusk.

One day while going along a jungle path we came across a Santhal going with bow and arrows for hunting. I accosted him saying, "Where are you going?" He said, "I am going for hunting." I asked, "What games were available in that forest". He said, "Peacocks are available". The man was quite healthy and strong and of jovial temperament. He looked at us cheerfully and gradually entered into the adjoining jungle smiling.

Our destination was Jamtara. but having lost our way we were overtaken by darkness. We were very much exhausted. Seeing a Santhal woman we enquired about the way to Jamtara. The woman said, "Where will you go?" I said, "Jamtara". She said, "Alas! you have left the road to Jamtara behind". So saying she showed us the way to Jamtara. Gradually, sometime after dusk. we arrived at Jamtara and spent the night there under a tree.

At dawn Tulsi and I continued our journey. When we would find a village on the way we would collect some food by begging in the form of *madhukari* from a few houses and appease our hunger with that. Continuing the journey we would halt for the night wherever darkness would set in. Travelling thus twenty to twenty-five miles a day, begging on the way, contented with whatever we would get, we arrived at Gazipur.

At Gazipur

On arrival at Gazipur we went to the house of Sisir Chandra Basu. Sisir Babu was a Munsiff in Gazipur Court at that time. He had high proficiency in various schools of philosophy and in Sanskrit literature. He was then translating Panini's Grammar and Sankara's commentary on 'Ishopanishad' into English. In case of any difficulty to understand the 'Mahabhasya' commentary on Panini or the commentary on Ishopanishad he would consult me. Through the grace of Sri Sri Thakur I had already made a special study of Panini's Grammar, named "Siddhanta-Kaumadi" and of 'Mahabhasya'. Patanjali had written 'Mahabhasya' as an interpretation of Panini's Grammar. It would not be an exaggeration to call 'Mahabhasya' a book of philosophical discourses. Having come in contact with Sisir Babu who was a scholar in Grammar I once again made a thorough study of 'Siddhanta-Kaumadi and 'Mahabhasya'. Sisir Babu was much pleased to see my knowledge of and my devotion to the study of grammar and so he would often discuss with me while translating 'Siddhanta-Kaumudi' into English. Besides helping Sisir Babu in translation I myself translated portions of 'Siddhanta-Kaumadi'. Observing the extraordinary diligence and application of Sisir Babu a desire grew in me to translate the sayings of Sri Sri Thakur into English. I made a beginning of translation also. Some of the sayings were translated by Sisir Babu and Ishan Chandra Mukhopadhyaya. Ishan Chandra Mukhopadhyaya was a devotee of Sri Sri Thakur. When Tulsi (Nirmalananda) and I were staying in Sisir Babu's house, Ishan Babu came to Gazipur for a change. He was well-known to Sisir Babu and so whenever he would visit Gazipur he would come to Sisir Babu's house. I knew Ishan Babu from before. So he was much pleased to see Tulsi and myself in Sisir Babu's house. Moreover when he heard that I was translating the teachings of Sri Sri Thakur he was all the more happy. I have already said that he himself translated some of the sayings of Sri Sri Thakur.

It was summer season. A spell of extreme heat had set in. Hot loo (hot wind as if from the furnace) used to blow at midday. For this reason the courts, schools and shops used

to function from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. No one could go out of doors after 12 o'clock. In the ground floor rooms all doors and windows would be closed and thermantidote and khus khus screens sprinkled with water would be arranged for use. Thus we would take rest in a cool and dark room. We would come out at 4 p.m. when it would be comparatively cool due to decline of the heat of the sun.

At that time Hariprasanna (Swami Vijnanananda later) was an Engineer of the P.W.D. at Gazipur. He would take Tulsi and myself in his Tandom cab when he would go to inspect roads and he would show us round the towns. Hariprasanna was acquainted with almost everybody of Gazipur. Let me relate here one annecdote of that time. One day Hariprasanna introduced to us a famous Sanskrit Pundit of Gazipur of that time. He was a dualist and was strongly opposed to the non-dualistic view. Hariprasanna's intention was to pit that dualist Pundit against me in debate, for, Hariprasanna knew that I was to invetrate non-dualist and that the Pundit would certainly be defeated by my sharp intellect and arguments. That was what happened in fact. The Pundit of Gazipur on having heard from Hariprasanna about my imflinching adherence to non-dualism started quoting scriptures in order to refute non-dualism. Hariprasanna and Tulsi sat nearby to hear our debate. The Pundit put forth many arguments and a network of reasoning to establish dualism and to refute the view of Sankara. I recall that he accused Acharya Sankara of having mis-interpreted the Vedanta aphorisms of Vyasadeva. I debated with him in fluent Sanskrit to prove the validity and logical consistency of the unassailable commentaries on Upanishad and Vedanta aphorisms and I shattered all the objections of the Pundit against non-dualism. After we had carried on the debate for nearly an hour the Pndit admitted defeat and said, "What you say is right but still I consider dualism to be beneficial for all". In reply to this I told the Pundit that the doctrines of dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism suit persons in different stages of spiritual development. The non-dualistic doctrine is necessary in the ultimate stage. The Pundit nodded his concurrence with this view. The joy of Hariprasanna and Tulsi knew no bounds as I had defeated the redoubable Pundit. I remember that long

after this, in 1921, when I was living in Belur Math on return from America Hariprasanna (Vijnanananda, after having taken *sannyasa* from Swamiji) reminded me of this episode of Gazipur and said, "Maharaj, I was aware of your extraordinary erudition in scriptures and of your debating utility. That was why that day in Gazipur I set the dualist Pundit in debate with you. I had a firm belief that you would surely defeat the Pundit." Of course Hariprasanna took pride in recounting this story not only that day but on many other occasions to many people.

Pawhari Baba

I had already heard about the Paramahamsa Pawhari Baba. the famous Sannyasin of Gazipur from Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) and I was aware of his extraordinary psychic powers and austerities. So when I came to Gazipur the desire to see him grew particularly strong in me. Instead of taking any kind of food he would live solely on air taken through the process of *pranayama.* That was why people used to call him Pawhari Baba or the "air-eater". I went one day to Pawhari Baba's *ashrama* with Tulsi (Nirmalananda). I found that there was an underground pit in the *ashrama* where he used to practise austerities and used to talk to outsiders from behind closed doors.

Pawhari Baba had a temple where his younger brother was the priest. There was a beautiful image of Narayana in that temple. His younger brother would serve the image of 'Narayana' first and then serve Pawhari Baba also. Sometimes Pawhari Baba would remain merged in *samadhi* in the pit within closed doors going without food for a month. At that time none would go near him. His brother would, however, place some food at the door everyday and the next day he would bring it back finding it intact. The austerities of Pawhari Baba were wonderful and stronge!

I heard many more annecdotes about Pawhari Baba. Sometimes he would stay in the pit and sometimes he would stay in a garden outside the pit which was enclosed by high wall and there he would spend his time by worshipping the image

of Vishnu and doing meditation. If anyone would come at that time he would talk to him from behind closed doors; but he would not see anyone. It was said that many years ago he had come out once. Having got that information such a large crowd had assembled to have a glimpse of him that since then he went into hiding in that garden in disgust. In spite of this, however, villagers of wide area were so attracted by his influence that they used to revere and regard him as a God. It is said that no theft, robbery or crime ever took place within twenty miles of Pawhari Baba's *ashrama* and so there was no Police Outpost in that area.

I heard another story also regarding Pawhari Baba and I was told that it was not merely a story, it was a fact. The story is that one night a thief scaled the wall of the *ashrama* and entered into the garden for committing theft. Pawhari Baba was at that time taking rest lying down. The thief entered into the temple and packed up the utensils used for worship and also the brass cooking and water pots in a piece of cloth. Pawhari Baba was then feigning as if he were asleep. But when the thief was about to escape with the booty packed in cloth he rose up with a sound. The thief ran away leaving the packet behind, when he heard human voice. Pawhari Baba found that the wish of the thief had not been fulfilled. He immediately gave up his rest and having taken the packet on his own head he began to run after the thief. The thief was perplexed and he began to run faster for fear of life. Pawhari Baba too was not the man to give up the quest. He ran even faster and having overtaken the thief said to him, "Brother, do not fear. You left behind the packet. This packet is yours. Have it—you may take it away. The thief had not received such treatment from anyone before. Moreover, he was aware of the greatness of Pawhari Baba. So, he was ashamed and he fell at his feet and begged for pardon. He also made a resolve that he would not commit theft. Even evil-doers are changed into men of saintly character by the holy touch of Saints and great Souls. We have heard of a similar incident in the life of a Christian Father. However, let me come back now to the main story. Our visit to Pawhari Baba was successful. He was then in meditation in the underground pit. When he got

information about us he called us and made us sit near him. I discussed a few spiritual topics with him. He answered slowly in words and gestures. I found that he was really a great man who had attained knowledge of the Absolute and was always conscious of his identity with the *Atman* (Soul).

To Kasi

Within a day or two Tulsi and I left Gazipur and started for Kasi. Gradually we reached Kasi and took shelter in the house of Bansi Datta in Bangalitola. There was no difficulty of begging in Kasdiam as many rich people had opened feeding centres. Mendicants and Sadhus could get bread, *dal,* etc., in sufficient quantity by *madhukari* in those centres. Both of us spent some time in Kasidam living by *madhukari*. After having spent a few days at Bansi Datta's house in Bangalitola we suddenly met Jogen, Gopaldada and Dinanath one day. They had come to Kasidam sometime ago. Our joy knew no bounds on having met them. Thereafter we began to live in a quiet garden on the bank of Asi. We would take one meal a day by doing *madhukari* in a feeding centre near Durgabari and we would spend the whole day in meditation and discussion of Vedanta. One day I had a desire to travel around the periphery of Kashi. Tulsi, Dinanath, Jogen and I thought of Sri Sri Thakur and started. Gopaldad stayed back in the garden. On our way we saw various Siva temples. We entered into every temple and worshipped Siva and at last returned to the garden after having completed our peripheral journey.

One day at about 11 a.m. while we were returning from *madhukari* we saw swarms of locusts coming. Gradually the whole sky was overcast. The inhabitants of all parts of Kasi then began to suond cymbals and beat tin-containers and blow conch-shells to scare away the locusts. That was the first time in my life I saw swarms of locusts eat up crops and leaves of trees wherever they sit. I actually saw that in a moment the swarms of locusts sat on neighbouring trees and ate up all their leaves.

Visit to Swami Bhaskarananda and Trailanga Swami

One day we went to see Bhaskarananda Swami. He used to live naked in a garden. We prostrated before him and sat on one side. He then enquired who we were. We said that we were wandering monks, that we had come to Kasidam on our journey and were staying in a garden house and that we intended to go to Hardwar and Hrishikesh. Being pleased he smiled a little. We discussed with him on some intricate problems of Vedanta. We found that he was a *Sadhaka* (spiritual seeker) in the path of discrimination. He was quite well-versed in the scriptures and he was a *Sannyasin* practised in discrimination. We, however, understood that he had not yet attained the fulfilment of spiritual quest. After having seen Sri Sri Thakur who was the personification of spiritual fulfiment (*Siddha* of *Siddhas*) and having had the opportunity to serve him our eye to see the spiritual state of Yogi had opened.

On another day we went to see Trailanga Swami. We saw him lying naked on a step of the stone staircase of Dasashvamedha Ghat. The stairs of stone had been so heated in the extremely hot sun that it was impossible to stand there barefooted. But we found that Trailanga Swami was lying there naked. He was sleep and he was snoring. We were astonished. Ae he was aslep we came away that day. Next day we went to Dasashvamedha Ghat in the morning. We heard that he was in his own *ashrama* near Beni Madhab's temple. So, we went there and found him sitting. He was in an indrawn mood. There was a slate and a pencil close by. We heard that if any question was written on the slate he would write down the answer in Sanskrit. On seeing him we understood that he was a man of realization. We had heard about Trailanga Swami from Sri Sri Thakur at Cossipore Garden. We wrote one or two questions on the slate regarding the existence of God. He looked at us and immediately wrote down the answer. We then remembered Sri Sri Thakur again and again. A correct and unwavering reply regarding the existence of God cannot be obtained from an ordinary man who has not attained self-relization. We prostrated

before te self-realized great Soul Trailanga Swami in deep reverence and big goodbye to him.

CHAPTER XXIV

TO HARDWAR

After a few more days at Kashidam Tulsi and I decided to start for Hardwar. So, we set out for Ajyodhya after having prostrated before Viswanathjiu of Kashi. One morning at 9 a.m. we reached a village which looked like a prosperous locality. We found that it was inhabited by many well-to-do people. Tulsi said that this village might be a convenient place for begging and so it would be of no use to proceed further. I agreed. We thought it proper to finish our bath in a neighbouring tank. After bath we thought that there was still enough time for our midday begging and therefore we should proceed a little furher abandoing the prospects of sumptuous *madhukari* in that advanced village. I said to Tulsi, "Look, it does not behove a Sannyasin to stay in this village with the expectation of plenty of *madhukari*. Moreover we have not travelled very far on foot today. So, let us move on. We may beg in the next village." Tulsi did not quite agree to this. He said, "We may get to a small village after travelling eight or ten *kroshes* more (1 *kroshe*=2 miles). I am afraid it may be difficult to get *madhukari* there and moreover the sun may be menacing." I said, "Tulsi, God takes the burden of His devotee on Himself. We have come out with the name of Sri Sri Thakur, why do you worry? Sri Sri Thakur must have kept our *madhukari* ready there. Let us go. Milk in the mother's breast is kept ready before the birth of the child. so, we shall have *madhukari* in that village." I set out and finding no other way Tulsi followed me. The sun gradually became increasingly hot. The road lay across open fields. There was no trace of any tree anywhere and so there was no shade. Moreover the road was full of dust which had got heated by the sun. We were barefooted. So we had considerable difficulty in walking. I saw that Tulsi's face and eyes had become red. Both of us were perspiring. After having travelled for about four hours in dust and hot sun we reached a small village tired and

exhausted. Our stomach was then burning with hunger and our throat was parched with thirst. Both of us were almost incapable of walking any further. In that state we took shelter in a Shiva temple of the village. It was about 2 p.m. then. We saw only one shop of a Marwari in the village. Tulsi said with choked voice, "I told you, brother, that the next village would be far off and *madhukari* would be difficult there. Now you see we are benumbed with hunger and it is difficult to get alms also." I consoled Tulsi as before saying, "Brother, why do you despair? It will happen as I told you. Sri Sri Thakur must have kept *madhukari* ready for us."

That was precisely what happened. Physically jaded as we were we spread out our blankets and sat down with the idea to go out for begging after some rest. Tulsi said, "Do as you like. I, for myself, shall lie down." Tulsi lay down. I sat for rest when to our surprise a Marwari gentleman came and having prostrated saying, "(Salutation to Narayana)" stood up and enquired, "Great Soul, have you had any food?" I said, "No, son." On having heard this the Marwari gentleman went away. Tulsi who was lying got up and sat. He said, "The Marwari gentleman will perhaps bring some food for us." I said, "Tulsi, you know the Lord has sad in the Gita, 'योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्' : "To one who worships me with simple hearted devotion I carry the requisites of Yoga). The Lord bears the burden of His devotee. We have come out with the name of Sri Sri Thakur, he is the be all and end all of our life. So, why despair? He will surely provide our food."

Hardly had I finshed when I saw the Marwari gentleman with *puri*, vegetables, sweets, *laddu*, etc., in sufficient quantity in a basket which he placed in the middle of our blanket and left after prostrating. I was really astonished. I said to Tulsi once again. "You see, how our *madhukari* has been kept ready here from before. Are you not convinced Tulsi, that the merciful Sri Sri Thakur is always with us?" I then began to recite that *sloka* of the ninth chapter of Srimad Bhagabadgita. Tulsai said in joy, "Your prediction has come true at last. Really Sri Sri Thakur is always with us." We sat down to take that food after having offered it to Sri Sri Thakur. The food given by the Marwari gentleman was so plentiful that we could not consume the whole of it. We distributed what

remained by calling the village children and to our great satisfaction we saw them eating that cheerfully.

Gradually darkness set in. We spent that night in the Shiva temple. Next morning we resumsed our journey. Gradually the town of Ajodhya came within our view. It is the birth place of the Lord Sri Ramachandra. That was in Treta Yuga. Of course neither Rama nor Ajodhya of those days is in existence now; yet the sacred memory of Sri Ramachandra still evokes reverence in the hearts of men. We took shelter in a temple of Ajodhya. There we had *madhukari* by going round two or three houses. We decided to spend three nights at Ajodhya to visit the sites connected with the divine spot of Sri Ramachandra and the monasteries of Ramait Vaishnavas. We remembered the old times while bathing in Jamuna. After three nights at Ajodhya we started for Lucknow. The road was dusty and the sun was searching. Sri Sri Thakur was out only source of support and strength. So, although we were faced with various difficulties and adverse situations from day to day yet we continued our journey remembering Sri Sri Thakur.

Gradually we arrived at Lucknow. Lucknow is a historical town. Many relics of Muslim Rulers are still presered here. When we reached Lucknow a North Indian devotee enquired where we would go. I said, "To Hardwar". The devotee enquired how we proposed to go. I said, "On foot". The North Indian devotee asked again with considerable earnestness, "Great Soul, Hardwar is far from here. Can you go all the way on foot?" I said, "My son,, we have come on foot from Calcuta. We have already covered half the way to Hardwar, only the other half remains to be covered. There is no reason why we shall not be able to walk this distance." The devotee said, "If I give you the train fare will you kindly accept-" I said, "We have taken a vow that we shall not touch money." The devotee said, "Great Soul. if I buy ticket will you accept." I said, "Yes, we shall accept." The devotee then bought two third class railway tickets for us to Hardwar. He offered us some money for our food on the way. We said that we would not accept money. Then he bought some sweets for us in a container made of *sal* leaves and after having prostrated before us he left. Tulsi began to praise

the devotee for his sympathy. I said, "Brother, it is thus that the Lord helps His devotees through others. You have seen with how much love and devotion the North Indian gentleman who is neither known nor related to us has ministered to us. You should realise that all this is divine sport of Sri Sri Thakur." I found that Tulsi was very pleased within himself.

Next morning we safely arrived at Hardwar Station. That was 1889 A.D. We took shelter in a *dharmasala* (rest house for pilgrims) in Hardwar town. Shops were not so numerous in Hardwar then. Everywhere there were shanties of Sadhus and Sannyasins. At places there were centres for feeding Sadhus. Kalikomliwala's feeding centre was the biggest. Most of the Sadhus and *Sannyasins* used to get their *madhukari* from there at noon. Food consisted mostly of bread and *kalai dal* of large grains. Occasionally a little vegetable preparation and some sweets would also be available. We had bath in Brahmakunda first and then we had *madhukari* from a feeding centre. Then, after some rest, we visited the monasteries of Sadhus of various sects. Hardwar is surrounded by hills clad with green trees which form part of the Himalayan range. The water of the Ganges at Hardwar is transparent, green looking, and is charming. The water of the Ganges is in constant flow with a gurgling sound. In such an environment the mind is naturally drawn into meditation.

At Hrishikesh

We visited Dakshaghat and other sacred spots in Kanakhal. Ramakrishna Ashrama had not yet been established in Kanakhal which was then a very quiet place. Except for some shanties of Sadhus here and there the area was covered with jungls all around. We stayd for two days in the *dharamsala* at Hardwar and visited all holy places there. We were however eager all the time to visit Kedarnath and Badrinath, Gangotri and Jamunotri via Lachmanjhula. So after two days at Hardwar we started on foot for Hrishikesh. On both sides of the roal sal forests sprayled over long distances. Chirping of birds could be heard at some places in the forest. Having started in the morning we reached Hrishikesh at about

9 or 10 a.m. charmed by natural beauty we did not feel any physical strain in covering the distance of 14 to 15 miles from Hardwar to Hrishikesh. At Hrishikesh we took shelter in a small house which was a Sadhu's cloister. As we stood saying, "Salutation to Narayana", the Sadhu welcomed us and made room for us in the cloister. The Ganges was flowing by that place with bubbling sound. Rocks of various sizes were spread all over the area including the bed of the Ganges. As the transparent water of the Ganges was flowing over those rocks with varying speed it was making that bubbling sound The sound sometimes appeared to be shrill and sometimes sweet.

We found that Marwari gentleman had opened some feeding centres for Sadhus at Hrishikesh. The Sadhus would get bread and other food by *madhukari* from these feeding centres after having finished *japa,* meditation, Vedantic studies they would take their meal at midday, sitting on the river side After the meal they would take rest in their respective cloister and then do *japa,* meditation, reading of scriptures and austerities. I saw that Sadhus with a genuine spirit of renunciation were living in shanties made in the shape of umbrellas. First they would make a frame like a tent with branches of trees and then they would make a shed by covering the frame with tiger grass and live under that. Tiger grass is like paddy straw in length and it is not difficult to thatch a shed with that. They would make a bed inside the shanty with tiger grass on which they would stretch and also sit for meditation, *japa* and studies. Those shanties of tiger grass were called *jhupries.* Seeing these *jhupries* made of grass I wished to make a *jhupri* with twigs and grass for myself and live there. Since there was no difficulty of *madhukari* I proposed to spend a few days at Hrishikesh doing meditation and prayer. etc., and then to proceed to Badrinarayan via Lachmanjhula. Tulsi agreed to this proposal.

So, I selected a site in the jungle almost at the edge of the Ganges and built a *jhupri* there with wigs and tiger grass. A Punjabi Sadhu detached from the world, who was living in the neighbourhood showed me how to build a *jhupri.* Tulsi also helped me. It was decided that Tulsi would live in the *jhupri* of that Sadhu and that I would live all alone

in this *jhupri* for sometime and do meditation and austerities. I too put a thick layer of tiger grass on the ground and made a cushion on which I spread my blanket. I would sit and lie down there. At midday Tulsi and I would go together with other Sadhus (great Souls) to the feeding centre for *madhukari.* After meal and a little rest thereafter, I would discuss scriptures with the Sadhus and spent most of the time in meditation with joy. Our days passed in beautitude and peace. I have not forgotten those days as yet and I am filled with joy when I recall those days.

While living in *jhupri* at Hrishikesh, Tulsi and I used to recite aloud *Kaupinapanchaka, Mohamudgara* and other Vedantic hymns of Acharya Sankara and we used to read Bhagabadgita, Upanishad, Brahmasutra with Sankara's commentary. Having passed some time thus we heard that the pilgrims for Kedar-Badri had already started on their journey. The Sadhus of the neighbourhood told us that it was advisable to begin our journey then. After consultation among ourselves we decided that we would first visit Badrinath and then go to Kedarnath. On the return journey from Kedarnath we would go to Bhatmari via Triyuginarayan and from Bhatmari we would go to Gangotri.

Having bid good-bye to the Sadhus at Hrishikesh, Tulsi and I started one morning for Lachmanjhula (Jhula means a hanging bridge). At that time there was a hanging bridge across the Ganges made of ropes and bamboos. That was called Lachmanjhula. Lachmanji's temple was by the side of the bridge and so the bridge was named Lachmanjhula. (In Hindi Lakshman is pronounced as Lachman). While crossing the bridge it would swing from one side to another and the pilgrims would feel giddy for that. Nowadays pilgrims have been spared this trouble.

On the way to Badrikashrama

After travelling nearly four miles from Hrishikesh we arrived at Lachmanji's temple near the bridge and having visited the temple we crossed Lachmanjhula very cautiously. We saw some pilgrims ahead and also behind. On the other

side of Lachmanjhula, the road to Badrikashram went to the left. We two took the road to Badrikashrama, completely penniless, taking the name of Sri Sri Thakur. A little ahead the Ganges was parallel to the road up to Devaprayag. On both sides there were hills covered with jungles and rocks. The Ganges was flowing below with a gurgling sound and at places it was far below the road. Chirping of birds could be heard from the jungles. There was a *Chati* after every ten or fifteen miles on that road. *Chati* is a resting place for pilgrims. The pilgrims used to take food and rest on arrival at those *Chatis* at midday or in the evening. They used to spend nights in those *Chatis*. Utensils like cooking pots, plate, tumbler, rice, dal, ghee, chillis and fuel wood, etc. were available there. Pilgrims would return the utensils after cooking and having their meal and then paid their dues they would resume their journey. I have already said that we did not have any money with us to bother about. So there was no alternative for us except to beg. We two used to have one meal with dal, bread, etc., whatever we could collect from the pilgrims and take rest and spend nights by spreading our blankets on the wayside. The pilgrims used to stay inside the *Chatis*. In this way Vyasghat was reached after a journey of ascent and descent over a distance of 35 miles on hilly road. Garuda chati is situated midway. There is a temple of Lord Garuda at Garudachati. We had *madhukari* from the pilgrims near Garudachati at midday and then we took a little rest after which we started again and reached Vyasghat in the evening. Tulsi and I arranged to spend the night by spreading our blankets under a tree by the side of Garuda *chati*. We were living on one meal a day obtained by begging. So there was no need for taking the trouble to arrange a meal at night.

It is said that Vyasadeva did austerities at Vyasghat and that the name Vyasghat has been given after Vyasadeva. Having spent the night at Vyasghat and travelled nine miles next morning we arrived at Devaprayag. The rivers Ganga and Alakananda meet at Devaprayag. Pilgrims take holy bath at the confluence of the two rivers. Originating from Gomukhi which is to the east of Gangotri Ganga flows down to Devaprayag where it meets Alakananda. There is a road to

Gangotri along the bank of Ganga. We had already decided that we would first visit Badrikashrama and Kedarnath and then go to Gangotri via Trijuginarayan. So we took our bath at the confluence of Ganga and Alakananda and had our lunch by *madhukari* from the pilgrims. It is said that the Gods did their austerities here. The view of the Himalayas at this place is very charming.

Sreenagar is situated 18 miles beyond Devaprayag. Bilwakedar is near Sreenagar. There is a temple of Bilwakedar also which is quite ancient. We went there and visited Siva. The green trees on the hills all around presented a charming scenery. Sreenagar is 4 miles from Bilwakedar and Rudraprayag is 18 miles beyond Sreenagar. The rivers Mandakini and Alakananda meet at Rudraprayag. At Rudraprayaga we had bath at the confluence of the two rivers. At that place there is an old temple of Rudreswar Siva. After bath we visited Siva and then appeased our hunger by *madhukari* from the pilgrims who had assembled there. From Rudraprayag two roads branch out—one going along the side of Alakananda to Badrikashrama via Karnaprayag and the other following the course of Mandakini to Kedarnath via Guptakashi.

Agasta Muni is situated on the way to Kedarnath seven miles from Rudraprayag. It is said that Agastya, the hermit, performed severe austerities at Agastamuni. Gupta Kashi is 13 miles from Agastamuni. There is a temple of Visweswara and Annapurna at Gupta Kashi. The deity in the temple is *Ardhanariswara* (half male and half female). Moreover there is Manikarnika there. It is a charming place with Manikarnika spring and a waterflow coming from Gomukhi. We two (Tulsi and I) took bath in the spring and visited the *Ardhanarisvar* image of Visweswara and Annapurna. The surroundings of this temple set in the heart of a secluded hill are calm. After three miles of ascent from the Gupta Kashi spring there are two springs—one hot and the other cold. Pilgrims often offer *pindas* to departed souls there. Two miles from there a road takes off to Chamouli or Lalsanga via Ukhimath. That road meets the road to Badrikashrama at Chamouli.

I found some banyan trees near Ukhimath. In Ukhimath

there are a post office, a hospital, a pilgrims' rest house, a police station, a school for children of middle-class families, a market, and a feeding centre of *Sadhus*. Ukhimath appeared to be a fairly rich and decent place on the way to Badrinath. Ukhimath is said to have derived its name from Usha, the daughter of King Bana. In Hindi 'Sha' is pronounced as 'kha'. From this an inference is made that in ancient times the capital of Bana was located here. The story of the secret love of the Usha and Aniruddha is described in Purana.

I was told that the head priest of Kedarnath, known as the Rawal, lives at Ukhimath. The doors of Kedarnath temple are opened on the day of *Aukshoy Tritia* and the doors are closed on the day of *Dipopanvita* (festivals of illumination) in the month of Kartik. At the time of opening of the temple doors of Kedarnath, the Rawal goes to Kedarnath from Ukhimath and stays there for sometime.

We two arrived at Ukhimath. It is said that in the age of Mahabharata Karna who was a hero of benevolence did severe austerieies at Karnaprayag and the name Karnaprayag is derived from him. We entered the monastery of Ukhimath through the gate and found a wide courtyard around which there were some temples. Images of Usha, Anirudha, the five Pandava brothers, Draupadi, Kunti, five-faced Kedareswar, Omkareswar, etc., are installed in these temples and are worshipped everyday regularly.

Panthabas *chati* is 8 miles from Ukhimath by a road with ups and downs on the way to Badrinath. The road passes through deep forest. The mountain scenery is, however, exceedingly beautiful and charming. We saw three mountain streams here rushing forth with great speed breaking the calmness of the place. Chopta-*chati* is four miles from there. The road to Chopta-*chati* also passes through deep forest. This *chati* is situated in a valley at the foot of Mt. Tunganath which is snow-clad. Pine forests covering wide areas on the side of Mt. Tunganath at various levels lend it a wonderful charm. Kulti-*chati* is 10 miles from Chopta-*chati*. We climbed upon Mt. Tunganath and visited Siva. The place was covered with snow all around. The temple also was covered with snow. The priests (*pandas*) had made way for entry into the temple by cutting out snow. From

Tunganath we came down to Choptachati again and from there went to Kultichati. Chaumouli or Lalsanga Chati is six miles from Kultichati. Roads to Kedarnath, Badrinath and Karnaprayag meet at Chaumouli. There is a big rest house for pilgrims at Chaumouli (Lalsanga Chati). Tulsi and I were proceeding towards Badrinath after having passed those *chatis*, for, our plan was that we would visit Badrinarayan first and then we would go to Kedarnath via Trijuginarayan. Accordingly we passed Chaumouli (Lalsanga Chati) and reached Pipalkoti which is 10 miles off from there. We would take a little rest at every *chati* on the way after *madhukari* and then we would move on with the pilgrims. Matchati is at a distance of two miles from Chaumouli. We gradually reached Mathchati which is located in very fertile area. We saw a garden there with mango, plantain, guava, pomegranate trees. There were flower plants of various kinds also all around. We saw cultivation of vegetables especially radish. On the way we found that a few small *chatis* had been recently set up.

Pippalkoti Chati appeared to be bigger than Chaumouli Chati. We found many shops there with brisk trade. Besides cabbage and other vegetables even *pan* (betel leaf) was also being sold there. We passed Pippalkoti and gradually reached Patalganga Chati, 8 miles off. We used to mitigate the strain of our journey by talking to Sadhus and pilgrims. On the way to Patalganga Chati there is a temple of Lord Garuda near this confluence of Garuda Ganga and Alakananda. I saw there two *Panachakkis* (grinding stones moved by water power) also. Joshimath is 11 miles from Patalganga. On the way there is a post office, a *dharamsala* (pilgrims' rest house) and a feeding centre for Sadhus at Kumar-*chati*. Within a short distance of that *chati* river Karmanasha meets the river Alakananda. We saw a temple of *Kalpeswar Mahadeva* (one of the five Kedars) there.

Gradually we reached Joshimath. It was a great pleasure to see roses of big size in blossom in the rose garden of Joshimath. During the winter season when the temple of Badrinath is closed the worship of the deity is held at Joshimath. The head priest of Badrinath (Rawal) often lives there. Joshimath is also known as Jyotirmath. From Joshi-

math there is a route to Manas-sarovar and Tibet via Mana Pass (17,568 ft. above sea level). Of course the route is very difficult. There is a temple of *Bhabishya Devi* at a distance of three miles from Joshimath. We had *madhukari* at Joshimath where we spent one night. We saw there with great satisfaction an image of Sankaracharya, the founder of the Math in his boyhood. Two miles below Joshimath is Vishnuprayag from where we had a partial view of snow covered Kailash that made us speechless with wonder. Ghat-*chati* is situated at a distance of four miles on the ascent from Vishnuprayag and at a distance of three miles down hill from there is Pandukesvara. From Pandukesvara we made an ascent of three miles to arrive at Lambagar-*chati*. There was snow on all sides of the road. We did not have shoes to protect our feet. So we had great difficulty to walk bare-footed over snow. From there we went four miles on ascent and arrived at Hanuman-*chati* from where we travelled five miles to reach Badrinathdham. A long cherished desire of ours was thus fulfilled. In our joy we began to say aloud, "Glory be to the Great Badri."

The surroundings to Badrikashrama are sublime and exquisite. There are two high mountains on two sides—one is named *Nar* and the other *Narayana*. It is said that in ancient times two hermits named *Nar* and *Narayana* did austerities in those two mountains and these mountains have been named *Nar* and *Narayana* to commemorate them. There is a hot spring at Badrikashrama in which water remains hot all through the year. It is comfortable for pilgrims to have bath in that hot spring. Tulsi and I lived in Badrikashrama for three days and three nights. We would visit Lord Badrinarayan and appease our hunger by begging His *prasada*. I have already mentioned that we used to live on one meal only which we would obtain by *madhukari*.

A short ascent above Badrikashrama lead to Vyas Cave. The legend is that in the age of the Puranas Vyasadeva, who classified the Vedas, performed austerities there. In winter the cave remains completely snow bound. At that time no pilgrim can go there. Almost right above that place there is a big waterfall named Basudhara. We saw water falling with great force on a huge rock and splashing on all sides being

broken into thousands of droplets. The great sound of the waterfall was disturbing the serenity of the mountains. Many of the Sadhus and pilgrims take bath in that water which is formed by melting of snow. Tulsi and I did not bathe. We took a little water and sprinkled it on our heads. A meandering road goes to Manassarovar by that waterfall. Gangadhar (Gangadhar Maharaj or Swami Akandananda) took that route when we went to Tibet. The Tibetan merchants used to give him warm clothings and alms. Gangadhar made an attempt to go towards Lhasa after having visited Manassarovar. He could not, however, go far. The Tibetan guards forced him to abandon that route and to take the route to Ladakh. Afterwards from Leh, a town of Ladakh, we came down towards Sreenagar, the capital of Kashmir. Gangadhar had as much of daring as of determination and dauntless spirit.

From Badrikashrama there is a road to Tibet. Bhutia traders take rice, atta, gur, and other merchandise from India to Tibet on the back of goats and sheep in small bags and bring wool, rock-salt, etc., from Tibet to India along this route. While at Badrikashrama we saw a party of Bhutia traders going towards Tibet. We saw a number of black watch dogs with them. When I saw them I had a great longing to go to Tibet and I told Tulsi about that. Tulsi said, "How is that possible? You do not have enough warm clothings with you. Tibet is very cold and snow bound. So, you will be in difficulty." On the advice of Tulsi I desisted from undertaking a journey to Tibet. A strong desire to see the terrain beyond the Himalayas any how, persisted in my heart. That desire of mine was fulfilled in 1922 A.D.

On the way to Kedarnath

After having visited Badrinath Tulsi and I started back by the same road in order to go to Kedarnath. Our plan, which we had already decided upon, was to visit Badrinath first and to go to Kedarnath, and from there to Uttarkashi via Trijuginarayana. From Uttarkashi a route via Bhatmari leads to Gangotri. It is said that the five Pandavas went on their

last journey along the route to Kedarnath during the age of the *Puranas*. During the journey along this hazardous route Draupadi first fell dead. Proceeding further Nakul and Sahadev and after them Bhima and Arjuna perished. Judhisthir fell dead and ascended to Heaven while climbing upon the snow covered hill at the back of Kedarnath. The priests (*pandas*) of Kedarnath relate these old legends to pilgrims and show the places to them and also conduct them in the performance of bath, puja, *Tarpan*, *Sraddha*, and other ceremonies.

We walked barefooted by the side of Mandakini on our journey to Kedarnath. Our feet became benumbed as if frozen in cold. Gradually the cold intensified. We however continued the journey with occasional rests.

Gourikunda lies on the way to Kedarnath. We took our journey to Kedarnath. Our feet became benumbed as if bath there in the hot spring. The water of the spring was very hot. One mile beyond Gourikunda there is a big image of Bhima. The story goes that during the last journey of the Pandavas Bhim fell here and died. Ramwara-*chati* is at a distance of four miles for Gourikunda. Up to that place deodar and other trees and creepers can be seen on both sides of the road; but beyond Ramwara-*chati* there is no vegetation, only bare snow-covered mountains stretch ahead. Near Ramwara-*chati* hot tea is distributed free to pilgrims of Kedarnath. From there one can see innumerable streams which take their rise from the snow-covered mountains.

Gradually as we ascended to higher and higher altitudes we had breathing difficulty. When we reached Kedarnath after our journey across snow we saw the priests clearing the temple gate of Kedarnath by cutting out heaps of snow by means of axes. The whole area around the temple was still under snow. With great difficulty we entered into the temple with other pilgrims through the temple gate and visited Kedarnath Siva. Kedarnath is *swayambhu* Siva (i.e., the image is a natural outgrowth of stone). The image was still completely covered with snow. We felt blessed by touching the 'body' of Siva. The snow inside the temple was melting. When we came out we found snow all around. We spent one night sitting with great difficulty. We could not sleep.

The temple of Kedarnath is made of stone. The body of the Siva-*lingam* is also of black stones. It look as though the Siva-*lingam* was made by cutting the top of a mountain peak. It is quite big in length and size. In the vestibule of the temple there are images of the five Pandavas, Draupadi, Kunti and other Gods and Goddesses. There is a temporary post office at Kedarnath. The top of Kedarnath temple is visible from a distance of about one mile. On the way there is a bridge across Mandakini. We found that a beautiful bathing ghat had been built in Mandakini.

Regarding the origin of Kedarnath there is a story in *Sauptic-Parba* of Mahabharata that when at the dead of one night Aswathama was going to the camp of the Pandavas he was stopped by Mahadeva who was guarding the camp gate. A fierce battle then ensued between the two. Being defeated Aswathama at last propitiated Mahadeva by singing hymns and praying Mahadeva then let him enter into the camp. Enraged at this behaviour of Mahadeva Bhima was about to kill him when Mahadeva escaped fast after having assumed the form of a buffalo and took shelter in a mountain cave. Bhima pursued him and killed the buffalo with his knife (*kharga*). The headless body of the buffalo is Kedarnath Siva, the head of the buffalo is Pashupatinath Siva (Nepal) and the tail of the buffalo is Tunganath. It is said that a visit to Kedarnath Siva is incomplete until all the three Sivas are visited. This is a *Pauranic* tale and all these three Sivas are connected with the Pandavas.

To Gangotri

I have already mentioned that our programme was to go to Badrikashrama via Rudraprayag, Karnaprayag and Chaumauli and then go Kedarnath via Trijuginarayan. From Kedarnath we were to return to Trijuginarayan from where we were to go to Uttarkashi by a different route. Uttarkashi is on the way to Gangotri. The pilgrims of Gangotri go from Uttarkashi to Bhatmari-*chati*. The road which is overgrown with forest is very difficult to negotiate. According to our programme we arrived at Uttarkashi after a few days' journey from Trijuginarayan. Uttarkashi is a holy place like

Varanashi in the heart of the Himalayas where many *Sadhus* spend their time in meditation, prayers and austerities for years on end.

Two routes branch out from Bhatmari-*chati*—one going towards Gangotri and the other towards Jamunotri. Tulsi and I first took the route to Gangotri. On the way we saw many hemp bushes. We collected handfuls of dry hemp (Siddhi) leaves which we ate occasionally. We found that the leaves cause slight intoxication. On arrival at Gangotri we were charmed to see the wonderful scenic beauty. It is very cold there surrounded as it is by snow-covered hills. We picked up acquaintance with a detatched *Sadhu,* a follower of Nanak. Taking him in our company we went to visit Gomukhi which is the source of the Ganges. Seven glacial streams meet there. The place remains snow bound all through the year. On return to Gangotri we spent one night there. At night we burnt creepers, leaves and some fire wood for protection against cold. The detatched *Sadhu* took particular care of us.

To Yamunotri

Next morning we resumed our journey towards Bhatmari-chati and at last reached there after a few days' streeking. Arriving there we met a few *Sadhus* who were getting ready for going to Yamunotri. We met some householder pilgrims too. Having had our meal by *madhukari* from the pilgrims and rest for a short while we started for Yamunotri with the *Sadhus.* There were forests on all sides of the road. It was quite cold also. We reached Yamunotri after having journeyed morning and evening for a few days. We found a hot spring at Yamunotri. Having had a look round the place we got some atta and rice by begging from the pilgrims and like the *Sadhus* we tied that up in a cloth and dipped the packet in the hot-spring. Within a short time we found that the rice had been fully boiled. We two appeased our hunger with that rice. Of course, it smelled of sulphur. The cold was unbearable in Jamunotri. We two took shelter in a neighbouring cave and at night we burnt twigs, etc., and sitting by the side of fire we spent the whole night in meditation and *japa.*

This provided partial protection against cold. There was no village or inhabited place in the neighbourhood. We, left Yamunotri next morning for return to Bhatmari-*chati*. We were back at Bhatmari after two or three days during which we enjoyed the beauty of the surrounding mountains and forests on the way. At Bhatmari we found many pilgrims and some *Sadhus* who had gathered there in order to visit Gangotri and Jamunotri. Tulsi and I appeased our hunger by *madhukari* from the pilgrims.

On our way back

After a short rest we started for Uttarkashi. We were told that Uttarkashi was about 80/85 miles from Bhatmari. We took about three days to reach Uttarkashi. At Uttarkashi we found a few shops, a post office and a small hamlet of hill people. We had bath in the Ganges at Uttarkashi and then we had *madhukari* from the hamlet. Having spent one night at Uttarkashi we continued our journey towards Hrishikesh. Whenever we would feel tired on the way we would rest under a tree. We would get *madhukari* from the hamlets of hill people and then we would resume our journey. Thus after a few days' journey we reached Hrishikesh via Dehradun.

At Hrishikesh

On return to Hrishikesh we met some of our former *Sannyasin* friends. Before starting on the journey to Kedar-Badri we used to live and practise austerities in a *jhupri* which we had made with tiger-grass and twigs on the bank of the Ganges at Hrishikesh. Many of those great souls were very glad to see us return in safety. I still remember, in particular, the hospitality of that Punjabi *Sadhu* who was a follower of Nanak. Tulsi and I lived at Hrishikesh for some-time by constructing a *jhupri* of grass as before. The name of Dhanaraj Giri, the head monk of Kailash Math was then well known in the whole of Uttarkashi. He was not only a scholar of unparalleled erudition, well-versed in all the six

systems of philosophy, he was also a Sannyasin and a Great Soul with real renunciation and realisation. I began to take lessons from him in Vedanta philosophy with commentary of Sankara. Dhanaraj Giri was very pleased to observe my sharp intellect and my wonderful way of analytical comprehension of scriptures. I recall that when Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) visited Hrishikesh on pilgrimage and asked Dhanaraj Giri about me he (Dhanaraj Giri) praised me in high terms and said, "Abhedananda? An extraordinary intellect!" Swamiji reported this to me later with such pride that I could realise how highly pleased he was to hear the praise of his spiritual brother.

Prayer for physical illness

During those days I got acquainted with many scholarly *Sadhus*. I was then practising austerities and discussing scriptures with great rigour. One day it occurred to me that recognition of non-duality should be a necessary concomittant of genuine realisation of the Absolute (Brahmajnana or Brahmanubhuti) and that when this stage is reached one should not discriminate between night soil and sandal wood. For some days I practised non-discrimination between night soil and sandal wood and really a spirit of complete equanimity arose in my mind which flooded me with joy. Moreover I thought that physical ailment is the touch stone of realisation of non-duality. The firmness of my conviction of identity with Brahman (the Absolute) will be tested if my mind can rest calm and composed in Brahman, instead of being affiicted by the pangs of disease. So, one day I really prayed for physical illness. It is strange that within three days I was attacked with fever, bronchitis and dysentery. I was bed-ridden due to simultaneous attack of chest disease and dysentery. Tulsi was nervous and anxious. Through the infinite mercy of Sri Sri Thakur, however Brother Hari (Swami Turiyananda), Sarat (Swami Saradananda) and Sanyal Mahasaya (then Swami Kripananda) arrived at Hrishikesh exactly at that time in course of their journey to places of pilgrimage. We were then known to and loved by many *Sadhus* at Hrishikesh.

Having heard from them about our presence at Hrishikesh and about my sudden illness Brothers Hari and Sarat came to us. Tulsi and I were overwhelmed with joy to meet them after a long time. I did not have the strength to rise, but, nevertheless, I was unperturbed and was not at all worried by physical illness and malaise. Occasionally, however, I was becoming unconscious due to high fever. Tulsi, Brother Hari, Sarat and Sanyal Mahasaya nursed me day and night. After three or four days I was on the way to recovery. Brother Hari, Sarat, Tulsi decided after consultation among themselves that I should go to Kashi and convalesce there for sometime at the place of Annapurna-Ma, for, they would go on their wanderings in the Northern region. Tulsi had a great desire to continue at Hrishikesh for sometime more doing meditation and prayers. So, on the advice of Sarat (Saradananda) and others Tulsi (Nirmalananda) took me to Hardwar in a bullock cart and having seated me in the train and put a third class ticket to Kasi in my hand he returned to Hrishikesh.

CHAPTES XXV

AT KASI (VARANASI)

Physically weakened and emaciated by disease, I started for Kasi. I sat through the whole night and drew solace from continuous contemplation of the merciful Sri Sri Thakur. It gave me joy to think that after having voluntarily prayed for physical illness I had at last passed the ordeal. I did not take any food on the way. I arrived at Kasi next morning. As I knew the address of Annapurna-Ma, I hired a *tanga* cab and arrived at Annapurna-Ma's house. She was very sorry to find me thin and weak and after hearing all that had happened she arranged for my homoeopathic treatment and for my diet, etc. I regained physical strength to some extent as a result of her careful attention and nursing; but even then I was quite weak. I shall never be able to forget the affectionate treatment and careful attention and nursing of Annapurna-Ma.

Attack of Influenza

I then thought it advisable to shift to Bansi Datta's house (at Kasi). Having bid good-bye to Annapurna-Ma I went to Bansi Datta's house in a *tanga* cab. The inmates of his house received me quite cordially. Of course, I had started taking normal diet in Annapurna-Ma's house two days earlier. Pramada Charan Mitra was then living at Kasi. He was very devoted to Ramakrishnadeva. On having got information about my arrival at Kasi he came to see me one day and told me that Narendranath (Swami Vivekananda) was down with influenza in his house after having come to Kasi from Gazipur. He also said that proper nursing and care of Swamiji could not be arranged in his house for want of men. Although I had not fully recovered I became anxious to attend on and to nurse Swamiji. Pramada Babu said, "You are a patient yourself. It is only two days that you have been on normal diet. So it

would not be advisable for you to undertake nursing." I did not listen to him. I stood up leaving my bed and requested Pramada Babu to take me to Swamiji in his house. Pramada Babu at last agreed and we went to Pramada Babu's house in a *tanga.* Swamiji was glad to meet me after a long time but he was distressed to find me so reduced and weak. He was bed-ridden and very sick with influenza. I engaged myself in nursing and taking care of him. Both Swamiji and Pramada Babu forbade me to work hard. I however ignored their advice and after two days of continuous nursing Swamiji's fever subsided and two days later he started taking normal diet.

A new situation, however, developed. As a result of having nursed Swamiji continuously for two or three days without respite I was attacked with influenza and I got bed-ridden. Swamiji and Pramada Babu were very much worried. Of course, Swamiji was then on normal diet, but his weakness was persisting. Yet, ignoring all advice, he set about nursing me. My influenza became so virulent that I had little chance of survival. My body broke down too. The affectionate memory of Sri Sri Thakur, however, would make me forgetful of all pain and suffering. In spite of the insufferable pangs of disease I would remain absorbed in self-knowledge, repeating within myself Acharya Sankara's line, 'चिदानन्दरूपः शिवोऽहं शिवोऽहम्' "I am Siva, the embodiment of Consciousness and Bliss." I would remember the message of the Upanishad" 'आत्मा विज्वरो विमृत्युर्विशोकः' (The self is free from disease, death and sorrow) and I would feel that the body (*Sarira*) is completely separate from its Master (*Sariri*)—the Consciousness or the *Atman* (Self). Swamiji was astonished to observe my unruffied spirit in serious condition of disease.

However, as a result of nursing by Swamiji and Pramada Babu I was on the way to recovery. Still I was extremely weak. In the meantime Swamiji had to leave for Calcutta on having got the news that Balaram Babu of Baghbazar had passed away. He made a special request to Pramada Babu to look after me and he bade me good-bye with tearful eyes. I continued to contemplate on Sri Sri Thakur day and night in bed-ridden condition. Three or four days thus passed when Sarat (Swami Saradananda) and Gupta Maharaj (Swami Sadananda) arrived from Calcutta. Swamiji had seen Sarat and

Gupta Maharaj immediately after his arrival at Calcutta to Bansi Datta's house at Kasi for nursing me. Tears came to my eyes when I saw Sarat and Gupta Maharaj and I thought again and again of the deep affection of Swamiji. I slowly came round through the care and nursing of Sarat and Gupta Maharaj. Of course it took me four months to recover completely.

At Allahabad and then at Jhusi

After recovery I resolved to leave Kashidham and go out again on peregrinations. Sarat and Gupta Maharaj requested me to stay with them at Bansi Datta's house at Kasi. I, however, decided to visit all places of pilgrimage in India living on *madhukari*. So, having bid good-bye to Sarat and Gupta Maharaj I started for Allahabad. Sarat and Gupta Maharaj said that they would stay at Kasi for sometime and do austerities.

On arrival at Allahabad I began to look for a suitable place for *Tapasya* (austerities). I was told that many *sadhus* and monks live in *jhupris* and *gufas* at Jhusi on the other bank of Yamuna near Allahabad practising austerities. There was no difficulty of *madhukari* at Allahabad. I decided to stay in a *jhupri* (*gufa*) at Jhusi on the bank of Yamuna and do austerities. On arrival at Jhusi I found many *Sadhus* and *Mahatmans* living at places on the bank of Yamuna in *gufas*, engaged in austerities. I too found out and took shelter in a *gufa*. I would get *madhukari* from neighbouring villages in the morning and I would spend almost the whole day in meditation and in study of scriptures. Gradually I got acquainted with other *Sadhus* and *Mahatmans* with whom I would often discuss scriptures in the afternoon.

After sometime Gupta Maharaj came from Kasi and after making enquiries met me at Jhusi. I was very glad to see him after a long time. Gupta Maharaj also wished to stay at Jhusi for sometime to do austerities and study scriptures. My *gufa* was comparatively big, so both of us lived together in the same *gufa*. Both of us would go out for *madhukari* at midday. Sometimes I would not go for *madhukari*. Gupta

Maharaj would go alone and both of us would share what he would get. Everyday in the afternoon Gupta Maharaj would study "Vicharsagara" (a book on Vedanta in Hindi) and Sanskrit Grammar under my guidance. Sometimes we would have discussions on Vedanta through questions and answers. We passed our days quite cheerfully through meditation, prayer and study of scriptures at Jhusi. .

Let me relate here an incident that occurred one day while we were at Jhusi. It was then rainy season. Almost every morning there would be rainfall with storm. One morning it started raining intermittently from the dawn. A North Indian *Sadhu* who was a follower of Nanak used to live in close proximity of our *gufa*. He would occasionally accompany us when Gupta Maharaj and I would get out for *madhukari*. As gains had started from the dawn that day he advised us to go for *madhukari* early and said that otherwise we might have to starve. At this I said to the *Sadhu* with a smile, "We shall not go out for begging today, we shall hibernate like a python. God willing our alms will come to us here." Gupta Maharaj stared at me without understanding what I meant. The *Sadhu*, who had renounced all belongings, also went away to his own Gufa on having observed my attitude.

In fact I did not go out for *madhukari* that day. Gupta Maharaj also did not go out for begging in view of my firm resolve. We two went to the bank of the Ganges and got absorbed in discussion of scriptures, meditation and *japa*. In the meantime a strange incident occurred! At the fag end of the day when I was explaining 'Vichara-sagar' to Sadananda I saw a gentleman approaching us with plenty of food in a basket. When he came near us I found that he was Maitra Mahasaya of Baranagar who was well known to us. We were overwhelmed with joy to see him and enquired how he could get our whereabouts. Maitra Mahasaya said, "On arrival at Allahabad I was told that a *Sadhu* named Kali Tapaswi who was well practised in *titiksha* (penances) was engaged in austerities on the bank of the Ganges at Jhusi. I grew curious when I heard the name Kali Tapaswi and thought that it must be you. I did not know that Gupta Maharaj was here. However, I became very anxious to see you and since it is not proper to go to a *Sadhu* empty-handed I have brought some

sweetmeats with me. I am extremely glad to meet you here unexpectedly."

Gupta and I went to our *gufa* accompanied by Maitra Mahasay. We found that Maitra Mahasay had brought plenty of sweetmeats and other foodstuff. We called that *Sadhu* of Nanaka School and give him a small share of sweetmeats saying, "Sadhuji, the words of *Gita*— 'योगक्षेमं वहाम्यहम्' (I carry the wherewithal of 'Yoga) have been fulfilled today. The *Sadhu* of Nanak School, who was extremely surprised and pleased, agreed and went away towards his *gufa*. Maitra Mahasay also prostrated to us and left for the town. Gupta Maharaj and I took the remainder of the sweetmeats and other foodstuff cheerfully and thought of the boundless mercy of Sri Sri Thakur. I said to Gupta Maharaj, "You have seen how the Merciful Sri Sri Thakur is behind us with outstretched arms of care protecting us all the time." Gupta Maharaj put his hands on his head in deep reverence and offered his salutations to Sri Sri Thakur.

CHAPTER XXVI

TO KASI AGAIN

After having performed austerities at Jhusi for sometime more I decided to go to Kasi again. Coming to know of my intention Gupta decided to stay alone at Jhu si for a few days more for austerities and then to visit the places of pilgrimage. In accordance with my plan I bade good-bye to Gupta Maharaj and started for Kasi on foot from Allahabad. At noon I would do *madhukari* in some village on the way and spending the night under a tree I would proceed towards Kasi. I do not remember exactly how many days I took to reach Kasi. I was very glad, however, to meet Sarat (Saradananda) and Moti (Satchidananda) on arrival at Bansi Datta's house in Kasi. Sarat Maharaj was then engaged in austerities at Kasi after having visited other places of pilgrimage. That was perhaps the earlier part of the month of Asharh. Sarat, Moti and myself began to spend days and nights in meditation and prayer, staying at Bansi Datta's garden house in Sonapura. One day, accompanied by Sarat and Moti, I made a circuit of *Panchakroshi* (ten miles circuit). I remember that about that time I had one day quite a good debate with Pramadadas Babu. Pramadadas Babu was living at Kasi then. As far as I remember I had a little controversy with him regarding the objects and ideals in our monastic life.

To Baranagar Math

Our days at Kasi were passing quite agreeably through meditation and *japa*. At that time I wished to return to Baranagar in order to take rest for sometime. I consulted Sarat who was glad to hear about my intention. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) was then travelling in various places of India. None of us knew his exact whereabouts. I heard from Sarat that Niranjan (Swami Niranjananda), Sashi (Swami

Ramakrishnananda), Tarakdada (Swami Sivananda) and others were then living in Baranagar Math where they were performing daily worship of Sri Sri Thakur and looking after the articles used by Sri Sri Thakur. After prolonged separation from Sashi and other spiritual brethren I longed to see them. So, having bid good-bye to Sarat I started from Kasi for Calcutta on foot. I have already mentioned that I had no money nor would I touch money. On my way, at noontide, I would go to some village and do *madhukari* in two or three houses and when night would set in I would spend the night under a tree or in some other place. Travelling in this manner I arrived one day at Baranagar Math after crossing the Ganga at Bally. At my request a boat man ferried me across the river free of charge.

Immediately on reaching Baranagar Math I met Sashi first. Overwhelmed with joy on having seen me unexpectedly, Sashi embraced me. Both of us were in tears then! For sometime neither of us could speak. After a little while Sashi enquired, "Where were you so long?" I said "on pilgrimage." Sashi said, "Brother, I am, however, spending days and nights with Sri Sri Thakur (with worship, aratrik and service of Sri Sri Thakur)." I said, "Sashi, you are the luckiest of us. Sri Sri Thakur's grace on you is infinite."

In the meantime Niranjan and Tarakdada came on hearing my voice and they were overwhelmed with joy to see me. This meeting with my spiritual brethren brought back to my mind the memories of our old days in presence of Sri Sri Thakur one by one. Tears came to my eyes. With great difficulty I checked my emotion and embraced Niranjan and Tarakdada.

At Baranagar Math

The condition of Baranagar Math was not at all sound then. Out of whatever would be received as occasional offerings from devotees the worship and *bhoga* of Sri Sri Thakur and one meal a day for Latu, Sashi, Sarat, Niranjan, Tarakdada and one or two more would be managed somehow. Sashi would remain engaged in the service of Sri Sri Thakur day and night being forgetful of himself. The daily service of

Sri Sri Thakur was the sole object of all his attention, contemplation and dream. Sometimes Niranjan and Tarakdada would go to the houses of some devotees in and in the neighbourhood of Calcutta. My return after a long time put new strength in the minds of Sashi and Niranjan. I began to live with them in Baranagar Math. When devotees would come in the afternoon or in the evening I would hold discussion with them. Sometimes we would read and discuss scriptures. On the whole our days at Baranagar were passing quite well through meditation, prayer and discussion of scriptures.

For various reasons, however, it was not possible for me to remain long in Baranagar Math. One day Sashi informed me confidentially that one of my spiritual brethren was particularly annoyed with me for reading and discussing scriptures with visitors and that a conspiracy was afoot to expel me from the Math before long. On enquiry about the reason Sashi said that according to that spiritual brother it was improper to encourage reading of scriptures and that was why our spiritual Master Paramahamsadeva did not get along with studies. When I enquired of Niranjan he too told me with a sad heart of the displeasure of that spiritual brother. Not knowing what to do I started praying constantly to Sri Sri Thakur for guidance. At last I decided that it would be better for me to leave the Math than to create unnecessary unpleasantness in the Math. I informed Sashi and Niranjan confidentially of my intention. They forbade me to leave the Math and said that it would be better if I would remain there with them, with Sri Sri Thakur as my refuge. The report about the conspiracy brought tears to my eyes and I did not like that anyone should feel uncomfortable because of me. I thought it better to leave Baranagar Math. On having come to know of my intention to leave the Math, Latu requested me fervently time and again to stay in the Math. I said to Latu, "Brother, I do not like that any one should feel inconvenience because of me. Moreover, Narendranath is not in the Math. In the circumstances it is better for me not to live in the Math." It pained me sorely to see tears in Latu's eyes. I made a resolve never to return to Baranagar Math.

My departure from Baranagar Math

I resolved to leave Baranagar Math secretly next day. Since day break, however, I found the sky overcast with dark clouds. At intervals there were sounds of thunder. Gradually rain set in. Without heed for anything I went to the Chapel and having prostrated before Sri Sri Thakur I came out slowly and made for the Ganges. Because of the inclement weather there were few boats in the Ganges. I boarded a boat by somehow persuading the boatmen and having crossed over I went towards Bally Station. I had no money with me. I, therefore, left Bally Station and started walking bare-footed along the Grand Trunk Road. On the way I would have one meal in the day somehow by doing *madhukari* in two or three hours and then I would continue the journey. In this way I arrived at Gaya. At Gaya I had bath in river Falgu and then I visited the Vishnpadapadma (impression of the Lotus-like feet of Lord Vishnu) and having had a meal by *madhukari* from pilgrims I started for Kasi again.

My life as a Parivrajaka (*Wandering Monk*)

Four days on end I wended my way alone. I would have a meal with whatever I would get by begging at midday and at eventide I would, as before, stop and spend the night mostly under a tree. Gradually I reached Kasi. At Kasi I had bath in the Ganges and then I got a meal by begging from a *Satra* (centre for free distribution of food). I had spent a long time at Kasi before. Eo, I left Kasi and set out for Prayag and Allahabad. Although I was alone yet the remembrance and contemplation of Sri Sri Thakur provided me with help and strength. Gradually I reached Prayag and after having a bath in the Ganges I did *madhukari* in a village nearby. I did not feel inclined to stay at Prayag or at Allahabad. I continued my journey in the same manner. After having left Allahabad I first went to Agra and then to Delhi. Having spent one or two days at Delhi I visited Jaipur, Udaipur, Kshetri, Abu, Girnar and other places. When I was travelling through these places a strong desire grew

in me to meet Narendranath. I crossed river Narmada and made for Junagad. On the way I became a guest in the house of Mr. Sankar Pandurang at Porbandar. I heard from Mr. Sankar Pandurang that sometime earlier a Bengali Sannyasin, well-versed in English, named Satchidananda had come to Porbandar. I could not recognise the Sannyasin from the name 'Satchidananda'. I came to know later that it was Narendranath who was travelling through Gujarat and Kutch assuming the pseudonym of 'Satchidananda'.

At the house of Sankar Pandurang

My mind became extremely agitated to hear about the English-knowing Bengali Sannyasin from Pandit Sankar Pandurang. On enquiry regarding the appearance, complexion and behaviour of the Sannyasin I was reminded of Narendranath.

Sankar Pandurang was very well-versed in Sanskrit. He was at that time publishing a compilation of Atharva Veda. Pleased with my discussion of scriptures he requested me to stay in his house for sometime. I agreed to stay there for one or two days, thinking that I might by chance meet Narendranath there. Everyday I would have discussion with Pandit Pandurang on various scriptures. He was pleased to observe the sharpness of my intellect and my way of discussion. After having had hospitality there for two days I sought the Pandit's permission to leave the place on the third day. He requested me to live in his house for a few days more. I was, however, very much disappointed for not having met Narendranath there. In the circumstances I bade good-bye to him and started for Junagadh.

Meeting with Narendranath

On arrival at Junagadh I came to hear from people that a Bengali Sannyasin with high English education was staying for some days at the house of Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi, a Gujrati Brahmin, who was the Private Secretary of the

local Nawab (Muslim Ruler). On enquiry I came to know that the name of the Sannyasin was Satchidananda. I thought that the person in the guise of Satchidananda would be no other than Narendranath. Elated with joy I reached the house of Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi by enquiry and immediately found that my conjecture was true. Narendranath brightened up with joy to see me unexpectedly. I too could not check my tears to meet him after a long time. Fortunately when I arrived there Narendranath was discussing some topic of non-dualistic Vedanta with Mr. Tripathi who was a keen scholar in scriptures. Narendranath introduced me to Mr. Tripathi. Mr. Tripathi rose up greeted me with *namaskara* and courteously requested me to sit down. When I took my seat Narendranath looked at me and said to Mr. Tripathi, "'He is my spiritual brother and a votary of non-dualistic Vedanta. He will now discuss scripture with you." I was taken aback. I was physically exhausted. Moreover having met Narendranath after a long time I was overwhelmed with joy. But before I had respite to talk to Narendranath it was Narendranath who called upon me to discuss scripture with Mr. Tripathi. In obedience to my elder brother, however, I started discussion with the Pandit in Sanskrit on some points of non-dualistic Vedanta. Mr. Tripathi began to put questions to me from the stand point of *purvapaksha* (the dissenter) and I began to answer his questions one by one. Narendra was listening to my replies with delight. At last being very pleased with my replies the Pandit greeted me with *namaskara* with folded hands. I found that Narendranath could not contain his joy within himself. His faces was glistening with pride at the success of his spiritual brother.

Mr. Tripathi requested me with courtesy to take rest and sent order in his house for arranging food for me along with Narendranath. After our meal when I was alone with Narendranath I informed him of all that had happened at Baranagar Math and I said that I would never return to Baranagar Math. Narendranath heaved a sigh after having heard the full story of Baranagar Math and staring at me he said with a spirited voice, "You are a child of Sri Ramakrishna. The Math is for you. If you do not go to the Math then for whom else should the Math exist?" Tears came to my eyes.

Narendranath drew me close to him and gave me solace. I shall never be able to forget the affection and solace that I got from him that day. I at last relented and told him that I would return to the Math. It seemed as if Narendranath was relieved.

I have already mentioned that all through my peregrinations I was travelling bare-footed. Having seen me bare-footed Narendranath said, "You should not travel bare-footed like this in this part of the country. If you do not follow this advice then you will have to suffer later." I need hardly say that these words of that great man came true subsequently. When I returned to Alambazar Math at Calcutta I really suffered a great deal from an attack of guinea worms in my feet.

To Dwarka

At the request of Pandit Mansukhram Suryaram Tripathi I gladly stayed in his house for three or four days in the company of Narendranath and then I got ready to start for Dwarka. At last I bade good-bye to Narendranath. I saw that his eyes were filled with tears. I then remembered those delightful days with Sri Sri Thakur at Cossipore. I too could not check my tears. When I was taking leave from Narendranath, whose heart was inseparable from mine, he told me that he would be going to Bombay in a day or two. The Pandit also saw me off with tearful eyes. With salutations to Sri Sri Thakur I started for Dwarka.

After arrival at Dwarka I visited the temple of Dwarkaji and having spent one night there I started for Pravash-tirtha where also I spent one day. I decided to go to Bombay from there. But when I was thinking how to cross the gulf a merchant of Gujarat suddenly came and greeted me and enquired in Hindi, "Mahatmaji (Great Soul) where will you go?" I said, "To Bombay." He offered some money to me for a ticket in the ship. I said, "My son, I do not touch money. It would be better if you would buy a ticket for

me." The mecrhant gladly agreed and having bought and handed over a third class ticket to me he prostrated and left. I thought that all this was due to the infinite grace of Paramahamsadeva.

MEETING WITH NARENDRANATH AGAIN

I arrived at Bombay by ship. After having seen Bombay I went from there to Mahabaleswar. I heard that Narottam Morarji Gokuldas was a hospitable gentleman in Mahabaleswar. I went to Gokuldasji's house by enquiry and on arrival there I found that Narendranath had already arrived there one day earlier. Through the Grace of Sri Sri Thakur I met Narendranath there once again. Gokuldasji received me cordially as the spiritual brother of Swami Satchidanandaji that is Narendranath. Seeing me Narendranath said with laughter, "'Brother, why are you on my trail for nothing? Both of us have come out with the name of Sri Sri Thakur. We had better travel independently." At this I said, "Why should I pursue you? I have come here, as you too have. in course of my wanderings. Through the Will of Sri Sri Thakur we have met again. I assure you that I am not deliberately after you." Narendranath reacted with a loud laughter. I said, "This time I shall start from South India via Poona, Baroda, Nasik, Dandakaranya, etc. You should proceed to the north, then there will be no chance of our meeting again." Narendranath laughed aloud again. Gokuldasji heard our conversation but could not follow. He only said, "It is extremely good fortune for me to get two great men like you together.'

At the earnest request of Gokuldasji, however I spent three days at his house with Narendranath and on the fourth day I resolved to set out for Poona. I told Narendranath about my intention. Narendranath said, "Since we have come out with the name of Sri Sri Thakur he will surely provide for our well-being." I bade good-bye to Narendranath and Narottam Morarji Gokuldas, the owner of the house, and started for Poona.

To Poona

After having seen some notable places of Poona and visited Baroda, Nasik and other places, I arrived in Dandakaranya. I was reminded of the wonderful divine sports of Sri Ramachandra, the Divine Incarnation of *Treta Yuga,* when I saw Dandakaranya with its forests. At the same time I thought of an incident of the past when Sri Ramakrishnadeva, laid up in sick bed, called Narendranath to him and said, "He who was Rama was the same as the One who was Krishna and it is He who is now Ramakrishna. This, however, is not said from the standpoint of your Vedanta." Bhagwan (the Lord) Sri Ramakrishna expressed to us and to the world in clear terms that it was He who incarnated as Ramchandra in the *Treta Yuga* and as Sri Krishna in *Dvapara Yuga.* Strange are the ways of the Lord. Only those who are fortunate can witness His sport. It is by virtue of meritorious acts of many lives that we have seen with our own eyes the wonderful sports of Sri Ramakrishna in the human form.

Travels in South India

Gradually I visited various places of pilgrimage in South India and wondered to see the superb architecture of the temples. As South India was not much affected by Muslim invasion the temples and images have not been destroyed. The yards and gates (*Gopuram*) of the temples of South India invest them with beauty. I took bath in holy rivers like Tapti, Godavari, Krishna, Kavery and proceeded gradually to Rameswaram begging on the way and travelling sometimes on foot and sometimes on railway. At Setubandha-Rameswar three seas meet lending unique beauty to the place. I took bath at the confluence of the seas and then visited Rameswar Siva. The *namandir* (vestibule) of the Rameswar temple rests on thousand sculptured pillars. Inside the sanctorium the image of Siva, bedecked with gold ornaments, looked very beautiful in the light of oil lamps. I spent three days at Rameswar and on my way back I visited the temple of Meenakshi Devi at Madurai. There are few temples in

South India so big and with so beautiful sculpture. From Madurai I started for Trichinopolly on foot. I would do *madhukari* on the way. I observed extraordinary regard for *Sadhus* and monks among the people of this part. After arrival at Trichinopolly I started for Srirangam and fulfilled my heart's desire by visiting Sri Ranganath.

I stayed at Trichinopolly for one night and then left for Tanjore. After visiting Tanjore temple I visited Kumbakonam, Kanchi, Pakshitirtha, etc. At Kumbhakhonam I saw a South Indian Sadhu who had been observing silence for thirty years. He was a man of great renunciation and discrimination. My mind was filled with great joy to see him. The huge temple of Kanchi is also worth-seeing. The golden temple top was always glistening in the sun. The *natmandir* (vestibule) of the temple with its innumerable pillars of black stone presented a wonderful sight. I found that by the side of the Kanchi temple the Dravidian Pandits were chanting *Sama Veda* in sweet voice. I had great satisfaction to see the image of Nataraj. Innumerable images of Gods and Goddesses were sculptured on all sides of the temple and the *natmandir.* It seems as if the beauty and glory of Kanchi were at one time well known throughout India. Kanchi is the Kasi or Varanasi of South India. The Kanchi temple is always humming with innumerable pilgrims. One peculiar custom of South India is that one has to go bare-bodied to see his Deity in the sanctorium. There is a holy atmosphere there which really brings pure joy to one's mind.

Return to Calcutta from Madras

After visiting Kanchi and neighbouring temples I came to Madras Having travelled very long on foot I was feeling quite tired. So I thought I had better return to Calcutta. Moreover those words of Narendranath were resounding in my ears, "You are a child of Ramakrishna. The Math is for you. If you do not go to the Math then for whom else should the Math exist?" Really, I had taken to the life of a wandering monk after having forsaken all vanity and egoism. I thought "whom should I be angry with? With

my brethren? But my spiritual brethren are the very limbs of Sri Sri Thakur! They are the companions of Sri Sri Thakur's Divine Sport! Then who else is there with whom I can be angry or sensitive? So I should return to the Math at Calcutta and live together with my spiritual brethren."

Having decided to return to Calcutta I stood pensively by the side of a tree when a respectable looking South Indian gentleman asked me in English where I proposed to go. I told him in English that my next destination was Calcutta, but as I was exhausted by journey and fatigued and weary due to prolonged travels to holy places, I could not decide what to do. The gentleman stared at my face and asked, "Do you want to travel by ship? A ship is just about to leave for Calcuta from Madras port. Do you like to avail of this ship?" I said, "What objection can I have to this?" He then took out from his pocket the fare from Madras to Calcuta and he was about to hand it over to me when I told him that I would not touch money and that I would be glad if he would buy a fourth class ticket for me. The gentleman gladly agreed and asked me to follow him and having bought a ticket from the booking office he gave it to me and prostrated. I was overwhelmed with the thought of the infinite grace of Sri Sri Thakur and started for Calcutta as a fourth class deck passenger from Madras. I had got some *chira* (flatened rice) by *madhukari* before embarking on the ship. So, for three days I took that *chira* by softening it with salt water of the sea. Gradually the ship put anchor at Calcutta port. For three days I had enjoyed the boundless beauty of nature on the vast surface of the sea, my only support being the sweet memory and grace of Sri Sri Thakur.

At Alambazar Math

After disembarkation at Calcutta port I started on foot for Baranagar. On the way I met a devotee who was known to me. He told me that the Math was no longer at Baranagar, it had been shifted to Alambazar. I was glad to hear this because I had made a promise not to return to Baranagar Math, which was thus kept. I realised that the sacred Will

of Sri Sri Thakur was supreme in this matter. Gradually I reached Alambazar Math by enquiry. I found that the Math was situated on the southern side of the road leading from Alambazar to Lochan Ghosh's Ghat which I knew from before. When through the lane I went to the Math premises and entered by the gate I first met Sarat and Sashi. Sashi embraced me being overwhelmed with joy and Sarat led me by holding my hand to the southern verandah on the first floor. Gradually all the inmates came one after another and made enquiries about my health. Sashi eagerly enquired if I had any information regarding Narendranath. I said that I had met Narendranath at Junagadh and at Mahabaleswar and that Narendranath was travelling all over the county, assuming the pseudonym of "Satchidananda". Everyone was glad and relieved to get the information about Narendranath from me.

I was told that in October or November, 1891 A.D., the new Math had been shifted to Alambazar from Baranagar. Sashi and Sarat (Ramakrishnananda and Saradananda) took me round the whole premises of Alambazar Math. I saw that there was a courtyard in front on which there was a west-facing building for ceremonial worship (*thakur-dalan*) with three arches. On the north a spiral staircase led to the upper storey. There were two verandahs on the upper storey—one on the southern and the other on the eastern side. The verandahs were paved with red and blue coloured tiles. On the north of the eastern verandah there was a long hall with three doors and a covered verandah with windows on the side of the road. On the east of the hall there was door leading to a small room. On the southern side of the covered verandah there was a bath room with venetian blinds of wood. There were round pillars and wooden railings on the eastern and southern verandahs. By the side of the bath there was a door leading to a wide corridor to the south. On the left side of the corridor there was one room and on the right side there were three rooms in a line. Two rooms on either side had windows opening on the corridor. The room on the left side was the chapel. It had a door and two windows opening on the south. Inside the premises there was a building with a courtyard in front. It had verandahs with

roof on the north, south and west, only on the eastern side there was wide and open terrace without any cover. By the side of the chapel there was a staircase going down to the ground floor. In front of the chapel there was a building and at its south-eastern corner there was a small room which was used as the store room of the chapel. On the eastern side of the eastern terrace there was a wall with holes for exit of smoke. At a short distance on the south there was one latrine.

Sashi used to live in the southernmost of the three rooms on the west. From the window of that room a considerable portion of the outer alley could be seen. The room on the north of Sashi's room was allotted for me. I gladly chose that room.

Going down by the staircase by the side of the chapel one would find the kitchen on the left side in the ground floor. On the south of the kitchen was another deserted and dilapidated room. In front of the kitchen on the south there was a lane going eastwards up to a tank with paved ghat. The tank on the east was included in the premises of the Math Moreover on the north-western side of the courtyard and below the hall of the upper storey there were a few dilapidated rooms on the ground floor which were not much in use.

I was very glad to see the new premises of the Math. It was a matter of great relief to us and to devotees that through the grace of Sri Sri Thakur a permanent house had been obtained for the Math, I found that the day to day condition of the Math had become much better than before. Food was more plentiful too. The devotees would become much better than before. Food was more plentiful too. The devotees would bring foodstuff to the Math according to their respective ability. The tatered carpet had been replaced by new carpets brought by devotees. A small bedstead and a reading lamp also had been obtained. On the whole every monk had a piece of wearing cloth and a *chaddar* (scarf). In short the Goddess of Fortune seemed to have gradually opened the gate of her treasure in Alambazar Math. Tulsi (Nirmalananda) had already arrived in Alambazar Math. He began to assist Sashi in the matter of worship, etc.

Life in Alambazar Math

I would remain all day long in the room, which Sashi and Sarat had arranged for me, absorbed in meditation, *japa* and studies. Gradually that room came to be known to all as the room of "Kali Vedanti". At that time the only aim of my life was to study and to discriminate in the light of Advaita Vedanta (non-dualistic Vedanta philosophy) and to build up my life on its ideals. I would study the Gita with the commentaries of Sankara. I would meditate till I could grasp the inner meaning of each *sloka* (verse) and then I would proceed to read and meditate on the next *sloka.* I would come out only at meal times, otherwise I would remain either engaged in study of scriptures and discrimination or absorbed in meditation. I would not be aware of the passage of time. Occasionally we would have discussions on scriptures among the spiritual brethren, but all of us had one aim of life all the time—to build our life in accordance with the teachings and instructions of our extraordinary preceptor Sri Ramakrishnadeva. Sri Sri Thakur was our sole object of meditation and conscious thinking. This was particularly true of Sashi to completely dedicate himself to the service of Sri Sri Thakur all the time.

Guinea Worm infection

I have already mentioned that after shifting of the Math to Alambazar the phase of hardship and privation of the children of Sri Ramakrishna virtually ended. The devotees of Sri Ramakrishna would come to the Math from Calcutta and suburbs particularly on Saturdays and Sundays. The children of Ramakrishna and devotees were, however, somewhat unhappy and anxious for want of reliable news about Narendranath. Let me mention here what happened one day. One English daily (I forget the name of the paper now) published an article of an American, named Marwin Mary Snell under the caption, "Swami Vivekananda". The name of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsadeva was also associated with Swami Vivekananda.

Mr. Mary Snell had written about some of the activities of Swami Vivekananda. All of us read the article but the name "Swami Vivekananda" was not familiar to us. When I was travelling in Bombay and other areas I heard that Narendranath had been travelling all over India under the name of "Swami Sacchidananda." So on reading about the activities of Swami Vivekananda in America we could make a rough conjecture that "Swami Vivekananda" was our Narendranath. As 'Swami' appeared as a suffix to 'Vivekananda' we at first thought that Swami Vivekananda might be some gentleman of Madras. But one or two days later we came to know that Swami Vivekananda was no other than our dear spiritual brother Narendranath. Narendranath must have come to America with some help from some one in order to preach Indian philosophy and religion. Our joy then knew no bounds. Our hearts were filled with pride. We began to pray to Sri Sri Thakur for his welfare and success.

Sometime later a letter of Narendranath came from America. The famous Parliament of Religions had been held in the City of Chicago in 1893 A.D. It had been attended by representatives of various religions from different parts of the world. Narendranath had gone also to America with monetary help of his devotees and friends and attended that session. His eloquent speech on Hinduism had cast a spell of charm and wonder on his audience. Appreciation of his speech did not remain confined to the limited circle of the Parliament of Religion at Chicago but spread all over America gradually. People would get excited with joy to see him on the way in America. The gist of his speech and innumerable appreciative comments and discussions on the speech were published in various papers of America. That session of the Parliament was attended by Angarika Dharmapala, Pratap Chandra Majumdar and others. Narendranath's extraordinary oratory and eloquence and his liberal ideals somehow evoked the jealousy of Pratap Majumdar and also of the Christian Missionaries of America who tried to confound the American public and to rouse their passions against him (Narendranath). In a way they were declaring that Swami Vivekananda was not only without any credential to represent Hinduism but the religion expounded by him was also not Hinduism.

Public Meeting in Town Hall

Narendranath felt quite embarrassed at this in a distant and strange country like America. Narendranath wrote to us, "Hold a public meeting in Calcutta approving of my activities in America and mentioning that I am accredited to represent Hinduism and send a letter of thanks to Dr. Barrows with a copy to me." Immediately on receipt of Narendranath's letter Sarat, Sashi and I decided, after consultation among ourselves, to arrange a big public meeting in the Town Hall at Calcutta and we thought it advisable to send copies of resolutions along with congratulations to Dr. Barrows and others. I made up my mind to stay in Balaram Babu's house at Baghbazar to organise the meeting in consultation with prominent citizens and devotees of Calcutta and accordingly I went over to Balaram Babu's house. Sarat and Sashi would come from Alambazar to join with me. When we informed the devotees at Calcutta about Narendranath they were elated with joy and they promised to help us. Monomohan Mitra would help us coming from his office. At that time, forgetful of my meals and sleep like one gone mad, I began to request every prominent citizen by going to his residence to attend the meeting. It was desirable that a prominent person of every community should be present at the meeting. So, in order to request a prominent member of the Marwari community I went to him accompanied by Haramohan Mitra and Manomohan Mitra. On having heard that Narendranath had gone to America he commented "Babaji, those who in spite of professing Hinduism go abroad are outcasts. Will it be proper on our part to have any connection with them?" Manomohan Babu who used to maintain close contact with Marwari businessmen knew their nature quite well. He at once said, "Sethji, your name has been included in the Committee." This silenced the Marwari gentleman and he readily agreed to join the meeting.

Either Sarat or Sashi would invariably be with me every day. Moreover, Manomohan Babu and other devotees would work tirelessly with me at their convenience. We sent invitations to prominent members of almost all communities. Selection of the President of the meeting only remained to be done. I went to the house of the venerable Gurudas Banerjee with

Nagendranath Basu, Bhupendra Kumar Basu and Manomohan Mitra and requested him to preside over the meeting. Having heard me he said, "The name 'Vivekananda' was not given by his preceptor. Moreover, according to the scriptures a *Sudra* is not eligible for initiation into monkhood. So, I am not agreeable to preside over such an unorthodox matter." Although the Venerable Gurudas Babu was a Judge of the Calcutta High Court yet he was an orthodox Brahmin. He would take bath in the Ganges everyday and then he would do puja and *japa.* Moreover I have heard that he had high regard for traditional Brahminism. For that reason he declined to join a meeting convened for Narendranath born as he was in the family of Dattas who are said to be *Sudras.* At last we went to Raja Peary Mohan Mukhopadhyay, the famous Zemindar (Landowner) of Uttarpara and made a request to him. Before making the request we told him all about Narendranath's activities in the matter of preaching Hinduism in America. We had with us some cuttings of newspaper comments sent to us by Narendranath from America. As we read out to him one of these comments he said, elated with joy, "It is quite true. He (Swami Vivekananda) has upheld the prestige of the entire Hindu community and Hinduism in America and for that India should remain ever grateful to him." The comment of the American newspaper was "After hearing him (Swami Vivekananda) we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation." The Honourable Raja Peary Mohan Mukhopadhyay gladly agreed to preside over the meeting and kept on repeating, "Really, it is foolishness to send missionaries to this learned Indian nation."

The public meeting was held in Calcutta Town Hall on the 5th September, 1894. More than four thousand people including elites, representatives of different communities and spectators attended the meeting. The Hon'ble Raja Peary Mohan Mukhopadhyay, C.I.E., presided. Among the prominent citizens, scholars, journalists and others were Pandit Madhusudan Smriti Ratna, Kamakshyanath Tarkabagish, Ambika Charan Nyayratna, Sivanarayan Siromani, Hon'ble Justice Gurudas Bandyopadhyaya, Kumar Dinendranath Ray, Kumar Radhaprasad Ray, Ray Jatindra Nath Chowdhury, M.A., B.L., Zemindar of Taki, Rakhal Chandra

Chowdhury, Zemindar of Barisal. Manmotha Mallik, Bar.-at-law, J. N. Banerjee, Attorney-at-law, Babu Narendranath Sen, Editor, Indian Mirror, Bhupendranath Basu, Attorney, etc. The Hon'ble Justice Ganesh Chandra Chandra proposed the name of the president which was seconded by Babu Guruprasanna Ghose. Raja Peary Mohan Mukhopadhyaya then took the chair and said:

"Hon'ble Justice Gurudas Banerjee and Gentlemen, I thank you heartily for having asked me to take the chair of this meeting. We are assembled here this evening to express our thankfulness not to one who has distinguished himself by his meritorious services to the State or to one who has won the reputation of a triumph of statesmanship, but we assemble in this grand meeting to express our high sense of appreciation and deep gratitude to a simple Sannyasin, only thirty years old, who has been expounding the truths of our religion to the Great American people with an ability, tact and judgement (cheers) which has elicited the highest admiration. Brother Vivekananda has opened the eyes of an important section of the civilized world by explaining the great truths of the Hindu religion, and convinced them that the most valuable products of human thought in the regions of philosophy and religion are to be found not in Western science and literature, but in our ancient *Sastras* (cheers) .....

..... With these words I request my friend Babu Narendranath Sen to move the first resolution." The Hon'ble Narendranath Sen moved that resolution in the meeting which was unanimously carried.

After two resolutions had been moved and carried Babu Saligram Singha moved the third resolution:

"That this meeting requests the Chairman to forward to Sreemat Vivekananda Swami. Dr. Barrows and Mr Snell copies of the foregoing resolutions together with the following letter addressed to Swami Vivekananda:

To

SREEMAT VIVEKANANDA SWAMI

Dear Sir,

As Chairman of a large representative and influential

meeting of the Hindu inhabitants of Calcutta and the Suburbs, held in the Town Hall of Calcutta, on the 5th of September, 1894, I have the pleasure to convey to your the thanks of the local Hindu Community for your able representation of their religion at the Parliament of Religions that met at Chicago in September, 1893.

The trouble and sacrifice you have incurred by your visit to America as a representative of Hindu Religion are profoundly appreciated by all whom you have done the honour to represent. But their special acknowledgements are due to you for services you have rendered to the cause they hold so dear, their sacred Arya Dharma, by your speeches and your ready responses to the questions of inquirers. No exposition of the general principles of the Hindu Religion could, within the limits of a lecture, be more accurate and lucid than what you gave in your address to the Parliament of Religions on Tuesday, the 19th September, 1893. And your subsequent utterances on the same subject on other occasions have been equally clear and precise. It has been the misfortune of Hindus to have their religion misunderstood and misrepresented through ages, and, therefore, they cannot but feel specially grateful to one of them who has had the courage and the ability to speak the truth about it and dispel illusions, among the strange people, in a strange land, professing a different religion. Their thanks are due no less to the audiences and the organisers of meetings, who have received you so kindly, given you opportunities for speaking, encouraged you in your work, and heard you in a patient and charitable spirit. Hinduism has, for the first time in its history, found a missionary, and by a rare good fortune it has found one so able and accomplished as yourself. Your fellow countrymen, fellow citizens and fellow Hindus feel that they would be wanting in an obvious duty if they did not convey to you their hearty sympathy and earnest gratitude for all your labours in spreading a true knowledge of their ancient faith. May God grant you strength and energy to carry on the good work you have begun!

Yours faithfully
(Sd.) Peary Mohan Mookherjee.
Chairman.

Sarat, Sashi, Harimohon Babu, myself and others collected by going from door to door, the money that was required for successfully organising the meeting. The resolution, the agenda of the meeting and the letter of congratulations addressed to Swamiji were printed and distributed at the meeting and three sets of good copies were duly sent respectively to Dr. Barrows, Mr. Snell and Swamiji in America on behalf of the Hindu community. Before despatching these the contents of the letter of congratulations were communicated to them by cable. Sometime later we received acknowledgement of the resolutions and congratulations and a letter from Swamiji. In that letter Swamiji highly admired our work and sent his thanks to the people of India especially to the public of Calcutta and to us.

To pilgrimage again

My health broke down as a result of the hard work that I had to do day and night to organise that meeting and I was requested by my spiritual brethren to take rest for sometime. After having taken rest for a few days in Alambazar I had a strong desire to go on pilgrimage again for sometime and accordingly I started for Nainital in 1895 A.D., taking permission from Sarat, Sashi and Rakhal Maharaj. I travelled in the neighbourhood of Nainital and then I had a desire to stay at Almora for a few months doing austerities. The natural scenery of Almora is exquisite Though the hills were covered with forest, the charming sky scraping and snow-capped mountain ranges at a distance inspired renunciation in the heart. I had a few English and Sanskrit books with me which I would read whenever I would have time and I would meditate and discriminate on them. At that time I wrote an article named "Hindu Preacher" in English and sent it to "The Brahmavadin" at Madras. That journal used to be published by M. C. Alasinga Perumal. He published that article in 'Brahmavadin' of 23rd November, 1895. Neither before nor at the time of writing that article did I ever imagine that one day I would have to go to the West at the call of Swamiji for preaching religion. However,

after having spent a few months at Almora, I returned to Alambazar Math on foot again. On arrival I felt joy and pride at the news of Swamiji's success everywhere in America. What wonder could be there that Narendranath, the darling of Sri Ramakrishna, would win the admiration of the world by dint of the strength and blessings received from the extraordinary Preceptor!