

The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda-
Volume 4- Writings: Prose

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Chapter 1

Is the Soul Immortal?

IS THE SOUL IMMORTAL?^[1]

— Bhagavad-Gitâ.

In the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahâbhârata, the story is told how the hero, Yudhishtira, when asked by Dharma to tell what was the most wonderful thing in the world, replied, that it was the persistent belief of man kind in their own deathlessness in spite of their witnessing death everywhere around them almost every moment of their lives. And, in fact, this is the most stupendous wonder in human life. In spite of all arguments to the contrary urged in different times by different schools, in spite of the inability of reason to penetrate the veil of mystery which will ever hang between the sensuous and the supersensuous worlds, man is thoroughly persuaded that he cannot die.

We may study all our lives, and in the end fail to bring the problem of life and death to the plane of rational demonstration, affirmative or negative. We may talk or write, preach or teach, for or against the permanency or impermanency of human existence as much as we like; we may become violent partisans of this side or that; we may invent names by the hundred, each more intricate than its predecessor, and lull ourselves into a momentary rest under the delusion of our having solved the problem once for all; we may cling with all our powers to any one of the curious religious superstitions or the far more objectionable scientific superstitions — but in the end, we find ourselves playing an external game in the bowling alley of reason and raising intellectual pin after pin, only to be knocked over again and again.

But behind all this mental strain and torture, not infrequently productive of more dangerous results than mere games, stands a fact unchallenged and unchallengeable — the fact, the wonder, which the Mahabharata points out as the inability of our mind to conceive our own annihilation. Even to imagine my own annihilation I shall have to stand by and look on as a witness.

Now, before trying to understand what this curious phenomenon means, we want to note that upon this one fact the whole world stands. The permanence of the external world is inevitably joined to the permanence of the internal; and, however plausible any theory of the universe

may seem which asserts the permanence of the one and denies that of the other, the theorist himself will find that in his own mechanism not one conscious action is possible, without the permanence of both the internal and the external worlds being one of the factors in the motive cause. Although it is perfectly true that when the human mind transcends its own limitations, it finds the duality reduced to an indivisible unity, on this side of the unconditioned, the whole objective world — that is to say, the world we know — is and can be alone known to us as existing for the subject, and therefore, before we would be able to conceive the annihilation of the subject we are bound to conceive the annihilation of the object.

So far it is plain enough. But now comes the difficulty. I cannot think of myself ordinarily as anything else but a body. My idea of my own permanence includes my idea of myself as a body. But the body is obviously impermanent, as is the whole of nature — a constantly vanishing quantity.

Where, then, is this permanence?

There is one more wonderful phenomenon connected with our lives, without which “who will be able to live, who will be able to enjoy life a moment?” — the idea of freedom.

This is the idea that guides each footstep of ours, makes our movements possible, determines our relations to each other — nay, is the very warp and woof in the fabric of human life. Intellectual knowledge tries to drive it inch by inch from its territory, post after post is snatched away from its domains, and each step is made fast and iron-bound with the railroadings of cause and effect. But it laughs at all our attempts, and, lo, it keeps itself above all this massive pile of law and causation with which we tried to smother it to death! How can it be otherwise? The limited always requires a higher generalization of the unlimited to explain itself. The bound can only be explained by the free, the caused by the uncaused. But again, the same difficulty is also here. What is free? The body or even the mind? It is apparent to all that they are as much bound by law as anything else in the universe.

Now the problem resolves itself into this dilemma: either the whole universe is a mass of never-ceasing change and nothing more, irrevocably bound by the law of causation,

not one particle having a unity of itself, yet is curiously producing an ineradicable delusion of permanence and freedom, or there is in us and in the universe something which is permanent and free, showing that the basal constitutional belief of the human mind is not a delusion. It is the duty of science to explain facts by bringing them to a higher generalization. Any explanation, therefore that first wants to destroy a part of the fact given to be explained, in order to fit itself to the remainder, is not scientific, whatever else it may be.

So any explanation that wants to overlook the fact of this persistent and all-necessary idea of freedom commits the above-mentioned mistake of denying a portion of the fact in order to explain the rest, and is, therefore, wrong. The only other alternative possible, then, is to acknowledge, in harmony with our nature, that there is something in us which is free and permanent.

But it is not the body; neither is it the mind. The body is dying every minute. The mind is constantly changing. The body is a combination, and so is the mind, and as such can never reach to a state beyond all change. But beyond this momentary sheathing of gross matter, beyond even the finer covering of the mind is the Âtman, the true Self of man, the permanent, the ever free. It is his freedom that is percolating through layers of thought and matter, and, in spite of the colourings of name and form, is ever asserting its unshackled existence. It is his deathlessness, his bliss, his peace, his divinity that shines out and makes itself felt in spite of the thickest layers of ignorance. He is the real man, the fearless one, the deathless one, the free.

Now freedom is only possible when no external power can exert any influence, produce any change. Freedom is only possible to the being who is beyond all conditions, all laws, all bondages of cause and effect. In other words, the unchangeable alone can be free and, therefore, immortal. This Being, this Atman, this real Self of man, the free, the unchangeable is beyond all conditions, and as such, it has neither birth nor death.

“Without birth or death, eternal, ever-existing is this soul of man.”

Notes

- [1] The Swamiji's contribution to the discussion of this question, carried on in the pages of *The New York Morning Advertiser*.

Chapter 2

Reincarnation

REINCARNATION^[1]

— Bhagavad-Gitâ

Of the many riddles that have perplexed the intellect of man in all climes and times, the most intricate is himself. Of the myriad mysteries that have called forth his energies to struggle for solution from the very dawn of history, the most mysterious is his own nature. It is at once the most insoluble enigma and the problem of all problems. As the starting-point and the repository of all we know and feel and do, there never has been, nor will be, a time when man's own nature will cease to demand his best and foremost attention.

Though through hunger after that truth, which of all others has the most intimate connection with his very existence, though through an all-absorbing desire for an inward standard by which to measure the outward universe though through the absolute and inherent necessity of finding a fixed point in a universe of change, man has sometimes clutched at handfuls of dust for gold, and even when urged on by a voice higher than reason or intellect, he has many times failed rightly to interpret the real meaning of the divinity within — still there never was a time since the search began, when some race, or some individuals, did not hold aloft the lamp of truth.

Taking a one-sided, cursory and prejudiced view of the surroundings and the unessential details, sometimes disgusted also with the vagueness of many schools and sects, and often, alas, driven to the opposite extreme by the violent superstitions of organised priestcraft — men have not been wanting, especially among advanced intellects, in either ancient or modern times, who not only gave up the search in despair, but declared it fruitless and useless. Philosophers might fret and sneer, and priests ply their trade even at the point of the sword, but truth comes to those alone who worship at her shrine for her sake only, without fear and without shopkeeping.

Light comes to individuals through the conscious efforts of their intellect; it comes, slowly though, to the whole race through unconscious percolations. The philosophers show the volitional struggles of great minds; history reveals the silent process of permeation through which truth is absorbed by the masses.

Of all the theories that have been held by man about himself, that of a soul entity, separate from the body and immortal, has been the most widespread; and among those that held the belief in such a soul, the majority of the thoughtful had always believed also in its pre-existence.

At present the greater portion of the human race, having organised religion, believe in it; and many of the best thinkers in the most favoured lands, though nurtured in religions avowedly hostile to every idea of the pre-existence of the soul, have endorsed it. Hinduism and Buddhism have it for their foundation; the educated classes among the ancient Egyptians believed in it; the ancient Persians arrived at it; the Greek philosophers made it the corner-stone of their philosophy; the Pharisees among the Hebrews accepted it; and the Sufis among the Mohammedans almost universally acknowledged its truth.

There must be peculiar surroundings which generate and foster certain forms of belief among nations. It required ages for the ancient races to arrive at any idea about a part, even of the body, surviving after death; it took ages more to come to any rational idea about this something which persists and lives apart from the body. It was only when the idea was reached of an entity whose connection with the body was only for a time, and only among those nations who arrived at such a conclusion, that the unavoidable question arose: Whither? Whence?

The ancient Hebrews never disturbed their equanimity by questioning themselves about the soul. With them death ended all. Karl Heckel justly says, "Though it is true that in the Old Testament, preceding the exile, the Hebrews distinguish a life-principle, different from the body, which is sometimes called 'Nephesh', or 'Ruakh', or 'Neshama', yet all these words correspond rather to the idea of breath than to that of spirit or soul. Also in the writings of the Palestinean Jews, after the exile, there is never made mention of an individual immortal soul, but always only of a life-breath emanating from God, which, after the body is dissolved, is reabsorbed into the Divine 'Ruakh'."

The ancient Egyptians and the Chaldeans had peculiar beliefs of their own about the soul; but their ideas about this living part after death must not be confused with those of the ancient Hindu, the Persian, the Greek, or any

other Aryan race. There was, from the earliest times, a broad distinction between the Âryas and the non-Sanskrit speaking Mlechchhas in the conception of the soul. Externally it was typified by their disposal of the dead — the Mlechchhas mostly trying their best to *preserve* the dead bodies either by careful burial or by the more elaborate processes of mummifying, and the Aryas generally burning their dead.

Herein lies the key to a great secret — the fact that no Mlechchha race, whether Egyptian, Assyrian, or Babylonian, ever attained to the idea of the soul as a separate entity which can live *independent* of the body, without the help of the Aryas, especially of the Hindus.

Although Herodotus states that the Egyptians were the first to conceive the idea of the immortality of the soul, and states as a doctrine of the Egyptians “that the soul after the dissolution of the body enters again and again into a creature that comes to life; then, that the soul wanders through all the animals of the land and the sea and through all the birds, and finally after three thousand years returns to a human body,” yet, modern researches into Egyptology have hitherto found no trace of metempsychosis in the popular Egyptian religion. On the other hand, the most recent researches of Maspero, A. Erman, and other eminent Egyptologists tend to confirm the supposition that the doctrine of palingenesis was not at home with the Egyptians.

With the ancient Egyptians the soul was only a double, having no individuality of its own, and never able to break its connection with the body. It persists only so long as the body lasts; and if by chance the corpse is destroyed, the departed soul must suffer a second death and annihilation. The soul after death was allowed to roam freely all over the world, but always returning at night to where the corpse was, always miserable, always hungry and thirsty, always extremely desirous to enjoy life once more, and never being able to fulfil the desire. If any part of its old body was injured, the soul was also invariably injured in its corresponding part. And this idea explains the solicitude of the ancient Egyptians to preserve their dead. At first the deserts were chosen as the burial-place, because the dryness of the air did not allow the body to perish soon, thus granting to the departed soul a long lease of existence. In course of time one of the gods discovered the process of making mummies, through which the devout hoped to preserve the dead bodies of their ancestors for almost an infinite length of time, thus securing immortality to the departed ghost, however miserable it might be.

The perpetual regret for the world, in which the soul can take no further interest, never ceased to torture the deceased. “O. my brother,” exclaims the departed “withhold not thyself from drinking and eating, from drunkenness, from love, from all enjoyment, from following thy desire by night and by day; put not sorrow within thy heart, for, what are the years of man upon earth? The

West is a land of sleep and of heavy shadows, a place wherein the inhabitants, when once installed, slumber on in their mummy forms, never more waking to see their brethren; never more to recognise their fathers and mothers, with hearts forgetful of their wives and children. The living water, which earth giveth to all who dwell upon it, is for me stagnant and dead; that water floweth to all who are on earth, while for me it is but liquid putrefaction, this water that is mine. Since I came into this funeral valley I know not where nor what I am. Give me to drink of running water . . . let me be placed by the edge of the water with my face to the North, that the breeze may caress me and my heart be refreshed from its sorrow.”^[2]

Among the Chaldeans also, although they did not speculate so much as the Egyptians as to the condition of the soul after death, the soul is still a double and is bound to its sepulchre. They also could not conceive of a state without this physical body, and expected a resurrection of the corpse again to life; and though the goddess Ishtar, after great perils and adventures, procured the resurrection of her shepherd, husband, Dumuzi, the son of Ea and Damkina, “The most pious votaries pleaded in rain from temple to temple, for the resurrection of their dead friends.”

Thus we find, that the ancient Egyptians or Chaldeans never could entirely dissociate the idea of the soul from the corpse of the departed or the sepulchre. The state of earthly existence was best after all; and the departed are always longing to have a chance once more to renew it; and the living are fervently hoping to help them in prolonging the existence of the miserable double and striving the best they can to help them.

This is not the soil out of which any higher knowledge of the soul could spring. In the first place it is grossly materialistic, and even then it is one of terror and agony. Frightened by the almost innumerable powers of evil, and with hopeless, agonised efforts to avoid them, the souls of the living, like their ideas of the souls of the departed — wander all over the world though they might — could never get beyond the sepulchre and the crumbling corpse.

We must turn now for the source of the higher ideas of the soul to another race, whose God was an all-merciful, all-pervading Being manifesting Himself through various bright, benign, and helpful Devas, the first of all the human race who addressed their God as Father “Oh, take me by the hands even as a father takes his dear son”; with whom life was a hope and not a despair; whose religion was not the intermittent groans escaping from the lips of an agonised man during the intervals of a life of mad excitement; but whose ideas come to us redolent with the aroma of the field and forest; whose songs of praise — spontaneous, free, joyful, like the songs which burst forth from the throats of the birds when they hail this beautiful world illuminated by the first rays of the lord of the day — come down to us even now through the vista of eighty centuries as fresh calls from heaven; we turn to the

ancient Aryas.

“Place me in that deathless, undecaying world where is the light of heaven, and everlasting lustre shines”; “Make me immortal in that realm where dwells the King Vivasvân’s son, where is the secret shrine of heaven”; “Make me immortal in that realm where they move even as they list”; “In the third sphere of inmost heaven, where worlds are full of light, make me immortal in that realm of bliss”— These are the prayers of the Aryas in their oldest record, the Rig-Veda Samhitâ.

We find at once a whole world of difference between the Mlechchha and the Aryan ideals. To the one, this body and this world are all that are real, and all that are desirable. A little life-fluid which flies off from the body at death, to feel torture and agony at the loss of the enjoyments of the senses, can, they fondly hope, be brought back if the body is carefully preserved; and thus a corpse became more an object of care than the living man. The other found out that, that which left the body was the real man; and when separated from the body, it enjoyed a state of bliss higher than it ever enjoyed when in the body. And they hastened to annihilate the corrupted corpse by burning it.

Here we find the germ out of which a true idea of the soul could come. Here it was — where the real man was not the body, but the soul, where all ideas of an inseparable connection between the real man and the body were utterly absent — that a noble idea of the freedom of the soul could rise. And it was when the Aryas penetrated even beyond the shining cloth of the body with which the departed soul was enveloped, and found its real nature of a formless, individual, unit principle, that the question inevitably arose: Whence?

It was in India and among the Aryas that the doctrine of the pre-existence, the immortality, and the individuality of the soul first arose. Recent researches in Egypt have failed to show any trace of the doctrines of an independent and individual soul existing before and after the earthly phase of existence. Some of the mysteries were no doubt in possession of this idea, but in those it has been traced to India.

“I am convinced”, says Karl Heckel, “that the deeper we enter into the study of the Egyptian religion, the clearer it is shown that the doctrine of metempsychosis was entirely foreign to the popular Egyptian religion; and that even that which single mysteries possessed of it was not inherent to the Osiris teachings, but derived from Hindu sources.”

Later on, we find the Alexandrian Jews imbued with the doctrine of an individual soul, and the Pharisees of the time of Jesus, as already stated, not only had faith in an individual soul, but believed in its wandering through various bodies; and thus it is easy to find how Christ was recognised as the incarnation of an older Prophet, and Jesus himself directly asserted that John the Baptist was the Prophet Elias come back again. “If ye will receive it,

this is Elias, which was for to come.” — *Matt.* XI. 14.

The ideas of a soul and of its individuality among the Hebrews, evidently came through the higher mystical teachings of the Egyptians, who in their turn derived it from India. And that it should come through Alexandria is significant, as the Buddhistic records clearly show Buddhistic missionary activity in Alexandria and Asia Minor.

Pythagoras is said to have been the first Greek who taught the doctrine of palingenesis among the Hellenes. As an Aryan race, already burning their dead and believing in the doctrine of an individual soul, it was easy for the Greeks to accept the doctrine of reincarnation through the Pythagorean teachings. According to Apuleius, Pythagoras had come to India, where he had been instructed by the Brâhmins.

So far we have learnt that wherever the soul was held to be an individual, the real man, and not a vivifying part of the body only, the doctrine of its pre-existence had inevitably come, and that externally those nations that believed in the independent individuality of the soul had almost always signified it by burning the bodies of the departed. Though one of the ancient Aryan races, the Persian, developed at an early period and without any; Semitic influence a peculiar method of disposing of the bodies of the dead, the very name by which they call their “Towers of silence”, comes from the root Dah, to burn.

In short, the races who did not pay much attention to the analysis of their own nature, never went beyond the material body as their all in all, and even when driven by higher light to penetrate beyond, they only came to the conclusion that somehow or other, at some distant period of time, this body will become incorruptible.

On the other hand, that race which spent the best part of its energies in the inquiry into the nature of man as a thinking being — the Indo-Aryan — soon found out that beyond this body, beyond even the shining body which their forefathers longed after, is the real man, the principle, the individual who clothes himself with this body, and then throws it off when worn out. Was such a principle created? If creation means something coming out of nothing, their answer is a decisive “No”. This soul is without birth and without death; it is not a compound or combination but an independent individual, and as such it cannot be created or destroyed. It is only travelling through various states.

Naturally, the question arises: Where was it all this time? The Hindu philosophers say, “It was passing through different bodies in the physical sense, or, really and metaphysically speaking, passing through different mental planes.”

Are there any proofs apart from the teachings of the Vedas upon which the doctrine of reincarnation has been founded by the Hindu philosophers? There are, and we hope to show later on that there are grounds as valid for it as for any other universally accepted doctrine. But first

we will see what some of the greatest of modern European thinkers have thought about reincarnation.

I. H. Fichte, speaking about the immortality of the soul, says:

“It is true there is one analogy in nature which might be brought forth in refutation of the continuance. It is the well-known argument that everything that has a beginning in time must also perish at some period of time; hence, that the claimed past existence of the soul necessarily implies its pre-existence. This is a fair conclusion, but instead of being an objection to, it is rather an additional argument for its continuance. Indeed, one needs only to understand the full meaning of the metaphysico-physiological axiom that in reality nothing can be created or annihilated, to recognise that the soul must have existed prior to its becoming visible in a physical body.”

Schopenhauer, in his book, *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung*, speaking about palingenesis, says:

“What sleep is for the individual, death is for the 'will'. It would not endure to continue the same actions and sufferings throughout an eternity without true gain, if memory and individuality remained to it. It flings them off, and this is Lethe, and through this sleep of death it reappears fitted out with another intellect as a new being; a new day tempts to new shores. These constant new births, then, constitute the succession of the life-dreams of a will which in itself is indestructible, until instructed and improved by so much and such various successive knowledge in a constantly new form, it abolishes and abrogates itself.... It must not be neglected that even empirical grounds support a palingenesis of this kind. As a matter of fact, there does exist a connection between the birth of the newly appearing beings and the death of those that are worn out. It shows itself in the great fruitfulness of the human race which appears as a consequence of devastating diseases. When in the fourteenth century the Black Death had for the most part depopulated the Old World, a quite abnormal fruitfulness appeared among the human race, and twin-births were very frequent. The circumstance was also remarkable that none of the children born at this time obtained their full number of teeth; thus nature, exerting itself to the utmost, was niggardly in details. This is related by F. Schnurrer in his *Chronik der Seuchen*, 1825. Casper, also, in his *Ueber die Wahrscheinliche Lebensdauer des Menschen*, 1835, confirms the principle that the number of births in a given population has the most decided influence upon the length of life and mortality in it, as this always keeps pace with mortality; so that always and everywhere the deaths and the births increase and decrease in like proportion, which he places beyond doubt by an accumulation of evidence collected from many lands and their various provinces. And yet it is impossible that there can be physical, causal connection between my early death and the fruitfulness of a marriage with which I have nothing to do, or conversely. Thus here the metaphysical appears undeniable, and in a stupendous

manner, as the immediate ground of explanation of the physical. Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift; but there is and can be nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen; they are one being.”

The great English philosopher Hume, nihilistic though he was, says in the sceptical essay on immortality, “The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can listen to.” The philosopher Lessing, with a deep poetical insight, asks, “Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest, because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? . . . Why should not I come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back?”

The arguments for and against the doctrine of a pre-existing soul reincarnating through many lives have been many, and some of the greatest thinkers of all ages have taken up the gauntlet to defend it; and so far as we can see, if there is an individual soul, that it existed before seems inevitable. If the soul is not an individual but a combination of “Skandhas” (notions), as the Mādhyamikas among the Buddhists insist, still they find pre-existence absolutely necessary to explain their position.

The argument showing the impossibility of an infinite existence beginning in time is unanswerable, though attempts have been made to ward it off by appealing to the omnipotence of God to do anything, however contrary to reason it may be. We are sorry to find this most fallacious argument proceeding from some of the most thoughtful persons.

In the first place, God being the universal and common cause of all phenomena, the question was to find the natural causes of certain phenomena in the human soul, and the *Deus ex machina* theory is, therefore, quite irrelevant. It amounts to nothing less than confession of ignorance. We can give that answer to every question asked in every branch of human knowledge and stop all inquiry and, therefore, knowledge altogether.

Secondly, this constant appeal to the omnipotence of God is only a word-puzzle. The cause, as cause, is and can only be known to us as sufficient for the effect, and nothing more. As such we have no more idea of an infinite effect than of an omnipotent cause. Moreover, all our ideas of God are only limited; even the idea of cause limits our idea of God. Thirdly, even taking the position for granted, we are not bound to allow any such absurd theories as “Something coming out of nothing”, or “Infinity beginning in time”, so long as we can give a better explanation.

A so-called great argument is made against the idea of

pre-existence by asserting that the majority of mankind are not conscious of it. To prove the validity of this argument, the party who offers it must prove that the whole of the soul of man is bound up in the faculty of memory. If memory be the test of existence, then all that part of our lives which is not now in it must be non-existent, and every person who in a state of coma or otherwise loses his memory must be non-existent also.

The premises from which the inference is drawn of a previous existence, and that too on the plane of conscious action, as adduced by the Hindu philosophers, are chiefly these:

First, how else to explain this world of inequalities? Here is one child born in the province of a just and merciful God, with every circumstance conducing to his becoming a good and useful member of the human race, and perhaps at the same instant and in the same city another child is born under circumstances every one of which is against his becoming good. We see children born to suffer, perhaps all their lives, and that owing to no fault of theirs. Why should it be so? What is the cause? Of whose ignorance is it the result? If not the child's, why should it suffer for its parents' actions?

It is much better to confess ignorance than to try to evade the question by the allurements of future enjoyments in proportion to the evil here, or by posing "mysteries". Not only undeserved suffering forced upon us by any agent is immoral — not to say unjust — but even the future-makingup theory has no legs to stand upon.

How many of the miserably born struggle towards a higher life, and how many more succumb to the circumstances they are placed under? Should those who grow worse and more wicked by being forced to be born under evil circumstances be rewarded in the future for the wickedness of their lives? In that case the more wicked the man is here, the better will be his deserts hereafter.

There is no other way to vindicate the glory and the liberty of the human soul and reconcile the inequalities and the horrors of this world than by placing the whole burden upon the legitimate cause — our own independent actions or Karma. Not only so, but every theory of the creation of the soul from nothing inevitably leads to fatalism and preordination, and instead of a Merciful Father, places before us a hideous, cruel, and an ever-angry God to worship. And so far as the power of religion for good or evil is concerned, this theory of a created soul, leading to its corollaries of fatalism and predestination, is responsible for the horrible idea prevailing among some Christians and Mohammedans that the heathens are the lawful victims of their swords, and all the horrors that have followed and are following it still.

But an argument which the philosophers of the Nyâya school have always advanced in favour of reincarnations and which to us seems conclusive, is this: Our experiences cannot be annihilated. Our actions (Karma) though apparently disappearing, remain still unperceived (Ad-

ishta), and reappear again in their effect as tendencies (Pravrittis). Even little babies come with certain tendencies — fear of death, for example.

Now if a tendency is the result of repeated actions, the tendencies with which we are born must be explained on that ground too. Evidently we could not have got them in this life; therefore we must have to seek for their genesis in the past. Now it is also evident that some of our tendencies are the effects of the self-conscious efforts peculiar to man; and if it is true that we are born with such tendencies, it rigorously follows that their causes were conscious efforts in the past — that is, we must have been on the same mental plane which we call the human plane, before this present life.

So far as explaining the tendencies of the present life by past conscious efforts goes, the reincarnationists of India and the latest school of evolutionists are at once; the only difference is that the Hindus, as spiritualists, explain it by the conscious efforts of individual souls, and the materialistic school of evolutionists, by a hereditary physical transmission. The schools which hold to the theory of creation out of nothing are entirely out of court.

The issue has to be fought out between the reincarnationists who hold that all experiences are stored up as; tendencies in the subject of those experiences, the individual soul, and are transmitted by reincarnation of that unbroken individuality — and the materialists who hold that the brain is the subject of all actions and the theory of the transmission through cells.

It is thus that the doctrine of reincarnation assumes an infinite importance to our mind, for the fight between reincarnation and mere cellular transmission is, in reality, the fight between spiritualism and materialism. If cellular transmission is the all-sufficient explanation, materialism is inevitable, and there is no necessity for the theory of a soul. If it is not a sufficient explanation, the theory of an individual soul bringing into this life the experiences of the past is as absolutely true. There is no escape from the alternative, reincarnation or materialism. Which shall we accept?

Notes

- [1] Contributed to the *Metaphysical Magazine*, New York, March, 1895
- [2] This text has been translated into German by Brugsch, *Die Egyptische Gräberwelt*, pp. 39, 40, and into French by Maspero, *Etudes Egyptiennes*, vol. I., pp. 181-90.

Chapter 3

On Dr. Paul Deussen

ON DR. PAUL DEUSSEN^[1]

More than a decade has passed since a young German student, one of eight children of a not very well-to-do clergyman, heard on a certain day Professor Lassen lecturing on a language and literature new — very new even at that time — to European scholars, namely, Sanskrit. The lectures were of course free; for even now it is impossible for any one in any European University to make a living by teaching Sanskrit, unless indeed the University backs him.

Lassen was almost the last of that heroic band of German scholars, the pioneers of Sanskrit scholarship in Germany. Heroic certainly they were — what interest except their pure and unselfish love of knowledge could German scholars have had at that time in Indian literature? The veteran Professor was expounding a chapter of *Shakuntalâ*; and on that day there was no one present more eagerly and attentively listening to Lassen's exposition than our young student. The subject-matter of the exposition was of course interesting and wonderful, but more wonderful was the strange language, the strange sounds of which, although uttered with all those difficult peculiarities that Sanskrit consonants are subjected to in the mouths of unaccustomed Europeans, had strange fascination for him. He returned to his lodgings, but that night sleep could not make him oblivious of what he had heard. A glimpse of a hitherto unknown land had been given to him, a land far more gorgeous in its colours than any he had yet seen, and having a power of fascination never yet experienced by his young and ardent soul.

Naturally his friends were anxiously looking forward to the ripening of his brilliant parts, and expected that he would soon enter a learned profession which might bring him respect, fame, and, above all, a good salary and a high position. But then there was this Sanskrit! The vast majority of European scholars had not even heard of it then; as for making it pay — I have already said that such a thing is impossible even now. Yet his desire to learn it was strong.

It has unfortunately become hard for us modern Indians to understand how it could be like that; nevertheless, there are to be met with in Varanasi and Nadia and other places even now, some old as well as young persons

among our Pandits, and mostly among the Sannyasins, who are mad with this kind of thirst for knowledge for its own sake. Students, not placed in the midst of the luxurious surroundings and materials of the modern Europeanised Hindu, and with a thousand times less facilities for study, poring over manuscripts in the flickering light of an oil lamp, night after night, which alone would have been enough to completely destroy the eye-sight of the students of any other nation; travelling on foot hundreds of miles, begging their way all along, in search of a rare manuscript or a noted teacher; and wonderfully concentrating all the energy of their body and mind upon their one object of study, year in and year out, till the hair turns grey and the infirmity of age overtakes them — such students have not, through God's mercy, as yet disappeared altogether from our country. Whatever India now holds as a proud possession, has been undeniably the result of such labour on the part of her worthy sons in days gone by; and the truth of this remark will become at once evident on comparing the depth and solidity as well as the unselfishness and the earnestness of purpose of India's ancient scholarship with the results attained by our modern Indian Universities. Unselfish and genuine zeal for real scholarship and honest earnest thought must again become dominant in the life of our countrymen if they are ever to rise to occupy among nations a rank worthy of their own historic past. It is this kind of desire for knowledge which has made Germany what she is now — one of the foremost, if not the foremost, among the nations of the world.

Yes, the desire to learn Sanskrit was strong in the heart of this German student. It was long, uphill work — this learning of Sanskrit; with him too it was the same world-old story of successful scholars and their hard work, their privations and their indomitable energy — and also the same glorious conclusion of a really heroic achievement. He thus achieved success; and now — not only Europe, but all India knows this man, Paul Deussen, who is the Professor of Philosophy in the University of Kiel. I have seen professors of Sanskrit in America and in Europe. Some of them are very sympathetic towards Vedantic thought. I admire their intellectual acumen and their lives of unselfish labour. But Paul Deussen — or as he prefers to be called in Sanskrit, Deva-Sena — and the veteran Max Müller have impressed me as being the truest friends

of India and Indian thought. It will always be among the most pleasing episodes in my life — my first visit to this ardent Vedantist at Kiel, his gentle wife who travelled with him in India, and his little daughter, the darling of his heart — and our travelling together through Germany and Holland to London, and the pleasant meetings we had in and about London.

The earliest school of Sanskritists in Europe entered into the study of Sanskrit with more imagination than critical ability. They knew a little, expected much from that little, and often tried to make too much of what little they knew. Then, in those days even, such vagaries as the estimation of *Shakuntala* as forming the high watermark of Indian philosophy were not altogether unknown! These were naturally followed by a reactionary band of superficial critics, more than real scholars of any kind, who knew little or nothing of Sanskrit, expected nothing from Sanskrit studies, and ridiculed everything from the East. While criticising the unsound imaginativeness of the early school to whom everything in Indian literature was rose and musk, these, in their turn, went into speculations which, to say the least, were equally highly unsound and indeed very venturesome. And their boldness was very naturally helped by the fact that these over-hasty and unsympathetic scholars and critics were addressing an audience whose entire qualification for pronouncing any judgment in the matter was their absolute ignorance of Sanskrit. What a medley of results from such critical scholarship! Suddenly, on one fine morning, the poor Hindu woke up to find that everything that was his was gone; one strange race had snatched away from him his arts, another his architecture, and a third, whatever there was of his ancient sciences; why, even his religion was not his own! Yes — that too had migrated into India in the wake of a Pehlevi cross of stone! After a feverish period of such treading-on-each-other's-toes of original research, a better state of things has dawned. It has now been found out that mere adventure without some amount of the capital of real and ripe scholarship produces nothing but ridiculous failure even in the business of Oriental research, and that the traditions in India are not to be rejected with supercilious contempt, as there is really more in them than most people ever dream of.

There is now happily coming into existence in Europe a new type of Sanskrit scholars, reverential, sympathetic, and learned — reverential because they are a better stamp of men, and sympathetic because they are learned. And the link which connects the new portion of the chain with the old one is, of course, our Max Müller. We Hindus certainly owe more to him than to any other Sanskrit scholar in the West, and I am simply astonished when I think of the gigantic task which he, in his enthusiasm, undertook as a young man and brought to a successful conclusion in his old age. Think of this man without any help, poring over old manuscripts, hardly legible to the Hindus themselves, and in a language to acquire which takes a lifetime even in India — without even the help of any needy

Pandit whose “brains could be picked”, as the Americans say, for ten shillings a month, and a mere mention of his name in the introduction to some book of “very new researches” — think of this man, spending days and sometimes months in elucidating the correct reading and meaning of a word or a sentence in the commentary of Sâyana (as he has himself told me), and in the end succeeding in making an easy road through the forest of Vedic literature for all others to go along; think of him and his work, and then say what he really is to us! Of course we need not all agree with him in all that he says in his many writings; certainly such an agreement is impossible. But agreement or no agreement, the fact remains that this one man has done a thousand times more for the preservation, spreading, and appreciation of the literature of our forefathers than any of us can ever hope to do, and he has done it all with a heart which is full of the sweet balm of love and veneration.

If Max Müller is thus the old pioneer of the new movement, Deussen is certainly one of its younger advance-guard. Philological interest had hidden long from view the gems of thought and spirituality to be found in the mine of our ancient scriptures. Max Müller brought out a few of them and exhibited them to the public gaze, compelling attention to them by means of his authority as the foremost philologist. Deussen, unhampered by any philological leanings and possessing the training of a philosopher singularly well versed in the speculations of ancient Greece and modern Germany, took up the cue and plunged boldly into the metaphysical depths of the Upanishads, found them to be fully safe and satisfying, and then — equally boldly declared that fact before the whole world. Deussen is certainly the freest among scholars in the expression of his opinion about the Vedanta. He never stops to think about the “What they would say” of the vast majority of scholars. We indeed require bold men in this world to tell us bold words about truth; and nowhere, is this more true now than in Europe where, through the fear of social opinion and such other causes, there has been enough in all conscience of the whitewashing and apologising attitude among scholars towards creeds and customs which, in all probability, not many among them really believe in. The greater is the glory, therefore, to Max Müller and to Deussen for their bold and open advocacy of truth! May they be as bold in showing to us our defects, the later corruptions in our thought-systems in India, especially in their application to our social needs! Just now we very much require the help of such genuine friends as these to check the growing virulence of the disease, very prevalent in India, of running either to the one extreme of slavish panegyrist who cling to every village superstition as the innermost essence of the Shâstras, or to the other extreme of demoniacal denouncers who see no good in us and in our history, and will, if they can, at once dynamite all the social and spiritual organizations of our ancient land of religion and philosophy.

Notes

[1] Written for the *Brahmavâdin*, 1896.

Chapter 4

On Professor Max Müller

ON PROFESSOR MAX MÜLLER^[1]

Though the ideal of work of our *Brahmavâdin* should always be " कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन — To work thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof", yet no sincere worker passes out of the field of activity without making himself known and catching at least a few rays of light.

The beginning of our work has been splendid, and the steady earnestness shown by our friends is beyond all praise. Sincerity of conviction and purity of motive will surely gain the day; and even a small minority, armed with these, is surely destined to prevail against all odds.

Keep away from all insincere claimants to supernatural illumination; not that such illumination is impossible, but, my friends, in this world of ours "lust, or gold, or fame" is the hidden motive behind ninety per cent of all such claims, and of the remaining ten per cent, nine per cent are cases which require the tender care of physicians more than the attention of metaphysicians.

The first great thing to accomplish is to establish a character, to obtain, as we say, the प्रतष्टिता प्रज्ञा (established Wisdom). This applies equally to individuals and to organised bodies of individuals. Do not fret because the world looks with suspicion at every new attempt, even though it be in the path of spirituality. The poor world, how often has it been cheated! The more the संसार that is, the worldly aspect of life, looks at any growing movement with eyes of suspicion, or, even better still, presents to it a semi-hostile front, so much the better is it for the movement. If there is any truth this movement has to disseminate, any need it is born to supply, soon will condemnation be changed into praise, and contempt converted into love. People in these days are apt to take up religion as a means to some social or political end. Beware of this. Religion is its own end. That religion which is only a means to worldly well-being is not religion, whatever else it may be; and it is sheer blasphemy against God and man to hold that man has no other end than the free and full enjoyment of all the pleasure of his senses.

Truth, purity, and unselfishness — wherever these are present, there is no power below or above the sun to crush the possessor thereof. Equipped with these, one individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition.

Above all, beware of compromises. I do not mean that you are to get into antagonism with anybody, but you have to hold on to your own principles in weal or woe and never adjust them to others' "fads" through the greed of getting supporters. Your Âtman is the support of the universe — whose support do you stand in need of? Wait with patience and love and strength; if helpers are not ready now, they will come in time. Why should we be in a hurry? The real working force of all great work is in its almost unperceived beginnings.

Whoever could have thought that the life and teachings of a boy born of poor Brâhmin parents in a wayside Bengal village would, in a few years, reach such distant lands as our ancestors never even dreamed of? I refer to Bhagavan Ramâkrishna. Do you know that Prof. Max Müller has already written an article on Shri Ramakrishna for the *Nineteenth Century*, and will be very glad to write a larger and fuller account of his life and teachings if sufficient materials are forthcoming? What an extraordinary man is Prof. Max Müller! I paid a visit to him a few days ago. I should say, that I went to pay my respects to him, for whosoever loves Shri Ramakrishna, whatever be his or her sect, or creed, or nationality, my visit to that person I hold as a pilgrimage. "मद्भक्तानां च ये भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः — They who are devoted to those who love Me — they are My best devotees." Is that not true?

The Professor was first induced to inquire about the power behind, which led to sudden and momentous changes in the life of the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the great Brâhmo leader; and since then, he has been an earnest student and admirer of the life and teachings of Shri Ramakrishna. "Ramakrishna is worshipped by thousands today, Professor", I said. "To whom else shall worship be accorded, if not to such", was the answer. The Professor was kindness itself, and asked Mr. Sturdy and myself to lunch with him. He showed us several colleges in Oxford and the Bodleian library. He also accompanied us to the railway station; and all this he did because, as he said, "It is not every day one meets a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahansa."

The visit was really a revelation to me. That nice little house in its setting of a beautiful garden, the silverheaded sage, with a face calm and benign, and forehead smooth as a child's in spite of seventy winters, and every line in

that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind; that noble wife, the helpmate of his life through his long and arduous task of exciting interest, overriding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India — the trees, the flowers, the calmness, and the clear sky — all these sent me back in imagination to the glorious days of Ancient India, the days of our Brahmarshis and Râjarshis, the days of the great Vânaprasthas, the days of Arundhatis and Vasishthas.

It was neither the philologist nor the scholar that I saw, but a soul that is every day realising its oneness with the Brahman, a heart that is every moment expanding to reach oneness with the Universal. Where others lose themselves in the desert of dry details, he has struck the well-spring of life. Indeed his heartbeats have caught the rhythm of the Upanishads "तमेवैकं जानथ जात्मानमन्या वाचो वमिञ्चथ — Know the Atman alone, and leave off all other talk."

Although a world-moving scholar and philosopher, his learning and philosophy have only led him higher and higher to the realisation of the Spirit, his अपरा वदिया (lower knowledge) has indeed helped him to reach the परा वदिया (higher knowledge). This is real learning. वदिया ददात विनियम् — "Knowledge gives humility." Of what use is knowledge if it does not show us the way to the Highest?

And what love he bears towards India! I wish I had a hundredth part of that love for my own motherland! Endued with an extraordinary, and at the same time intensely active mind, he has lived and moved in the world of Indian thought for fifty years or more, and watched the sharp interchange of light and shade in the interminable forest of Sanskrit literature with deep interest and heartfelt love, till they have all sunk into his very soul and coloured his whole being.

Max Müller is a Vedantist of Vedantists. He has, indeed, caught the real soul of the melody of the Vedanta, in the midst of all its settings of harmonies and discords — the one light that lightens the sects and creeds of the world, the Vedanta, the one principle of which all religions are only applications. And what was Ramakrishna Paramahansa? The practical demonstration of this ancient principle, the embodiment of India that is past, and a foreshadowing of the India that is to be, the bearer of spiritual light unto nations. The jeweller alone can understand the worth of jewels; this is an old proverb. Is it a wonder that this Western sage does study and appreciate every new star in the firmament of Indian thought, before even the Indians themselves realise its magnitude?

"When are you coming to India? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light", I said. The face of the aged sage brightened up — there was almost a tear in his eyes, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out: "I would not return then; you would have to

cremate me there." Further questions seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored the holy secrets of man's heart. Who knows but that it was what the poet has said—

तच्चेतसा स्मरति नूनमबोधपूर्वं ।
भावस्थरिणिजनान्तरसौहृदानि ॥

—"He remembers with his mind the friendships of former births, firmly rooted in his heart."

His life has been a blessing to the world; and may it be many, many years more, before he changes the present plane of his existence!

Notes

- [1] Written for the *Brahmâvadin*, from London, June 6, 1896.

Chapter 5

Sketch of the Life of Pavhari Baba

SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PAVHARI BABA

To help the suffering world was the gigantic task to which the Buddha gave prominence, brushing aside for the time being almost all other phases of religion; yet he had to spend years in self-searching to realise the great truth of the utter hollowness of clinging to a selfish individuality. A more unselfish and untiring worker is beyond our most sanguine imagination: yet who had harder struggles to realise the meaning of things than he? It holds good in all times that the greater the work, the more must have been the power of realisation behind. Working out the details of an already laid out masterly plan may not require much concentrated thought to back it, but the great impulses are only transformed great concentrations. The theory alone perhaps is sufficient for small exertions, but the push that creates the ripple is very different from the impulsion that raises the wave, and yet the ripple is only the embodiment of a bit of the power that generates the wave.

Facts, naked facts, gaunt and terrible may be; truth, bare truth, though its vibrations may snap every chord of the heart; motive selfless and sincere, though to reach it, limb after limb has to be lopped off — such are to be arrived at, found, and gained, before the mind on the lower plane of activity can raise huge work-waves. The fine accumulates round itself the gross as it rolls on through time and becomes manifest, the unseen crystallises into the seen, the possible becomes the practical, the cause the effect, and thought, muscular work.

The cause, held back by a thousand circumstances, will manifest itself, sooner or later, as the effect; and potent thought, however powerless at present, will have its glorious day on the plane of material activity. Nor is the standard correct which judges of everything by its power to contribute to our sense-enjoyment.

The lower the animal, the more is its enjoyment in the senses, the more it lives in the senses. Civilisation, true civilization, should mean the power of taking the animal-man out of his sense-life — by giving him visions and tastes of planes much higher — and not external comforts.

Man knows this instinctively. He may not formulate it to himself under all circumstances. He may form very di-

vergent opinions about the life of thought. But it is there, pressing itself to the front in spite of everything, making him pay reverence to the hoodoo-worker, the medicine-man, the magician, the priest, or the professor of science. The growth of man can only be gauged by his power of living in the higher atmosphere where the senses are left behind, the amount of the pure thought-oxygen his lungs can breathe in, and the amount of time he can spend on that height.

As it is, it is an obvious fact that, with the exception of what is taken up by the necessities of life, the man of culture is loth to spend his time on so-called comforts, and even necessary actions are performed with lessened zeal, as the process moves forward.

Even luxuries are arranged according to ideas and ideals, to make them reflect as much of thought-life as possible — and this is Art.

“As the one fire coming into the universe is manifesting itself in every form, and yet is more besides” — yes, infinitely more besides! A bit, only a small bit, of infinite thought can be made to descend to the plane of matter to minister to our comfort — the rest will not allow itself to be rudely handled. The superfine always eludes our view and laughs at our attempts to bring it down. In this case, Mohammed must go to the mountain, and no “nay”. Man must raise himself to that higher plane if he wants to enjoy its beauties, to bathe in its light, to feel his life pulsating in unison with the Cause-Life of the universe.

It is knowledge that opens the door to regions of wonder, knowledge that makes a god of an animal: and that knowledge which brings us to That, “knowing which everything else is known” (the heart of all knowledge — whose pulsation brings life to all sciences — the science of religion) is certainly the highest, as it alone can make man live a complete and perfect life in thought. Blessed be the land which has styled it “supreme science”!

The principle is seldom found perfectly expressed in the practical, yet the ideal is never lost. On the one hand, it is our duty never to lose sight of the ideal, whether we can approach it with sensible steps, or crawl towards it with imperceptible motion: on the other hand, the truth is, it is always loosening in front of us — though we try our best to cover its light with our hands before our eyes.

The life of the practical is in the ideal. It is the ideal that has penetrated the whole of our lives, whether we philosophise, or perform the hard, everyday duties of life. The rays of the ideal, reflected and refracted in various straight or tortuous lines, are pouring in through every aperture and windhole, and consciously or unconsciously, every function has to be performed in its light, every object has to be seen transformed, heightened, or deformed by it. It is the ideal that has made us what we are, and will make us what we are going to be. It is the power of the ideal that has enshrouded us, and is felt in our joys or sorrows, in our great acts or mean doings, in our virtues and vices.

If such is the power of the ideal over the practical, the practical is no less potent in forming the ideal. The truth of the ideal is in the practical. The fruition of the ideal has been through the sensing of the practical. That the ideal is there is a proof of the existence of the practical somehow, somewhere. The ideal may be vaster, yet it is the multiplication of little bits of the practical. The ideal mostly is the summed-up, generalized, practical units.

The power of the ideal is in the practical. Its work on us is in and through the practical. Through the practical, the ideal is brought down to our sense-perception, changed into a form fit for our assimilation. Of the practical we make the steps to rise to the ideal. On that we build our hopes; it gives us courage to work.

One man who manifests the ideal in his life is more powerful than legions whose words can paint it in the most beautiful colours and spin out the finest principles.

Systems of philosophy mean nothing to mankind, or at best only intellectual gymnastics, unless they are joined to religion and can get a body of men struggling to bring them down to practical life with more or less success. Even systems having not one positive hope, when taken up by groups and made somewhat practical, had always a multitude; and the most elaborate positive systems of thought withered away without it.

Most of us cannot keep our activities on a par with our thought-lives. Some blessed ones can. Most of us seem to lose the power of work as we think deeper, and the power of deep thought if we work more. That is why most great thinkers have to leave to time the practical realisation of their great ideals. Their thoughts must wait for more active brains to work them out and spread them. Yet, as we write, comes before us a vision of him, the charioteer of Arjuna, standing in his chariot between the contending hosts, his left hand curbing the fiery steeds — a mail-clad warrior, whose eagle-glance sweeps over the vast army, and as if by instinct weighs every detail of the battle array of both parties — at the same time that we hear, as it were, falling from his lips and thrilling the awestruck Arjuna, that most marvellous secret of work: "He who finds rest in the midst of activity, and activity in rest, he is the wise amidst men, he the Yogi, he is the doer of all work" (Gita, IV. 18).

This is the ideal complete. But few ever reach it. We must take things as they are, therefore, and be contented to piece together different aspects of human perfection, developed in different individuals.

In religion we have the man of intense thought, of great activity in bringing help to others, the man of boldness and daring self-realisation, and the man of meekness and humility.

The subject of this sketch was a man of wonderful humility and intense self-realisation.

Born of Brâhmin parents in a village near Guzi, Varanasi, Pavhâri Bâbâ, as he was called in after life, came to study and live with his uncle in Ghazipur, when a mere boy. At present, Hindu ascetics are split up into the main divisions of Sannyâsins, Yogis, Vairâgis, and Panthis. The Sannyasins are the followers of Advaitism after Shankarâchârya; the Yogis, though following the Advaita system, are specialists in practicing the different systems of Yoga; the Vairagis are the dualistic disciples of Râmânujâchârya and others; the Panthis, professing either philosophy, are orders founded during the Mohammedan rule. The uncle of Pavhari Baba belonged to the Ramanuja or Shri sect, and was a Naishthika Brahmachârin, i.e. one who takes the vow of lifelong celibacy. He had a piece of land on the banks of the Ganga, about two miles to the north of Ghazipur, and had established himself there. Having several nephews, he took Pavhari Baba into his home and adopted him, intending him to succeed to his property and position.

Not much is known of the life of Pavhari Baba at this period. Neither does there seem to have been any indication of those peculiarities which made him so well known in after years. He is remembered merely as a diligent student of Vyâkarana and Nyâya, and the theology of his sect, and as an active lively boy whose jollity at times found vent in hard practical jokes at the expense of his fellow-students.

Thus the future saint passed his young days, going through the routine duties of Indian students of the old school; and except that he showed more than ordinary application to his studies, and a remarkable aptitude for learning languages, there was scarcely anything in that open, cheerful, playful student life to foreshadow the tremendous seriousness which was to culminate in a most curious and awful sacrifice.

Then something happened which made the young scholar feel, perhaps for the first time, the serious import of life, and made him raise his eyes, so long riveted on books, to scan his mental horizon critically and crave for something in religion which was a fact, and not mere book-lore. His uncle passed away. One face on which all the love of that young heart was concentrated had gone, and the ardent boy, struck to the core with grief, determined to supply the gap with a vision that can never change.

In India, for everything, we want a Guru. Books, we Hin-

dus are persuaded, are only outlines. The living secrets must be handed down from Guru to disciple, in every art, in every science, much more so in religion. From time immemorial earnest souls in India have always retired to secluded spots, to carry on uninterrupted their study of the mysteries of the inner life, and even today there is scarcely a forest, a hill, or a sacred spot which rumour does not consecrate as the abode of a great sage. The saying is well known:

“The water is pure that flows.
The monk is pure that goes.”

As a rule, those who take to the celibate religious life in India spend a good deal of their life in journeying through various countries of the Indian continent, visiting different shrines — thus keeping themselves from rust, as it were, and at the same time bringing religion to the door of everyone. A visit to the four great sacred places, situated in the four corners of India, is considered almost necessary to all who renounce the world.

All these considerations may have had weight with our young Brahmacharin, but we are sure that the chief among them was the thirst for knowledge. Of his travels we know but little, except that, from his knowledge of Dravidian languages, in which a good deal of the literature of his sect is written, and his thorough acquaintance with the old Bengali of the Vaishnavas of Shri Chaitanya's order, we infer that his stay in Southern India and Bengal could not have been very short.

But on his visit to one place, the friends of his youth lay great stress. It was on the top of mount Girnâr in Kathi-awar, they say, that he was first initiated into the mysteries of practical Yoga.

It was this mountain which was so holy to the Buddhists. At its foot is the huge rock on which is inscribed the first-deciphered edict of the “divinest of monarchs”, Asoka. Beneath it, through centuries of oblivion, lay the conclave of gigantic Stupas, forest covered, and long taken for hillocks of the Girnar range. No less sacred is it still held by the sect of which Buddhism is now thought to be a revised edition, and which strangely enough did not venture into the field of architectural triumphs till its world-conquering descendant had melted away into modern Hinduism. Girnar is celebrated amongst Hindus as having been sanctified by the stay of the great Avadhuta Guru Dattâtreyâ, and rumour has it that great and perfected Yogis are still to be met with by the fortunate on its top.

The next turning-point in the career of our youthful Brahmacharin we trace to the banks of the Ganga some where near Varanasi, as the disciple of a Sannyasin who practiced Yoga and lived in a hole dug in the high bank of the river. To this yogi can be traced the after-practice of our saint, of living inside a deep tunnel, dug out of the ground on the bank of the Ganga near Ghazipur. Yogis have always inculcated the advisability of living in caves

or other spots where the temperature is even, and where sounds do not disturb the mind. We also learn that he was about the same time studying the Advaita system under a Sannyasin in Varanasi.

After years of travel, study, and discipline, the young Brahmacharin came back to the place where he had been brought up. Perhaps his uncle, if alive, would have found in the face of the boy the same light which of yore a greater sage saw in that of his disciple and exclaimed, “Child, thy face today shines with the glory of Brahman!” But those that welcomed him to his home were only the companions of his boyhood — most of them gone into, and claimed for ever by, the world of small thought and eternal toil.

Yet there was a change, a mysterious — to them an awe-inspiring — change, in the whole character and demeanour of that school-day friend and playmate whom they had been wont to understand. But it did not arouse in them emulation, or the same research. It was the mystery of a man who had gone beyond this world of trouble and materialism, and this was enough. They instinctively respected it and asked no questions.

Meanwhile, the peculiarities of the saint began to grow more and more pronounced. He had a cave dug in the ground, like his friend near Varanasi, and began to go into it and remain there for hours. Then began a process of the most awful dietary discipline. The whole day he worked in his little Âshrama, conducted the worship of his beloved Râmachandra, cooked good dinners — in which art he is said to have been extraordinarily proficient — distributed the whole of the offered food amongst his friends and the poor, looked after their comforts till night came, and when they were in their beds, the young man stole out, crossed the Ganga by swimming, and reached the other shore. There he would spend the whole night in the midst of his practices and prayers, come back before daybreak and wake up his friends, and then begin once more the routine business of “worshipping others”, as we say in India.

His own diet, in the meanwhile, was being attenuated every day, till it came down, we are told, to a handful of bitter Nimba leaves, or a few pods of red pepper, daily. Then he gave up going nightly to the woods on the other bank of the river and took more and more to his cave. For days and months, we are told, he would be in the hole, absorbed in meditation, and then come out. Nobody knows what he subsisted on during these long intervals, so the people called him Pav-âhâri (or air-eater) Bâbâ (or father).

He would never during his life leave this place. Once, however, he was so long inside the cave that people gave him up as dead, but after a long time, the Baba emerged and gave a Bhândârâ (feast) to a large number of Sâdhus.

When not absorbed in his meditations, he would be living in a room above the mouth of his cave, and during this time he would receive visitors. His fame began to

spread, and to Rai Gagan Chandra Bahadur of the Opium Department, Ghazipur — a gentleman whose innate nobility and spirituality have endeared him to all — we owe our introduction to the saint.

Like many others in India, there was no striking or stirring external activity in this life. It was one more example of that Indian ideal of teaching through life and not through words, and that truth bears fruit in those lives only which have become ready to receive. Persons of this type are entirely averse to preaching what they know, for they are for ever convinced that it is internal discipline alone that leads to truth, and not words. Religion to them is no motive to social conduct, but an intense search after and realisation of *truth* in this life. They deny the greater potentiality of one moment over another, and every moment in eternity being equal to every other, they insist on seeing the truths of religion face to face now and here, not waiting for death.

The present writer had occasion to ask the saint the reason of his not coming out of his cave to help the world. At first, with his native humility and humour, he gave the following strong reply:

“A certain wicked person was caught in some criminal act and had his nose cut off as a punishment. Ashamed to show his noseless features to the world and disgusted with himself, he fled into a forest; and there, spreading a tiger-skin on the ground, he would feign deep meditation whenever he thought anybody was about. This conduct, instead of keeping people off, drew them in crowds to pay their respects to this wonderful saint; and he found that his forest-life had brought him once again an easy living. Thus years went by. At last the people around became very eager to listen to some instruction from the lips of the silent meditative saint; and one young man was specially anxious to be initiated into the order. It came to such a pass that any more delay in that line would undermine the reputation of the saint. So one day he broke his silence and asked the enthusiastic young man to bring on the morrow a sharp razor with him. The young man, glad at the prospect of the great desire of his life being speedily fulfilled, came early the next morning with the razor. The noseless saint led him to a very retired spot in the forest, took the razor in his hand, opened it, and with one stroke cut off his nose, repeating in a solemn voice, 'Young man, this has been my initiation into the order. The same I give to you. Do you transmit it diligently to others when the opportunity comes!' The young man could not divulge the secret of this wonderful initiation for shame, and carried out to the best of his ability the injunctions of his master. Thus a whole sect of nose-cut saints spread over the country. Do you want me to be the founder of another such?”

Later on, in a more serious mood, another query brought the answer: “Do you think that physical help is the only help possible? Is it not possible that one mind can help other minds even without the activity of the body?”

When asked on another occasion why he, a great Yogi, should perform Karma, such as pouring oblations into the sacrificial fire, and worshipping the image of Shri Raghunâthji, which are practices only meant for beginners, the reply came: “Why do you take for granted that everybody makes Karma for his own good? Cannot one perform Karma for others?”

Then again, everyone has heard of the thief who had come to steal from his Ashrama, and who at the sight of the saint got frightened and ran away, leaving the goods he had stolen in a bundle behind; how the saint took the bundle up, ran after the thief, and came up to him after miles of hard running; how the saint laid the bundle at the feet of the thief, and with folded hands and tears in his eyes asked his pardon for his own intrusion, and begged hard for his acceptance of the goods, since they belonged to him, and not to himself.

We are also told, on reliable authority, how once he was bitten by a cobra; and though he was given up for hours as dead, he revived; and when his friends asked him about it, he only replied that the cobra “was a messenger from the Beloved”.

And well may we believe this, knowing as we do the extreme gentleness, humility, and love of his nature. All sorts of physical illness were to him only “messengers from the Beloved”, and he could not even bear to hear them called by any other name, even while he himself suffered tortures from them. This silent love and gentleness had conveyed themselves to the people around, and those who have travelled through the surrounding villages can testify to the unspoken influence of this wonderful man. Of late, he did not show himself to anyone. When out of his underground retiring-place, he would speak to people with a closed door between. His presence above, ground was always indicated by the rising smoke of oblations in the sacrificial fire, or the noise of getting things ready for worship.

One of his great peculiarities was his entire absorption at the time in the task in hand, however trivial. The same amount of care and attention was bestowed in cleaning a copper pot as in the worship of Shri Raghunathji, he himself being the best example of the secret he once told us of work: “The means should be loved and cared for as if it were the end itself.”

Neither was his humility kindred to that which means pain and anguish or self-abasement. It sprang naturally from the realization of that which he once so beautifully explained to us, “O King, the Lord is the wealth of those who have nothing — yes, of those”, he continued, “who have thrown away all desires of possession, even that of one’s own soul.” He would never directly teach, as that would be assuming the role of a teacher and placing himself in a higher position than another. But once the spring was touched, the fountain welled up with infinite wisdom; yet always the replies were indirect.

In appearance he was tall and rather fleshy, had but one

eye, and looked much younger than his real age. His voice was the sweetest we have ever heard. For the last ten years or more of his life, he had withdrawn himself entirely from the gaze of mankind. A few potatoes and a little butter were placed behind the door of his room, and sometimes during the night this was taken in when he was not in Samâdhi and was living above ground. When inside his cave, he did not require even these. Thus, this silent life went on, witnessing to the science of Yoga, and a living example of purity, humility, and love.

The smoke, which, as we have said already, indicated his coming out of Samadhi, one day smelled of burning flesh. The people around could not guess what was happening; but when the smell became overpowering, and the smoke was seen to rise up in volumes, they broke open the door, and found that the great Yogi had offered himself as the last oblation to his sacrificial fire, and very soon a heap of ashes was all that remained of his body.

Let us remember the words of Kâlidâsa: "Fools blame the actions of the great, because they are extraordinary and their reasons past the finding-out of ordinary mortals."

Yet, knowing him as we do, we can only venture to suggest that the saint saw that his last moments had come, and not wishing to cause trouble to any, even after death, performed this last sacrifice of an Ârya, in full possession of body and mind.

The present writer owes a deep debt of gratitude to the departed saint and dedicates these lines, however unworthy, to the memory of one of the greatest Masters he has loved and served.

Chapter 6

Aryans and Tamilians

ARYANS AND TAMILIANS

A veritable ethnological museum! Possibly, the half-ape skeleton of the recently discovered Sumatra link will be found on search here, too. The Dolmens are not wanting. Flint implements can be dug out almost anywhere. The lake-dwellers — at least the river-dwellers — must have been abundant at one time. The cave-men and leaf-wearers still persist. The primitive hunters living in forests are in evidence in various parts of the country. Then there are the more historical varieties — the Negrito-Kolarian, the Dravidian, and the Aryan. To these have been added from time to time dashes of nearly all the known races, and a great many yet unknown — various breeds of Mongoloids, Mongols, Tartars, and the so-called Aryans of the philologists. Well, here are the Persian, the Greek, the Yunchi, the Hun, the Chin, the Scythian, and many more, melted and fused, the Jews, Parsees, Arabs, Mongols, down to the descendants of the Vikings and the lords of the German forests, yet undigested — an ocean of humanity, composed of these race-waves seething, boiling, struggling, constantly changing form, rising to the surface, and spreading, and swallowing little ones, again subsiding — this is the history of India.

In the midst of this madness of nature, one of the contending factions discovered a method and, through the force of its superior culture, succeeded in bringing the largest number of Indian humanity under its sway.

The superior race styled themselves the *Âryas* or nobles, and their method was the *Varnâshramâchâra* — the so-called caste.

Of course the men of the Aryan race reserved for themselves, consciously or unconsciously a good many privileges; yet the institution of caste has always been very flexible, sometimes too flexible to ensure a healthy uprise of the races very low in the scale of culture.

It put, theoretically at least, the whole of India under the guidance — not of wealth, nor of the sword — but of intellect — intellect chastened and controlled by spirituality. The leading caste in India is the highest of the Aryans — the Brahmins.

Though apparently different from the social methods of

other nations, on close inspection, the Aryan method of caste will not be found so very different except on two points:

The first is, in every other country the highest honour belongs to the Kshatriya — the man of the sword. The Pope of Rome will be glad to trace his descent to some robber baron on the banks of the Rhine. In India, the highest honour belongs to the man of peace — the Sharman the Brahmin, the man of God.

The greatest Indian king would be gratified to trace his descent to some ancient sage who lived in the forest, probably a recluse, possessing nothing, dependent upon the villagers for his daily necessities, and all his life trying to solve the problems of this life and the life hereafter.

The second point is, the difference of *unit*. The law of caste in every other country takes the individual man or woman as the sufficient unit. Wealth, power, intellect, or beauty suffices for the individual to leave the status of birth and scramble up to anywhere he can.

Here, the unit is all the members of a caste community.

Here, too, one has every chance of rising from a low caste to a higher or the highest: only, in this birth-land of altruism, one is compelled to take his whole caste along with him.

In India, you cannot, on account of your wealth, power, or any other merit, leave your fellows behind and make common cause with your superiors; you cannot deprive those who helped in your acquiring the excellence of any benefit therefrom and give them in return only contempt. If you want to rise to a higher caste in India, you have to elevate all your caste first, and then there is nothing in your onward path to hold you back.

This is the Indian method of fusion, and this has been going on from time immemorial. For in India, more there elsewhere. Such words as Aryans and Dravidians are only of philological import, the so-called craniological differentiation finding no solid ground to work upon.

Even so are the names Brahmin, Kshatriya, etc. They simply represent the status of a community in itself continuously fluctuating, even when it has reached the summit and all further endeavours are towards fixity of the

type by non-marriage, by being forced to admit fresh groups, from lower castes or foreign lands, within its pale.

Whatever caste has the power of the sword, becomes Kshatriya; whatever learning, Brahmin; whatever wealth, Vaishya.

The groups that have already reached the coveted goal, indeed, try to keep themselves aloof from the newcomers, by making sub-divisions in the same caste, but the fact remains that they coalesce in the long run. This is going on before our own eyes, all over India.

Naturally, a group having raised itself would try to preserve the privileges to itself. Hence, whenever it was possible to get the help of a king, the higher castes, especially the Brahmins, have tried to put down similar aspirations in lower castes, by the sword if practicable. But the question is: Did they succeed? Look closely into your Purânas and Upa-puranas, look especially into the local Khandas of the big Puranas, look round and see what is happening before your eyes, and you will find the answer.

We are, in spite of our various castes, and in spite of the modern custom of marriage restricted within the sub-divisions of a caste (though this is not universal), a mixed race in every sense of the word.

Whatever may be the import of the philological terms “Aryan” and “Tamilian”, even taking for granted that both these grand sub-divisions of Indian humanity came from outside the Western frontier, the dividing line had been, from the most ancient times, one of language and not of blood. Not one of the epithets expressive of contempt for the ugly physical features of the Dasyus of the Vedas would apply to the great Tamilian race; in fact if there be a toss for good looks between the Aryans and Tamilians, no sensible man would dare prognosticate the result.

The super-arrogated excellence of birth of any caste in India is only pure myth, and in no part of India has it, we are sorry to say, found such congenial soil, owing to linguistic differences, as in the South.

We purposely refrain from going into the details of this social tyranny in the South, just as we have stopped ourselves from scrutinising the genesis of the various modern Brahmins and other castes. Sufficient for us to note the extreme tension of feeling that is evident between the Brahmins and non-Brahmins of the Madras Presidency.

We believe in Indian caste as one of the greatest social institutions that the Lord gave to man. We also believe that though the unavoidable defects, foreign persecutions, and, above all, the monumental ignorance and pride of many Brahmins who do not deserve the name, have thwarted, in many ways, the legitimate fructification of this most glorious Indian institution, it has already worked wonders for the land of Bharata and is destined to lead Indian humanity to its goal.

We earnestly entreat the Brahmins of the South not to

forget the ideal of India — the production of a universe of Brahmins, pure as purity, good as God Himself: this was at the beginning, says the Mahâbhârata, and so will it be in the end.

Then anyone who claims to be a Brahmin should prove his pretensions, first by manifesting that spirituality, and next by raising others to the same status. On the face of this, it seems that most of them are only nursing a false pride of birth; and any schemer, native or foreign, who can pander to this vanity and inherent laziness by fulsome sophistry, appears to satisfy most.

Beware, Brahmins, this is the sign of death! Arise and show your manhood, your Brahminhood, by raising the non-Brahmins around you — not in the spirit of a master — not with the rotten canker of egotism crawling with superstitions and the charlatanry of East and West — but in the spirit of a servant. For verily he who knows how to serve knows how to rule.

The non-Brahmins also have been spending their energy in kindling the fire of caste hatred — vain and useless to solve the problem — to which every non-Hindu is only too glad to throw on a load of fuel.

Not a step forward can be made by these inter-caste quarrels, not one difficulty removed; only the beneficent onward march of events would be thrown back, possibly for centuries, if the fire bursts out into flames

It would be a repetition of Buddhistic political blunders.

In the midst of this ignorant clamour and hatred, we are delighted to find Pandit D. Savariroyan pursuing the only legitimate and the only sensible course. Instead of wasting precious vitality in foolish and meaningless quarrels, Pandit Savariroyan has undertaken in his articles on the “Admixture of the Aryan with Tamilian” in the *Siddhânta Deepikâ*, to clear away not only a lot of haze, created by a too adventurous Western philology, but to pave the way to a better understanding of the caste problem in the South.

Nobody ever got anything by begging. We get only what we deserve. The first step to deserve is to desire: and we desire with success what we feel ourselves worthy to get.

A gentle yet clear brushing off of the cobwebs of the so-called Aryan theory and all its vicious corollaries is therefore absolutely necessary, especially for the South, and a proper self-respect created by a knowledge of the past grandeur of one of the great ancestors of the Aryan race — the great Tamilians.

We stick, in spite of Western theories, to that definition of the word “Arya” which we find in our sacred books, and which includes only the multitude we now call Hindus. This Aryan race, itself a mixture of two great races, Sanskrit-speaking and Tamil-speaking, applies to all Hindus alike. That the Shudras have in some Smritis been excluded from this epithet means nothing, for the Shudras were and still are only the waiting Aryas — Aryas in novitiate.

Though we know Pandit Savariroyan is walking over rather insecure ground, though we differ from many of his sweeping explanations of Vedic names and races, yet we are glad that he has undertaken the task of beginning a proper investigation into the culture of the great mother of Indian civilisation — if the Sanskrit-speaking race was the father.

We are glad also that he boldly pushes forward the Accado-Sumerian racial identity of the ancient Tamilians. And this makes us proud of the blood of the great civilisation which flowered before all others — compared to whose antiquity the Aryans and Semites are babies.

We would suggest, also, that the land of Punt of the Egyptians was not only Malabar, but that the Egyptians as a race bodily migrated from Malabar across the ocean and entered the delta along the course of the Nile from north to south, to which Punt they have been always fondly looking back as the home of the blessed.

This is a move in the right direction. Detailed and more careful work is sure to follow with a better study of the Tamilian tongues and the Tamilian elements found in the Sanskrit literature, philosophy, and religion. And who are more competent to do this work than those who learn the Tamilian idioms as their mother-tongue?

As for us Vedântins and Sannyâsins, ore are proud of our Sanskrit-speaking ancestors of the Vedas; proud of our Tamil-speaking ancestors whose civilization is the oldest yet known; we are proud of our Kolarian ancestors older than either of the above — who lived and hunted in forests; we are proud of our ancestors with flint implements — the first of the human race; and if evolution is true, we are proud of our animal ancestors, for they antedated man himself. We are proud that we are descendants of the whole universe, sentient or insentient. Proud that we are born, and work, and suffer — prouder still that we die when the task is finished and enter forever the realm where there is no more delusion.

Chapter 7

The Social Conference Address

THE SOCIAL CONFERENCE ADDRESS

“God created the native, God created the European, but somebody else created the mixed breed” — we heard a horribly blasphemous Englishman say.

Before us lies the inaugural address of Mr. Justice Ranade, voicing the reformatory zeal of the Indian Social Conference. In it there is a huge array of instances of inter-caste marriages of yore, a good leaf about the liberal spirit of the ancient Kshatriyas, good sober advice to students, all expressed with an earnestness of goodwill and gentleness of language that is truly admirable.

The last part, however, which offers advice as to the creation of a body of teachers for the new movement strong in the Punjab, which we take for granted is the Ârya Samâj, founded by a Sannyâsin, leaves us wondering and asking ourselves the question:

It seems God created the Brâhmin, God created the Kshatriya, but who created the Sannyasin?

There have been and are Sannyasins or monks in every known religion. There are Hindu monks, Buddhist monks, Christian monks, and even Islam had to yield its rigorous denial and take in whole orders of mendicant monks.

There are the wholly shaved, the partly shaved, the long hair, short hair, matted hair, and various other hirsute types.

There are the sky-clad, the rag-clad, the ochre-clad, the yellow-clad (monks), the black-clad Christian and the blue-clad Mussulman. Then there have been those that tortured their flesh in various ways, and others who believed in keeping their bodies well and healthy. There was also, in odd days in every country, the monk militant. The same spirit and similar manifestations haste run in parallel lines with the women, too — the nuns. Mr. Ranade is not only the President of the Indian Social Conference but a chivalrous gentleman also: the nuns of the Shrutis and Smritis seem to have been to his entire satisfaction. The ancient celibate Brahmvâdinis, who travelled from court to court challenging great philosophers, do not seem to him to thwart the central plan of the Creator — the propagation of species; nor did they seem to have lacked in the variety and completeness of human experience, in

Mr. Ranade’s opinion, as the stronger sex following the same line of conduct seem to have done.

We therefore dismiss the ancient nuns and their modern spiritual descendants as having passed muster.

The arch-offender, man alone, has to bear the brunt of Mr. Ranade’s criticism, and let us see whether he survives it or not.

It seems to be the consensus of opinion amongst savants that this world-wide monastic institution had its first inception in this curious land of ours, which appears to stand so much in need of “social reform”.

The married teacher and the celibate are both as old as the Vedas. Whether the Soma-sipping married Rishi with his “all-rounded” experience was the first in order of appearance, or the lack-human-experience celibate Rishi was the primeval form, is hard to decide just now. Possibly Mr. Ranade will solve the problem for us independently of the hearsay of the so-called Western Sanskrit scholars; till then the question stands a riddle like the hen and egg problem of yore.

But whatever be the order of genesis, the celibate teachers of the Shrutis and Smritis stand on an entirely different platform from the married ones, which is perfect chastity, Brahmacharya.

If the performance of Yajnas is the corner-stone of the work-portion of the Vedas, as surely is Brahmacharya the foundation of the knowledge-portion.

Why could not the blood-shedding sacrificers be the exponents of the Upanishads — why?

On the one side was the married Rishi, with his meaningless, bizarre, nay, terrible ceremonials, his misty sense of ethics, to say the least; on the other hand, the celibate monks tapping, in spite of their want of human experience, springs of spirituality and ethics at which the monastic Jinas, the Buddhas, down to Shankara, Ramanuja, Kabir, and Chaitanya, drank deep and acquired energy to propagate their marvellous spiritual and social reforms, and which, reflected third-hand, fourth-hand from the West, is giving our social reformers the power even to criticise the Sannyasins.

At the present day, what support, what pay, do the mendi-

cants receive in India, compared to the pay and privilege of our social reformers? And what work does the social reformer do, compared to the Sannyasin's silent selfless labour of love?

But they have not learnt the modern method of self-advertisement!!

The Hindu drank in with his mother's milk that this life is as nothing — a dream! In this he is at one with the Westerners; but the Westerner sees no further and his conclusion is that of the Chârvâka — to "make hay while the sun shines". "This world being a miserable hole, let us enjoy to the utmost what morsels of pleasure are left to us." To the Hindu, on the other hand, God and soul are the only realities, infinitely more real than this world, and he is therefore ever ready to let this go for the other.

So long as this attitude of the national mind continues, and we pray it will continue for ever, what hope is there in our anglicised compatriots to check the impulse in Indian men and women to renounce all "for the good of the universe and for one's own freedom"?

And that rotten corpse of an argument against the monk — used first by the Protestants in Europe, borrowed by the Bengali reformers, and now embraced by our Bombay brethren — the monk on account of his celibacy must lack the realisation of life "in all its fullness and in all its varied experience!" We hope this time the corpse will go for good into the Arabian Sea, especially in these days of plague, and notwithstanding the filial love one may suppose the foremost clan of Brahmins there may have for ancestors of great perfume, if the Paurânika accounts are of any value in tracing their ancestry.

By the bye, in Europe, between the monks and nuns, they have brought up and educated most of the children, whose parents, though married people, were utterly unwilling to taste of the "varied experiences of life".

Then, of course, every faculty has been given to us by God for some use. Therefore the monk is wrong in not propagating the race — a sinner! Well, so also have been given us the faculties of anger, lust, cruelty, theft, robbery, cheating, etc., every one of these being absolutely necessary for the maintenance of social life, reformed or unreformed. What about these? Ought they also to be maintained at full steam, following the varied-experience theory or not? Of course the social reformers, being in intimate acquaintance with God Almighty and His purposes, must answer the query in the positive. Are we to follow Vishvâmitra, Atri, and others in their ferocity and the Vasishtha family in particular in their "full and varied experience" with womankind? For the majority of married Rishis are as celebrated for their liberality in begetting children wherever and whenever they could, as for their hymn-singing and Soma-bibbing; or are we to follow the celibate Rishis who upheld Brahmacharya as the *sine qua non* of spirituality?

Then there are the usual backsliders, who ought to come

in for a load of abuse — monks who could not keep up to their ideal — weak, wicked.

But if the ideal is straight and sound, a backsliding monk is head and shoulders above any householder in the land, on the principle, "It is better to have loved and lost."

Compared to the coward that never made the attempt, he is a hero.

If the searchlight of scrutiny were turned on the inner workings of our social reform conclave, angels would have to take note of the percentage of backsliders as between the monk and the householder; and the recording angel is in our own heart.

But then, what about this marvellous experience of standing alone, discarding all help, breasting the storms of life, of working without any sense of recompense, without any sense of putrid duty? Working a whole life, joyful, free — not goaded on to work like slaves by false human love or ambition?

This the monk alone can have. What about religion? Has it to remain or vanish? If it remains, it requires its experts, its soldiers. The monk is the religious expert, having made religion his one *métier* of life. He is the soldier of God. What religion dies so long as it has a band of devoted monks?

Why are Protestant England and America shaking before the onrush of the Catholic monk?

Vive Ranade and the Social Reformers! — but, O India! Anglicised India! Do not forget, child, that there are in this society problems that neither you nor your Western Guru can yet grasp the meaning of — much less solve!

Chapter 8

India's Message to the World

INDIA'S MESSAGE TO THE WORLD

The following notes were discovered among Swami Vivekananda's papers. He intended to write a book and jotted down forty-two points as a syllabus for the work, but only a few points were dealt with as an introduction by him and the work was left unfinished. We give the manuscript as found.

Syllabus

1. Bold has been my message to the people of the West. Bolder to those at home.
2. Four years of residence in the marvellous West has made India only the better understood. The shades are deeper and the lights brighter.
3. The survey — it is not true that the Indians have degenerated.
4. The problem here has been as it has been everywhere else — the assimilation of various races, but nowhere has it been so vast as here.
5. Community of language, government and, above all, religion has been the power of fusion.
6. In other lands this has been attempted by "force", that is, the enforcement of the culture of *one* race only over the rest. The result being the production of a short-lived vigorous national life; then, dissolution.
7. In India, on the other hand, the attempts have been as gentle as the problem vast, and from the earliest times, the customs, and especially the religions, of the different elements tolerated.
8. Where it was a small problem and force was sufficient to form a unity, the effect really was the nipping in the bud of various healthy types in the germ of all the elements except the dominant one. It was only one set of brains using the vast majority for its own good, thus losing the major portion of the possible amount of development, and thus when the dominant type had spent itself, the apparently impregnable building tottered to its ruins, e.g., Greece, Rome, the Norman.
9. A common language would be a great desideratum;

but the same criticism applies to it, the destruction of the vitality of the various existing ones.

10. The only solution to be reached was the finding of a great sacred language of which all the others would be considered as manifestations, and that was found in the Sanskrit.
11. The Dravidian languages may or may not have been originally Sanskritic, but for practical purposes they are so now, and every day we see them approaching the ideal more and more, yet keeping their distinctive vital peculiarities.
12. A racial background was found — the Âryas.
13. The speculation whether there was a distinct, separate race called the Aryas living in Central Asia to the Baltic.
14. The so-called types. Races were always mixed.
15. The "blonde" and the "brunette".
16. Coming to practical common sense from so-called historical imagination. The Aryas in their oldest records were in the land between Turkistan and the Punjab and N. W. Tibet.
17. This leads to the attempt at fusion between races and tribes of various degrees of culture.
18. Just as Sanskrit has been the linguistic solution, so the Arya the racial solution. So the Brâhminhood is the solution of the varying degrees of progress and culture as well as that of all social and political problems.
19. The great ideal of India — Brahminhood.
20. Property-less, selfless, subject to no laws, no king except the moral.
21. Brahminhood by descent — various races have claimed and acquired the right in the past as well as in the present.
22. No claim is made by the doer of great deeds, only by lazy worthless fools.
23. Degradation of Brahminhood and Kshatriyahood. The Puranas said there will be only non-Brahmins in the Kali Yuga, and that is true, becoming truer every day. Yet a few Brahmins remain, and in India alone.
24. Kshatriyahood — we must pass through that to be-

come a Brahmin. Some may have passed through in the past, but the present must show that.

25. But the disclosure of the whole plan is to be found in religion.

26. The different tribes of the same race worship similar gods, under a generic name as the Baals of the Babylonians, the Molochs of the Hebrews.

27. The attempt in Babylonia of making all the Baals merge in Baal-Merodach — the attempt of the Israelites to merge all the Molochs in the Moloch Yavah or Yahu.

28. The Babylonians destroyed by the Persians; and the Hebrews who took the Babylonian mythology and adapted it to their own needs, succeeded in producing a strict monotheistic religion.

29. Monotheism like absolute monarchy is quick in executing orders, and a great centralization of force, but it grows no farther, and its worst feature is its cruelty and persecution. All nations coming within its influence perish very soon after a flaring up of a few years.

30. In India the same problem presented itself - the solution found — एकं सद्द्विप्रा बहुधा वदन्ति ।

This is the keynote to everything which has succeeded, and the keystone of the arch.

31. The result is that wonderful toleration of the Vedantist.

32. The great problem therefore is to harmonise and unify without destroying the individuality of these various elements.

33. No form of religion which depends Upon persons, either of this earth or even of heaven, is able to do that.

34. Here is the glory of the Advaita system preaching a principle, not a person, yet allowing persons, both human and divine, to have their full play.

35. This has been going on all the time; in this sense we have been always progressing. The Prophets during the Mohammedan rule.

36. It was fully conscious and vigorous in old days, and less so of late; in this sense alone we have degenerated.

37. This is going to be in the future. If the manifestation of the power of one tribe utilising the labours of the rest produced wonderful results at least for a certain length of time, here is going to be the accumulation and the concentration of all the races that have been slowly and inevitably getting mixed up in blood and ideas, and in my mind's eye, I see the future giant slowly maturing. The future of India, the youngest and the most glorious of the nations of earth as well as the oldest.

38. The way — we will have to work. Social customs as barriers, some as founded upon the Smritis. But none from the Shrutis. The Smritis must change with time. This is the admitted law.

39. The principles of the Vedanta not only should be preached everywhere in India, but also outside. Our thought must enter into the make-up of the minds of every nation, not through writings, but through persons.

40. Gift is the only Karma in Kali Yuga. None attaining knowledge until purified by Karma.

41. Gift of spiritual and secular knowledge.

42. Renunciation — Renouncers — the national call.

Introduction

Bold has been my message to the people of the West, bolder is my message to you, my beloved countrymen. The message of ancient India to new Western nations I have tried my best to voice — ill done or well done the future is sure to show; but the mighty voice of the same future is already sending forward soft but distinct murmurs, gaining strength as the days go by, the message of India that is to be to India as she is at present.

Many wonderful institutions and customs, and many wonderful manifestations of strength and power it has been my good fortune to study in the midst of the various races I have seen, but the most wonderful of all was to find that beneath all these apparent variations of manners and customs, of culture and power, beats the same mighty human heart under the impulsion of the same joys and sorrows, of the same weakness and strength

Good and evil are everywhere and the balance is wondrously even; but, above all, is the glorious soul of man everywhere which never fails to understand any one who knows how to speak its own language. Men and women are to be found in every race whose lives are blessings to humanity, verifying the words of the divine Emperor Asoka: "In every land dwell Brâhmins and Shramanas."

I am grateful to the lands of the West for the many warm hearts that received me with all the love that pure and disinterested souls alone could give; but my life's allegiance is to this my motherland; and if I had a thousand lives, every moment of the whole series would be consecrated to your service, my countrymen, my friends.

For to this land I owe whatever I possess, physical, mental, and spiritual; and if I have been successful in anything, the glory is yours, not mine. Mine alone are my weaknesses and failures, as they come through my inability of profiting by the mighty lessons with which this land surrounds one, even from his very birth.

And what a land! Whosoever stands on this sacred land, whether alien or a child of the soil, feels himself surrounded — unless his soul is degraded to the level of brute animals — by the living thoughts of the earth's best and purest sons, who have been working to raise the animal to the divine through centuries, whose beginning history fails to trace. The very air is full of the pulsations of spirituality. This land is sacred to philosophy, to ethics and spirituality, to all that tends to give a respite to man in his

incessant struggle for the preservation of the animal to all training that makes man throw off the garment of brutality and stand revealed as the spirit immortal, the birthless, the deathless, the ever-blessed — the land where the cup of pleasure was full, and fuller has been the cup of misery, until here, first of all, man found out that it was all vanity; here, first of all in the prime of youth, in the lap of luxury, in the height of glory and plenitude of power, he broke through the fetters of delusion. Here, in this ocean of humanity, amidst the sharp interaction of strong currents of pleasure and pain, of strength and weakness, of wealth and poverty, of joy and sorrow, of smile and tear, of life and death, in the melting rhythm of eternal peace and calmness, arose the throne of renunciation! Here in this land, the great problems of life and death, of the thirst for life, and the vain mad struggles to preserve it only resulting in the accumulation of woes were first grappled with and solved — solved as they never were before and never will be hereafter; for here and here alone was discovered that even life itself is an evil, the shadow only of something which alone is real. This is the land where alone religion was practical and real, and here alone men and women plunged boldly in to realise the goal, just as in other lands they madly plunge in to realise the pleasures of life by robbing their weaker brethren. Here and here alone the human heart expanded till it included not only the human, but birds, beasts, and plants; from the highest gods to grains of sand, the highest and the lowest, all find a place in the heart of man, grown great, infinite. And here alone, the human soul studied the universe as one unbroken unity whose every pulse was his own pulse.

We all hear so much about the degradation of India. There was a time when I also believed in it. But today standing on the vantage-ground of experience, with eyes cleared of obstructive predispositions and above all, of the highly-coloured pictures of other countries toned down to their proper shade and light by actual contact, I confess in all humility that I was wrong. Thou blessed land of the Aryas, thou wast never degraded. Sceptres have been broken and thrown away, the ball of power has passed from hand to hand, but in India, courts and kings always touched only a few; the vast mass of the people, from the highest to the lowest, has been left to pursue its own inevitable course, the current of national life flowing at times slow and half-conscious, at others, strong and awakened. I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps — my motherland — to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check — the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.

Ay, a glorious destiny, my brethren, for as far back as the days of the Upanishads we have thrown the challenge to the world: न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः— “Not by progeny, not by wealth, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached.” Race after race has taken the

challenge up and tried their utmost to solve the world-riddle on the plane of desires. They have all failed in the past — the old ones have become extinct under the weight of wickedness and misery, which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war; whether patience will survive or non-forbearance, whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to it through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness — renunciation.

This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being, the *raison d'être* of her very existence — the spiritualisation of the human race. In this her life-course she has never deviated, whether the Tartar ruled or the Turk, whether the Mogul ruled or the English.

And I challenge anybody to show one single period of her national life when India was lacking in spiritual giants capable of moving the world. But her work is spiritual, and that cannot be done with blasts of war-trumpets or the march of cohorts. Her influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers of the earth. This influence, being in its nature gentle, would have to wait for a fortunate combination of circumstances, to go out of the country into other lands, though it never ceased to work within the limits of its native land. As such, every educated person knows that whenever the empire-building Tartar or Persian or Greek or Arab brought this land in contact with the outside world, a mass of spiritual influence immediately flooded the world from here. The very same circumstances have presented themselves once more before us. The English high roads over land and sea and the wonderful power manifested by the inhabitants of that little island have once more brought India in contact with the rest of the world, and the same work has already begun. Mark my words, this is but the small beginning, big things are to follow; what the result of the present work outside India will be I cannot exactly state, but this I know for certain that millions, I say deliberately, millions in every civilised land are waiting for the message that will save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern money-worship is driving them headlong, and many of the leaders of the new social movements have already discovered that Vedanta in its highest form can alone spiritualise their social aspirations. I shall have to return to this towards the end I take up therefore the other great subject, the work within the country.

The problem assumes a twofold aspect, not only spiritualisation but assimilation of the various elements of which the nation is composed. The assimilation of different races into one has been the common task in the life of every nation.

Chapter 9

Stray Remarks on Theosophy

STRAY REMARKS ON THEOSOPHY^[1]

The Theosophists are having a jubilee time of it this year, and several press-notices are before us of their goings and doings for the last twenty-five years.

Nobody has a right now to say that the Hindus are not liberal to a fault. A coterie of young Hindus has been found to welcome even this graft of American Spiritualism, with its panoply of taps and raps and hitting back and forth with Mahâtmic pellets.

The Theosophists claim to possess the original divine knowledge of the universe. We are glad to learn of it, and gladder still that they mean to keep it rigorously a secret. Woe unto us, poor mortals, and Hindus at that, if all this is at once let out on us! Modern Theosophy is Mrs. Besant. Blavatskism and Olcottism seem to have taken a back seat. Mrs. Besant means well at least — and nobody can deny her perseverance and zeal.

There are, of course, carping critics. We on our part see nothing but good in Theosophy — good in what is directly beneficial, good in what is pernicious, as they say, indirectly good as we say — the intimate geographical knowledge of various heavens, and other places, and the denizens thereof; and the dexterous finger work on the visible plane accompanying ghostly communications to live Theosophists — all told. For Theosophy is the best serum we know of, whose injection never fails to develop the queer moths finding lodgment in some brains attempting to pass muster as sound.

We have no wish to disparage the good work of the Theosophical or any other society. Yet exaggeration has been in the past the bane of our race and if the several articles on the work of the Theosophical Society that appeared in the *Advocate* of Lucknow be taken as the temperamental gauge of Lucknow, we are sorry for those it represents, to say the least; foolish depreciation is surely vicious, but fulsome praise is equally loathsome.

This Indian grafting of American Spiritualism — with only a few Sanskrit words taking the place of spiritualistic jargon — Mahâtmâ missiles taking the place of ghostly raps and taps, and Mahatmic inspiration that of obsession by ghosts.

We cannot attribute a knowledge of all this to the writer of the articles in the *Advocate*, but he must not confound himself and his Theosophists with the great Hindu nation, the majority of whom have clearly seen through the Theosophical phenomena from the start and, following the great Swami Dayânanda Sarasvati who took away his patronage from Blavatskism the moment he found it out, have held themselves aloof.

Again, whatever be the predilection of the writer in question, the Hindus have enough of religious teaching and teachers amidst themselves even in this Kali Yuga, and they do not stand in need of dead ghosts of Russians and Americans.

The articles in question are libels on the Hindus and their religion. We Hindus — let the writer, like that of the articles referred to, know once for all — have no need nor desire to import religion from the West. Sufficient has been the degradation of importing almost everything else.

The importation in the case of religion should be mostly on the side of the West, we are sure, and our work has been all along in that line. The only help the religion of the Hindus got from the Theosophists in the West was not a ready field, but years of uphill work, necessitated by Theosophical sleight-of-hand methods. The writer ought to have known that the Theosophists wanted to crawl into the heart of Western Society, catching on to the skirts of scholars like Max Müller and poets like Edwin Arnold, all the same denouncing these very men and posing as the only receptacles of universal wisdom. And one heaves a sigh of relief that this wonderful wisdom is kept a secret. Indian thought, charlatanry, and mango-growing fakirism had all become identified in the minds of educated people in the West, and this was all the help rendered to Hindu religion by the Theosophists.

The great immediate visible good effect of Theosophy in every country, so far as we can see, is to separate, like Prof. Koch's injections into the lungs of consumptives, the healthy, spiritual, active, and patriotic from the charlatans, the morbid, and the degenerates posing as spiritual beings.

Notes

[1] Found among Swami Vivekananda's papers.

Chapter 10

Reply to the Address of the Maharaja of Khetri

REPLY TO THE ADDRESS OF THE MAHARAJA OF KHETRI

INDIA — THE LAND OF RELIGION

During the residence of the Swamiji in America, the following Address from the Maharaja of Khetri (Rajputana), dated March 4th, 1895, was received by him:

My dear Swamiji,

As the head of this Durbar (a formal stately assemblage) held today for this special purpose, I have much pleasure in conveying to you, in my own name and that of my subjects, the heartfelt thanks of this State for your worthy representation of Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago, in America.

I do not think the general principles of Hinduism could be expressed more accurately and clearly in English than what you have done, with all the restrictions imposed by the very natural shortcomings of language itself.

The influence of your speech and behaviour in foreign lands has not only spread admiration among men of different countries and different religions, but has also served to familiarise you with them, to help in the furtherance of your unselfish cause. This is very highly and inexpressibly appreciated by us all, and we should feel to be failing in our duty, were I not to write to you formally at least these few lines, expressing our sincere gratitude for all the trouble you have taken in going to foreign countries, and to expound in the American Parliament of Religions the truths of our ancient religion which we ever hold so dear. It is certainly applicable to the pride of India that it has been fortunate in possessing the privilege of having secured so able a representative as yourself.

Thanks are also due to those noble souls whose efforts succeeded in organising the Parliament of Religions, and who accorded to you a very enthusiastic reception. As you were quite a foreigner in that continent, their kind treatment of you is due to their love of the several qualifications you possess, and this speaks highly of their noble nature.

I herewith enclose twenty printed copies of this letter and have to request that, keeping this one with yourself you will kindly distribute the other copies among your friends.

With best regards,

I remain,

Yours very sincerely,

Raja Ajit Singh Bahadur of Khetri .

The Swamiji sent the following reply:

"Whenever virtue subsides, and wickedness raises its head, I manifest Myself to restore the glory of religion" — are the words, O noble Prince, of the Eternal One in the holy Gitâ, striking the keynote of the pulsating ebb and flow of the spiritual energy in the universe.

These changes are manifesting themselves again and again in rhythms peculiar to themselves, and like every other tremendous change, though affecting, more or less, every particle within their sphere of action, they show their effects more intensely upon those particles which are naturally susceptible to their power.

As in a universal sense, the primal state is a state of sameness of the qualitative forces — a disturbance of this equilibrium and all succeeding struggles to regain it, composing what we call the manifestation of nature, this universe, which state of things remains as long as the primitive sameness is not reached — so, in a restricted sense on our own earth, differentiation and its inevitable counterpart, this struggle towards homogeneity, must remain as long as the human race shall remain as such, creating strongly marked peculiarities between ethnic divisions, sub-races and even down to individuals in all parts of the world.

In this world of impartial division and balance, therefore, each nation represents, as it were, a wonderful dynamo for the storage and distribution of a particular species of energy, and amidst all other possessions that particular property shines forth as the special characteristic of that race. And as any upheaval in any particular part of human nature, though affecting others more or less, stirs to its very depth that nation of which it is a special characteristic, and from which as a centre it generally starts, so any

commotion in the religious world is sure to produce momentous changes in India, that land which again and again has had to furnish the centre of the wide-spread religious upheavals; for, above all, India is the land of religion.

Each man calls that alone real which helps him to realise his ideal. To the worldly-minded, everything that can be converted into money is real, that which cannot be so converted is unreal. To the man of a domineering spirit, anything that will conduce to his ambition of ruling over his fellow men is real — the rest is naught; and man finds nothing in that which does not echo back the heartbeats of his special love in life.

Those whose only aim is to barter the energies of life for gold, or name, or any other enjoyment; those to whom the tramp of embattled cohorts is the only manifestation of power; those to whom the enjoyments of the senses are the only bliss that life can give — to these, India will ever appear as an immense desert whose every blast is deadly to the development of life, as it is known by them.

But to those whose thirst for life has been quenched for ever by drinking from the stream of immortality that flows from far away beyond the world of the senses, whose souls have cast away — as a serpent its slough — the threefold bandages of lust, gold, and fame, who, from their height of calmness, look with love and compassion upon the petty quarrels and jealousies and fights for little gilded puff-balls, filled with dust, called “enjoyment” by those under a sense-bondage; to those whose accumulated force of past good deeds has caused the scales of ignorance to fall off from their eyes, making them see through the vanity of name and form — to such where-soever they be, India, the motherland and eternal mine of spirituality, stands transfigured, a beacon of hope to everyone in search of Him who is the only real Existence in a universe of vanishing shadows.

The majority of mankind can only understand power when it is presented to them in a concrete form, fitted to their perceptions. To them, the rush and excitement of war, with its power and spell, is something very tangible, and any manifestation of life that does not come like a whirlwind, bearing down everything before it, is to them as death. And India, for centuries at the feet of foreign conquerors, without any idea or hope of resistance, without the least solidarity among its masses, without the least idea of patriotism, must needs appear to such, as a land of rotten bones, a lifeless putrescent mass.

It is said — the fittest alone survive. How is it, then, that this most unfitted of all races, according to commonly accepted ideas, could bear the most awful misfortunes that ever befall a race, and yet not show the least signs of decay? How is it that, while the multiplying powers of the so-called vigorous and active races are dwindling every day, the immoral (?) Hindu shows a power of increase beyond them all? Great laurels are due, no doubt, to those who can deluge the world with blood at a moment's notice; great indeed is the glory of those who, to keep up

a population of a few millions in plenty, have to starve half the population of the earth, but is no credit due to those who can keep hundreds of millions in peace and plenty, without snatching the bread from the mouth of anyone else? Is there no power displayed in bringing up and guiding the destinies of countless millions of human beings, through hundreds of centuries, without the least violence to others?

The mythologists of all ancient races supply us with fables of heroes whose life was concentrated in a certain small portion of their bodies, and until that was touched they remained invulnerable. It seems as if each nation also has such a peculiar centre of life, and so long as that remains untouched, no amount of misery and misfortune can destroy it.

In religion lies the vitality of India, and so long as the Hindu race do not forget the great inheritance of their forefathers, there is no power on earth to destroy them.

Nowadays everybody blames those who constantly look back to their past. It is said that so much looking back to the past is the cause of all India's woes. To me, on the contrary, it seems that the opposite is true. So long as they forgot the past, the Hindu nation remained in a state of stupor; and as soon as they have begun to look into their past, there is on every side a fresh manifestation of life. It is out of this past that the future has to be moulded; this past will become the future.

The more, therefore, the Hindus study the past, the more glorious will be their future, and whoever tries to bring the past to the door of everyone, is a great benefactor to his nation. The degeneration of India came not because the laws and customs of the ancients were bad, but because they were not allowed to be carried to their legitimate conclusions.

Every critical student knows that the social laws of India have always been subject to great periodic changes. At their inception, these laws were the embodiment of a gigantic plan, which was to unfold itself slowly through time. The great seers of ancient India saw so far ahead of their time that the world has to wait centuries yet to appreciate their wisdom, and it is this very inability on the part of their own descendants to appreciate the full scope of this wonderful plan that is the one and only cause of the degeneration of India.

Ancient India had for centuries been the battlefield for the ambitious projects of two of her foremost classes — the Brâhmins and the Kshatriyas.

On the one hand, the priesthood stood between the lawless social tyranny of the princes over the masses whom the Kshatriyas declared to be their legal food. On the other hand, the Kshatriya power was the one potent force which struggled with any success against the spiritual tyranny of the priesthood and the ever-increasing chain of ceremonials which they were forging to bind down the people with.

The tug of war began in the earliest periods of the history of our race, and throughout the Shrutis it can be distinctly traced. A momentary lull came when Shri Krishna, leading the faction of Kshatriya power and of Jnâna, showed the way to reconciliation. The result was the teachings of the Gita — the essence of philosophy, of liberality, of religion. Yet the causes were there, and the effect must follow.

The ambition of these two classes to be the masters of the poor and ignorant was there, and the strife once more became fierce. The meagre literature that has come down to us from that period brings to us but faint echoes of that mighty past strife, but at last it broke out as a victory for the Kshatriyas, a victory for Jnana, for liberty — and ceremonial had to go down, much of it for ever. This upheaval was what is known as the Buddhistic reformation. On the religious side, it represented freedom from ceremonial; on the political side, overthrow of the priesthood by the Kshatriyas.

It is a significant fact that the two greatest men ancient India produced, were both Kshatriyas — Krishna and Buddha — and still more significant is the fact that both of these God-men threw open the door of knowledge to everyone, irrespective of birth or sex.

In spite of its wonderful moral strength, Buddhism was extremely iconoclastic; and much of its force being spent in merely negative attempts, it had to die out in the land of its birth, and what remained of it became full of superstitions and ceremonials, a hundred times cruder than those it was intended to suppress. Although it partially succeeded in putting down the animal sacrifices of the Vedas, it filled the land with temples, images, symbols, and bones of saints.

Above all, in the medley of Aryans, Mongols, and aborigines which it created, it unconsciously led the way to some of the hideous Vâmâchâras. This was especially the reason why this travesty of the teaching of the great Master had to be driven out of India by Shri Shankara and his band of Sannyâsins.

Thus even the current of life, set in motion by the greatest soul that ever wore a human form, the Bhagavân Buddha himself, became a miasmatic pool, and India had to wait for centuries until Shankara arose, followed in quick succession by Râmânûja and Madhva.

By this time, an entirely new chapter had opened in the history of India. The ancient Kshatriyas and the Brahmins had disappeared. The land between the Himalayas and the Vindhya, the home of the Âryas, the land which gave birth to Krishna and Buddha, the cradle of great Râjarshis and Brahmarshis, became silent, and from the very farther end of the Indian Peninsula, from races alien in speech and form, from families claiming descent from the ancient Brahmins, came the reaction against the corrupted Buddhism.

What had become of the Brahmins and Kshatriyas

of Âryâvarta? They had entirely disappeared, except here and there a few mongrel clans claiming to be Brahmins and Kshatriyas, and in spite of their inflated, self-laudatory assertions that the whole world ought to learn from एतद्देशप्रसृतस्य सकाशादग्रजन्मनः, they had to sit in sackcloth and ashes, in all humility, to learn at the feet of the Southerners. The result was the bringing back of the Vedas to India — a revival of Vedânta, such as India never before had seen; even the householders began to study the Âranyakas.

In the Buddhistic movement, the Kshatriyas were the real leaders, and whole masses of them became Buddhists. In the zeal of reform and conversion, the popular dialects had been almost exclusively cultivated to the neglect of Sanskrit, and the larger portion of Kshatriyas had become disjointed from the Vedic literature and Sanskrit learning. Thus this wave of reform, which came from the South, benefited to a certain extent the priesthood, and the priests only. For the rest of India's millions, it forged more chains than they had ever known before.

The Kshatriyas had always been the backbone of India, so also they had been the supporters of science and liberty, and their voices had rung out again and again to clear the land from superstitions; and throughout the history of India they ever formed the invulnerable barrier to aggressive priestly tyranny.

When the greater part of their number sank into ignorance, and another portion mixed their blood with savages from Central Asia and lent their swords to establish the rules of priests in India, her cup became full to the brim, and down sank the land of Bharata, not to rise again, until the Kshatriya rouses himself, and making himself free, strikes the chains from the feet of the rest. Priestcraft is the bane of India. Can man degrade his brother, and himself escape degradation?

Know, Rajaji, the greatest of all truths, discovered by your ancestors, is that the universe is one. Can one injure anyone without injuring himself? The mass of Brahmin and Kshatriya tyranny has recoiled upon their own heads with compound interest; and a thousand years of slavery and degradation is what the inexorable law of Karma is visiting upon them.

This is what one of your ancestors said: "Even in this life, they have conquered relativity whose mind is fixed in sameness" — one who is believed to be God incarnate. We all believe it. Are his words then vain and without meaning? If not, and we know they are not, any attempt against this perfect equality of all creation, irrespective of birth, sex, or even qualification, is a terrible mistake, and no one can be saved until he has attained to this idea of sameness.

Follow, therefore, noble Prince, the teachings of the Vedanta, not as explained by this or that commentator, but as the Lord within you understands them. Above all, follow this great doctrine of sameness in all things,

through all beings, seeing the same God in all.

This is the way to freedom; inequality, the way to bondage. No man and no nation can attempt to gain physical freedom without physical equality, nor mental freedom without mental equality.

Ignorance, inequality, and desire are the three causes of human misery, and each follows the other in inevitable union. Why should a man think himself above any other man, or even an animal? It is the same throughout:

त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।

—“Thou art the man, Thou the woman, Thou art the young man, Thou the young woman.”

Many will say, “That is all right for the Sannyasins, but we are householders.” No doubt, a householder having many other duties to perform, cannot as fully attain to this sameness; yet this should be also their ideal, for it is the ideal of all societies, of all mankind, all animals, and all nature, to attain to this sameness. But alas! they think inequality is the way to attain equality as if they could come to right by doing wrong!

This is the bane of human nature, the curse upon mankind, the root of all misery — this inequality. This is the source of all bondage, physical, mental, and spiritual.

समं पश्यन् हिसर्वत्र समवस्थितिमीश्वरम् ।
न हनिस्त्यात्मनात्मानं ततो याति परां गतम् ॥

— “Since seeing the Lord equally existent everywhere he injures not Self by self, and so goes to the Highest Goal” (Gita, XIII. 28). This one saying contains, in a few words, the universal way to salvation.

You, Rajputs, have been the glories of ancient India. With your degradation came national decay, and India can only be raised if the descendants of the Kshatriyas co-operate with the descendants of the Brahmins, not to share the spoils of pelf and power, but to help the weak to enlighten the ignorant, and to restore the lost glory of the holy land of their forefathers.

And who can say but that the time is propitious? Once more the wheel is turning up, once more vibrations have been set in motion from India, which are destined at no distant day to reach the farthest limits of the earth. One voice has spoken, whose echoes are rolling on and gathering strength every day, a voice even mightier than those which have preceded it, for it is the summation of them all. Once more the voice that spoke to the sages on the banks of the Sarasvati, the voice whose echoes reverberated from peak to peak of the “Father of Mountains”, and descended upon the plains through Krishna Buddha, and Chaitanya in all-carrying floods, has spoken again. Once more the doors have opened. Enter ye into the realms of light, the gates have been opened wide once more.

And you, my beloved Prince — you the scion of a race who are the living pillars upon which rests the religion

eternal, its sworn defenders and helpers, the descendants of Râma and Krishna, will you remain outside? I know, this cannot be. Yours, I am sure, will be the first hand that will be stretched forth to help religion once more. And when I think of you, Raja Ajit Singh, one in whom the well-known scientific attainments of your house have been joined to a purity of character of which a saint ought to be proud, to an unbounded love for humanity, I cannot help believing in the glorious renaissance of the religion eternal, when such hands are willing to rebuild it again.

May the blessings of Ramakrishna be on you and yours for ever and ever, and that you may live long for the good of many, and for the spread of truth is the constant prayer of —

VIVEKANANDA.

Chapter 11

Reply to the Madras address

REPLY TO THE MADRAS ADDRESS^[1]

Friends, Fellow-Countrymen and Co-Religionists of Madras,

It is most gratifying to me to find that my insignificant service to the cause of our religion has been accept able to you, not because it is as a personal appreciation of me and my work in a foreign and distant land, but as a sure sign that, though whirlwind after whirlwind of foreign invasion has passed over the devoted head of India, though centuries of neglect on our part and contempt on the part of our conquerors have visibly dimmed the glories of ancient Āryāvarta, though many a stately column on which it rested, many a beautiful arch, and many a marvellous corner have been washed away by the inundations that deluged the land for centuries — the centre is all sound, the keystone is unimpaired. The spiritual foundation upon which the marvellous monument of glory to God and charity to all beings has been reared stands unshaken, strong as ever. Your generous appreciation of Him whose message to India and to the whole world, I, the most unworthy of His servants, had the privilege to bear shows your innate spiritual instinct which saw in Him and His message the first murmurs of that tidal wave of spirituality which is destined at no distant future to break upon India in all its irresistible powers, carrying away in its omnipotent flood all that is weak and defective, and raising the Hindu race to the platform it is destined to occupy in the providence of God, crowned with more glory than it ever had even in the past, the reward of centuries of silent suffering, and fulfilling its mission amongst the races of the world — the evolution of spiritual humanity.

The people of Northern India are especially grateful to you of the South, as the great source to which most of the impulses that are working in India today can be traced. The great Bhâshyakâras, epoch-making Āchâryas, Shankara, Râmânûja, and Madhva were born in Southern India. Great Shankara to whom every Advâitavâdin in the world owes allegiance; great Ramanuja whose heavenly touch converted the downtrodden pariahs into Ālwârs; great Madhva whose leadership was recognised even by the followers of the only Northern Prophet whose power has been felt all over the length and breadth of India — Shri Krishna Chaitanya. Even at the present

day it is the South that carries the palm in the glories of Varanasi — your renunciation controls the sacred shrines on the farthest peaks of the Himalayas, and what wonder that with the blood of Prophets running in your veins, with your lives blessed by such Acharyas, you are the first and foremost to appreciate and hold on to the message of Bhagavân Shri Ramakrishna.

The South had been the repository of Vedic learning, and you will understand me when I state that, in spite of the reiterated assertions of aggressive ignorance, it is the Shruti still that is the backbone of all the different divisions of the Hindu religion.

However great may be the merits of the Samhitâ and the Brâhmana portions of the Vedas to the ethnologists or the philologists, however desirable may be the results that the अग्नमिले^[2] or इषेत्वोर्जेत्वा^[3] or शन्नो देवीरभीष्टये^[4] in conjunction with the different Vedis (altars) and sacrifices and libations produce — it was all in the way of Bhoga; and no one ever contended that it could produce Moksha. As such, the Jnâna-Kânda, the Āranyakas, the Shrutis *par excellence* which teach the way to spirituality, the Moksha-Mârga, have always ruled and will always rule in India.

Lost in the mazes and divisions of the “Religion Eternal”, by prepossession and prejudice unable to grasp the meaning of the only religion whose universal adaptation is the exact shadow of the अणोरणीयान् महतो महीयान्^[5] God it preaches, groping in the dark with a standard of spiritual truth borrowed second-hand from nations who never knew anything but rank materialism, the modern young Hindu struggles in vain to understand the religion of his forefathers, and gives up the quest altogether, and becomes a hopeless wreck of an agnostic, or else, unable to vegetate on account of the promptings of his innate religious nature, drinks carelessly of some of those different decoctions of Western materialism with an Eastern flavour, and thus fulfils the prophecy of the Shruti:

परयिन्तमूढा अन्धेनैव नीयमाना यथान्धाः ।

— “Fools go staggering to and fro, like blind men led by the blind.” They alone escape whose spiritual nature has been touched and vivified by the life-giving touch of the “Sad-Guru”.^[6]

Well has it been said by Bhagavan Bhashyakara:

दुर्लभं त्रयमेवैतत् देवानुग्रहहेतुकम् ।
मनुष्यत्वं मुमुक्षुत्वं महापुरुशसंश्रयः ॥

— “These three are difficult to obtain in this world, and depend on the mercy of the gods — the human birth, the desire for salvation, and the company of the great-souled ones.”

Either in the sharp analysis of the Vaisheshikas, resulting in the wonderful theories about the Paramānus, Dvyanus, and Trasarenu, [7] or the still more wonderful analysis displayed in the discussions of the Jāti, Dravya, Guna, Samavāya, [8] and to the various categories of the Naiyāyikas, rising to the solemn march of the thought of the Sāṅkhyas, the fathers of the theories of evolution, ending with the ripe fruit, the result of all these researches, the Sutras of Vyāsa — the one background to all these different analyses and syntheses of the human mind is still the Shrutis. Even in the philosophical writings of the Buddhists or Jains, the help of Shrutis is never rejected, and at least in some of the Buddhistic schools and in the majority of the Jain writings, the authority of the Shrutis is fully admitted, excepting what they call the Himsaka Shrutis, which they hold to be interpolations of the Brahmins. In recent times, such a view has been held by the late great Swami Dayānanda Saraswati.

If one be asked to point out the system of thought towards which as a centre all the ancient and modern Indian thoughts have converged, if one wants to see the real backbone of Hinduism in all its various manifestations, the Sutras of Vyasa will unquestionably be pointed out as constituting all that.

Either one hears the Advaita-Keshari roaring in peals of thunder — the Asti, Bhāti, and Priya^[9] — amidst the heart-stopping solemnities of the Himalayan forests, mixing with the solemn cadence of the river of heaven, or listens to the cooing of the Piyā, Pitam in the beautiful bowers of the grove of Vrindā: whether one mingles with the sedate meditations of the monasteries of Varanasi or the ecstatic dances of the followers of the Prophet of Nadia; whether one sits at the feet of the teacher of the Vishishtādvaita system with its Vadakale, Tenkale, [10] and all the other subdivisions, or listens with reverence to the Acharyas of the Mādva school; whether one hears the martial “Wā Guruki Fateh” [11] of the secular Sikhs or the sermons on the Grantha Sāhib of the Udāsins and Nirmalās; whether he salutes the Sannyāsins disciples of Kabir with “Sat Sāhib” and listens with joy to the Sākhis (Bhajans); whether he pores upon the wonderful lore of that reformer of Rajputana, Dādu, or the works of his royal disciple, Sundaradāsa, down to the great Nishchaladāsa, the celebrated author of *Vichāra sāgara*, which book has more influence in India than any that has been written in any language within the last three centuries; if even one asks the Bhangi Mehtar of Northern India to sit down and give an account of the teachings of his Lāl-

guru — one will find that all these various teachers and schools have as their basis that system whose authority is the Shruti, Gitā its divine commentary, the *Shāriraka-Sutras* its organised system, and all the different sects in India, from the Paramahansa Parivrājakāchāryas to the poor despised Mehtar disciples of Lālguru, are different manifestations.

The three Prasthānas, [12] then, in their different explanations as Dvaita, Vishishtadvaita, or Advaita, with a few minor recensions, form the “authorities” of the Hindu religion. The Purānas, the modern representations of the ancient Nārāsamsi (anecdote portion of the Vedas), supply the mythology, and the Tantras, the modern representations of the Brāhmanas (ritual and explanatory portion of the Vedas), supply the ritual. Thus the three Prasthanas, as authorities, are common to all the sects; but as to the Puranas and Tantras, each sect has its own.

The Tantras, as we have said, represent the Vedic rituals in a modified form; and before any one jumps into the most absurd conclusions about them, I will advise him to read the Tantras in conjunction with the Brahmanas, especially the Adhvaryu portion. And most of the Mantras, used in the Tantras, will be found taken verbatim from their Brahmanas. As to their influence, apart from the Shrauta and Smārta rituals, all the forms of the rituals in vogue from the Himalayas to the Comorin have been taken from the Tantras, and they direct the worship of the Shākta, or Shaiva, or Vaishnava, and all the others alike.

Of course, I do not pretend that all the Hindus are thoroughly acquainted with these sources of their religion. Many, especially in lower Bengal, have not heard of the names of these sects and these great systems; but consciously or unconsciously, it is the plan laid down in the three Prasthanas that they are all working out.

Wherever, on the other hand, the Hindi language is spoken, even the lowest classes have more knowledge of the Vedantic religion than many of the highest in lower Bengal.

And why so?

Transported from the soil of Mithilā to Navadvipa, nurtured and developed by the fostering genius of Shiromani, Gadādhara, Jagadisha, and a host of other great names, an analysis of the laws of reasoning, in some points superior to every other system in the whole world, expressed in a wonderful and precise mosaic of language, stands the Nyāya of Bengal, respected and studied throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthān. But, alas, the Vedic study was sadly neglected, and until within the last few years, scarcely anyone could be found in Bengal to teach the *Mahābhāshya* of Patanjali. Once only a mighty genius rose above the never-ending Avachchhinnas and Avachchhedakas [13] — Bhagavān Shri Krishna Chaitanya. For once the religious lethargy of Bengal was shaken, and for a time it entered into a communion with the religious life of other parts of India.

It is curious to note that though Shri Chaitanya obtained his Sannyâsa from a Bhârati, and as such was a Bharati himself, it was through Mâdhavendra Puri that his religious genius was first awakened.

The Puris seem to have a peculiar mission in rousing the spirituality of Bengal. Bhagavan Shri Ramakrishna got his Sannyâsâshrama from Totâ Puri.

The commentary that Shri Chaitanya wrote on the *Vyâsa-Sutras* has either been lost or not found yet. His disciples joined themselves to the Madhvas of the South, and gradually the mantles of such giants as Rupa and Sanâtana and Jiva Goswâmi fell on the shoulders of Bâbâjis, and the great movement of Shri Chaitanya was decaying fast, till of late years there is a sign of revival. Hope that it will regain its lost splendour.

The influence of Shri Chaitanya is all over India. Wherever the Bhakti-Mârگا is known, there he is appreciated, studied, and worshipped. I have every reason to believe that the whole of the Vallabhâchârya recension is only a branch of the sect founded by Shri Chaitanya. But most of his so-called disciples in Bengal do not know how his power is still working all over India; and how can they? The disciples have become Gadiâns (Heads of monasteries), while he was preaching barefooted from door to door in India, begging Âchandâlas (all down to the lowest) to love God.

The curious and unorthodox custom of hereditary Gurus that prevails in Bengal, and for the most part in Bengal alone, is another cause of its being cut off from the religious life of the rest of India.

The greatest cause of all is that the life of Bengal never received an influx from that of the great brotherhood of Sannyasins who are the representatives and repositories of the highest Indian spiritual culture even at the present day.

Tyâga (renunciation) is never liked by the higher classes of Bengal. Their tendency is for Bhoga (enjoyment). How can they get a deep insight into spiritual things? त्यागेनैके अमृतत्वमानशुः — “By renunciation alone immortality was reached.” How can it be otherwise?

On the other hand, throughout the Hindi-speaking world, a succession of brilliant Tyâgi teachers of far-reaching influence has brought the doctrines of the Vedanta to every door. Especially the impetus given to Tyaga during the reign of Ranjit Singh of the Punjab has made the highest teachings of the Vedantic philosophy available for the very lowest of the low. With true pride, the Punjabi peasant girl says that even her spinning wheel repeats: “Soham”, “Soham”. And I have seen Mehtar Tyagis in the forest of Hrishikesh wearing the garb of the Sannyasin, studying the Vedanta. And many a proud high-class man would be glad to sit at their feet and learn. And why not? अन्त्यादपि परं धर्मं — “Supreme knowledge (can be learnt) even from the man of low birth.”

Thus it is that the North-West and the Punjab have a re-

ligious education which is far ahead of that of Bengal, Bombay, or Madras. The ever-travelling Tyagis of the various orders, Dashanâmis or Vairâgis or Panthis bring religion to everybody's door, and the cost is only a bit of bread. And how noble and disinterested most of them are! There is one Sannyasin belonging to the Kachu Panthis or independents (who do not identify themselves with any sect), who has been instrumental in the establishing of hundreds of schools and charitable asylums all over Rajputana. He has opened hospitals in forests, and thrown iron bridges over the gorges in the Himalayas, and this man never touches a coin with his hands, has no earthly possession except a blanket, which has given him the nickname of the “Blanket Swami”, and begs his bread from door to door. I have never known him taking a whole dinner from one house, lest it should be a tax on the householder. And he is only one amongst many. Do you think that so long as these Gods on earth live in India and protect the “Religion Eternal” with the impenetrable rampart of such godly characters, the old religion will die?

In this country, ^[14] the clergymen sometimes receive as high salaries as rupees thirty thousand, forty thousand, fifty thousand, even ninety thousand a year, for preaching two hours on Sunday only, and that only six months in a year. Look at the millions upon millions they spend for the support of their religion, and Young Bengal has been taught that these Godlike, absolutely unselfish men like Kambli-Swami are idle vagabonds. मद्भक्तानाञ्च च ये भक्तास्ते मे भक्ततमा मताः — “Those who are devoted to My worshippers are regarded as the best of devotees.”

Take even an extreme case, that of an extremely ignorant Vairagi. Even he, when he goes into a village tries his best to impart to the villagers whatever he knows, from Tulasidâsa, or *Chaitanya-Charitâmrita* or the Âlwârs in Southern India. Is that not doing some good? And all this for only a bit of bread and a rag of cloth. Before unmercifully criticising them, think how much you do, my brother, for your poor fellow-countrymen, at whose expense you have got your education, and by grinding whose face you maintain your position and pay your teachers for teaching you that the Babajis are only vagabonds.

A few of your fellow-countrymen in Bengal have criticised what they call a new development of Hinduism. And well they may. For Hinduism is only just now penetrating into Bengal, where so long the whole idea of religion was a bundle of Deshâchâras (local customs) as to eating and drinking and marriage.

This short paper has not space for the discussion of such a big subject as to whether the view of Hinduism, which the disciples of Ramakrishna have been preaching all over India, was according to the “Sad-Shâstras” or not. But I will give a few hints to our critics, which may help them in understanding our position better.

In the first place, I never contended that a correct idea of Hinduism can be gathered from the writings of Kâshidâsa

or Krittivâsa, though their words are “Amrita Samâna” (like nectar), and those that hear them are “Punyavâns” (virtuous). But we must go to Vedic and Dârshanika authorities, and to the great Acharyas and their disciples all over India.

If, brethren, you begin with the Sutras of Gautama, and read his theories about the Âptas (inspired) in the light of the commentaries of Vâtsyâyana, and go up to the Mimâmsakas with Shabara and other commentators, and find out what they say about the अलौकिकप्रत्यक्षम् (super-sensuous realisation), and who are Aptas, and whether every being can become an Apta or not, and that the proof of the Vedas is in their being the words of such Aptas if you have time to look into the introduction of Mahidhara to the Yajur-Veda, you will find a still more lucid discussion as to the Vedas being laws of the inner life of man, and as such they are eternal.

As to the eternity of creation — this doctrine is the corner-stone not only of the Hindu religion, but of the Buddhists and Jains also.

Now all the sects in India can be grouped roughly as following the Jnâna-Mârگا or the Bhakti-Mârگا. If you will kindly look into the introduction to the *Shâriraka-Bhâshya* of Shri Shankarâchârya, you will find there the Nirapekshatâ (transcendence) of Jnana is thoroughly discussed, and the conclusion is that realisation of Brahman or the attainment of Moksha do not depend upon ceremonial, creed, caste, colour, or doctrine. It will come to any being who has the four Sâdhanâs, which are the most perfect moral culture.

As to the Bhaktas, even Bengali critics know very well that some of their authorities even declared that caste or nationality or sex, or, as to that, even the human birth, was never necessary to Moksha. Bhakti is the one and only thing necessary.

Both Jnana and Bhakti are everywhere preached to be unconditioned, and as such there is not one authority who lays down the conditions of caste or creed or nationality in attaining Moksha. See the discussion on the Sutra of Vyâsa — अनन्तरा चापि तु तद्दृष्टेः^[15] by Shankara, Ramanuja, and Madhva.

Go through all the Upanishads, and even in the Samhitas, nowhere you will find the limited ideas of Moksha which every other religion has. As to toleration, it is everywhere, even in the Samhita of the Adhvaryu Veda, in the third or fourth verse of the fortieth chapter, if my memory does not fail; it begins with न बुद्धभिर्द जनयेदज्ज्ञानां कर्मसंगनिम्^[16]. This is running through every where. Was anybody persecuted in India for choosing his Ishta Devatâ, or becoming an atheist or agnostic even, so long as he obeyed the social regulations? Society may punish anybody by its disapprobation for breaking any of its regulations, but no man, the lowest Patita (fallen), is ever shut out from Moksha. You must not mix up the two together. As to that, in Malabar a Chandâla is not allowed to pass through the same street as a high-caste man, but let him

become a Mohammedan or Christian, he will be immediately allowed to go anywhere; and this rule has prevailed in the dominion of a Hindu sovereign for centuries. It may be queer, but it shows the idea of toleration for other religions even in the most untoward circumstances.

The one idea the Hindu religions differ in from every other in the world, the one idea to express which the sages almost exhaust the vocabulary of the Sanskrit language, is that man must realise God even in this life. And the Advaita texts very logically add, “To know God is to become God.”

And here comes as a necessary consequence the broadest and most glorious idea of inspiration — not only as asserted and declared by the Rishis of the Vedas, not only by Vidura and Dharmavyâdha and a number of others, but even the other day Nischaladâsa, a Tyagi of the Dâdu panthi sect, boldly declared in his *Vichâra-Sâgara*: “He who has known Brahman has become Brahman. His words are Vedas, and they will dispel the darkness of ignorance, either expressed in Sanskrit or any popular dialect.”

Thus to realise God, the Brahman, as the Dvaitins say, or to become Brahman, as the Advaitins say — is the aim and end of the whole teaching of the Vedas; and every other teaching, therein contained, represents a stage in the course of our progress thereto. And the great glory of Bhagavan Bhashyakara Shankaracharya is that it was his genius that gave the most wonderful expression to the ideas of Vyasa.

As absolute, Brahman alone is true; as relative truth, all the different sects, standing upon different manifestations of the same Brahman, either in India or elsewhere, are true. Only some are higher than others. Suppose a man starts straight towards the sun. At every step of his journey he will see newer and newer visions of the sun — the size, the view, and light will every moment be new, until he reaches the real sun. He saw the sun at first like a big ball, and then it began to increase in size. The sun was never small like the ball he saw; nor was it ever like all the succession of suns he saw in his journey. Still is it not true that our traveller always saw the sun, and nothing but the sun? Similarly, all these various sects are true — some nearer, some farther off from the real sun which is our एकमेवाद्वितीयम् — “One without a second”.

And as the Vedas are the only scriptures which teach this real absolute God, of which all other ideas of God are but minimised and limited visions; as the सर्वलोकहितिषिणी^[17] Shruti takes the devotee gently by the hand, and leads him from one stage to another, through all the stages that are necessary for him to travel to reach the Absolute; and as all other religions represent one or other of these stages in an unprogressive and crystallized form, all the other religions of the world are included in the nameless, limitless, eternal Vedic religion.

Work hundreds of lives out, search every corner of your mind for ages — and still you will not find one noble religious idea that is not already imbedded in that infinite

mine of spirituality.

As to the so-called Hindu idolatry — first go and learn the forms they are going through, and where it is that the worshippers are really worshipping, whether in the temple, in the image, or in the temple of their own bodies. First know for certain what they are doing — which more than ninety per cent of the revilers are thoroughly ignorant of — and then it will explain itself in the light of the Vedantic philosophy.

Still these Karmas are not compulsory. On the other hand, open your Manu and see where it orders every old man to embrace the fourth Ashrama, and whether he embraces it or not, he must give up all Karma. It is reiterated everywhere that all these Karmas ज्ञाने परसिमाप्यते । — “finally end in Jnana”.

As to the matter of that, a Hindu peasant has more religious education than many a gentleman in other countries. A friend criticised the use of European terms of philosophy and religion in my addresses. I would have been very glad to use Sanskrit terms; it would have been much more easy, as being the only perfect vehicle of religious thought. But the friend forgot that I was addressing an audience of Western people; and although a certain Indian missionary declared that the Hindus had forgotten the meaning of their Sanskrit books, and that it was the missionaries who unearthed the meaning, I could not find one in that large concourse of missionaries who could understand a line in Sanskrit — and yet some of them read learned papers criticising the Vedas, and all the sacred sources of the Hindu religion!

It is not true that I am against any religion. It is equally untrue that I am hostile to the Christian missionaries in India. But I protest against certain of their methods of raising money in America. What is meant by those pictures in the school-books for children where the Hindu mother is painted as throwing her children to the crocodiles in the Ganga? The mother is black, but the baby is painted white, to arouse more sympathy, and get more money. What is meant by those pictures which paint a man burning his wife at a stake with his own hands, so that she may become a ghost and torment the husband's enemy? What is meant by the pictures of huge cars crushing over human beings? The other day a book was published for children in this country, where one of these gentlemen tells a narrative of his visit to Calcutta. He says he saw a car running over fanatics in the streets of Calcutta. I have heard one of these gentlemen preach in Memphis that in every village of India there is a pond full of the bones of little babies.

What have the Hindus done to these disciples of Christ that every Christian child is taught to call the Hindus “vile”, and “wretches”, and the most horrible devils on earth? Part of the Sunday School education for children here consists in teaching them to hate everybody who is not a Christian, and the Hindus especially, so that, from their very childhood they may subscribe their pennies to

the missions. If not for truth's sake, for the sake of the morality of their own children, the Christian missionaries ought not to allow such things going on. Is it any wonder that such children grow up to be ruthless and cruel men and women? The greater a preacher can paint the tortures of eternal hell — the fire that is burning there, the brimstone - the higher is his position among the orthodox. A servant-girl in the employ of a friend of mine had to be sent to a lunatic asylum as a result of her attending what they call here the revivalist-preaching. The dose of hell-fire and brimstone was too much for her. Look again at the books published in Madras against the Hindu religion. If a Hindu writes one such line against the Christian religion, the missionaries will cry fire and vengeance.

My countrymen, I have been more than a year in this country. I have seen almost every corner of the society, and, after comparing notes, let me tell you that neither are we devils, as the missionaries tell the world we are, nor are they angels, as they claim to be. The less the missionaries talk of immorality, infanticide, and the evils of the Hindu marriage system, the better for them. There may be actual pictures of some countries before which all the imaginary missionary pictures of the Hindu society will fade away into light. But my mission in life is not to be a paid reviler. I will be the last man to claim perfection for the Hindu society. No man is more conscious of the defects that are therein, or the evils that have grown up under centuries of misfortunes. If, foreign friends, you come with genuine sympathy to help and not to destroy, Godspeed to you. But if by abuses, incessantly hurled against the head of a prostrate race in season and out of season, you mean only the triumphant assertion of the moral superiority of your own nation, let me tell you plainly, if such a comparison be instituted with any amount of justice, the Hindu will be found head and shoulders above all other nations in the world as a moral race.

In India religion was never shackled. No man was ever challenged in the selection of his Ishta Devatâ, or his sect, or his preceptor, and religion grew, as it grew nowhere else. On the other hand, a fixed point was necessary to allow this infinite variation to religion, and society was chosen as that point in India. As a result, society became rigid and almost immovable. For liberty is the only condition of growth.

On the other hand, in the West, the field of variation was society, and the constant point was religion. Conformity was the watchword, and even now is the watchword of European religion, and each new departure had to gain the least advantage only by wading through a river of blood. The result is a splendid social organisation, with a religion that never rose beyond the grossest materialistic conceptions.

Today the West is awakening to its wants; and the “true self of man and spirit” is the watchword of the advanced school of Western theologians. The student of Sanskrit philosophy knows where the wind is blowing from, but it

matters not whence the power comes so long as it brings new life.

In India, new circumstances at the same time are persistently demanding a new adjustment of social organisations. For the last three-quarters of a century, India has been bubbling over with reform societies and reformers. But, alas, every one of them has proved a failure. They did not know the secret. They had not learnt the great lesson to be learnt. In their haste, they laid all the evils in our society at the door of religion; and like the man in the story, wanting to kill the mosquito that sat on a friend's forehead, they were trying to deal such heavy blows as would have killed man and mosquito together. But in this case, fortunately, they only dashed themselves against immovable rocks and were crushed out of existence in the shock of recoil. Glory unto those noble and unselfish souls who have struggled and failed in their misdirected attempts. Those galvanic shocks of reformatory zeal were necessary to rouse the sleeping leviathan. But they were entirely destructive, and not constructive, and as such they were mortal, and therefore died.

Let us bless them and profit by their experience. They had not learnt the lesson that all is a growth from inside out, that all evolution is only a manifestation of a preceding involution. They did not know that the seed can only assimilate the surrounding elements, but grows a tree in its own nature. Until all the Hindu race becomes extinct, and a new race takes possession of the land, such a thing can never be — try East or West, India can never be Europe until she dies.

And will she die — this old Mother of all that is noble or moral or spiritual, the land which the sages trod, the land in which Godlike men still live and breathe? I will borrow the lantern of the Athenian sage and follow you, my brother, through the cities and villages, plains and forests, of this broad world — show me such men in other lands if you can. Truly have they said, the tree is known by its fruits. Go under every mango tree in India; pick up bushels of the worm-eaten, unripe, fallen ones from the ground, and write hundreds of the most learned volumes on each one of them — still you have not described a single mango. Pluck a luscious, full-grown, juicy one from the tree, and now you have known all that the mango is.

Similarly, these Man-Gods show what the Hindu religion is. They show the character, the power, and the possibilities of that racial tree which counts culture by centuries, and has borne the buffets of a thousand years of hurricane, and still stands with the unimpaired vigour of eternal youth.

Shall India die? Then from the world all spirituality will be extinct, all moral perfection will be extinct, all sweet-souled sympathy for religion will be extinct, all ideality will be extinct; and in its place will reign the duality of lust and luxury as the male and female deities, with money as its priest, fraud, force, and competition its ceremonies, and the human soul its sacrifice. Such a thing can never

be. The power of suffering is infinitely greater than the power of doing; the power of love is infinitely of greater potency than the power of hatred. Those that think that the present revival of Hinduism is only a manifestation of patriotic impulse are deluded.

First, let us study the quaint phenomenon.

Is it not curious that, whilst under the terrific onset of modern scientific research, all the old forts of Western dogmatic religions are crumbling into dust; whilst the sledge-hammer blows of modern science are pulverising the porcelain mass of systems whose foundation is either in faith or in belief or in the majority of votes of church synods; whilst Western theology is at its wit's end to accommodate itself to the ever-rising tide of aggressive modern thought; whilst in all other sacred books the texts have been stretched to their utmost tension under the ever-increasing pressure of modern thought, and the majority of them are broken and have been stored away in lumber rooms; whilst the vast majority of thoughtful Western humanity have broken asunder all their ties with the church and are drifting about in a sea of unrest, the religions which have drunk the water of life at that fountain of light, the Vedas — Hinduism and Buddhism — alone are reviving?

The restless Western atheist or agnostic finds in the *Gitā* or in the *Dhammapada* the only place where his soul can anchor.

The tables have been turned, and the Hindu, who saw through tears of despair his ancient homestead covered with incendiary fire, ignited by unfriendly hands, now sees, when the searchlight of modern thought has dispersed the smoke, that his home is the one that is standing in all its strength, and all the rest have either vanished or are building their houses anew after the Hindu plan. He has wiped away his tears, and has found that the axe that tried to cut down to the roots the ऊर्ध्वमूलमधःशाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् (*Gita*, XV. 1) has proved the merciful knife of the surgeon.

He has found that he has neither to torture texts nor commit any other form of intellectual dishonesty to save his religion. Nay, he may call all that is weak in his scriptures, weak, because they were meant to be so by the ancient sages, to help the weak, under the theory of अरुन्धतीदर्शनन्याय^[18]. Thanks to the ancient sages who have discovered such an all-pervading, ever-expanding system of religion that can accommodate all that has been discovered in the realm of matter, and all that is to be known; he has begun to appreciate them anew, and discover anew, that those discoveries which have proved so disastrous to every limited little scheme of religion are but rediscoveries, in the plane of intellect and sense-consciousness, of truths which his ancestors discovered ages ago in the higher plane of intuition and superconsciousness.

He has not, therefore, to give up anything, nor go about seeking for anything anywhere, but it will be enough for

him if he can utilise only a little from the infinite store he has inherited and apply it to his needs. And that he has begun to do and will do more and more. Is this not the real cause of this revival?

Young men of Bengal, to you I especially appeal. Brethren, we know to our shame that most of the real evils for which the foreign races abuse the Hindu nation are only owing to us. We have been the cause of bringing many undeserved calumnies on the head of the other races in India. But glory unto God, we have been fully awakened to it, and with His blessings, we will not only cleanse ourselves, but help the whole of India to attain the ideals preached in the religion eternal.

Let us wipe off first that mark which nature always puts on the forehead of a slave — the stain of jealousy. Be jealous of none. Be ready to lend a hand to every worker of good. Send a good thought for every being in the three worlds.

Let us take our stand on the one central truth in our religion — the common heritage of the Hindus, the Buddhists, and Jains alike — the spirit of man, the Atman of man, the immortal, birthless, all-pervading, eternal soul of man whose glories the Vedas cannot themselves express, before whose majesty the universe with its galaxy upon galaxy of suns and stars and nebulae is as a drop. Every man or woman, nay, from the highest Devas to the worm that crawls under our feet, is such a spirit evolved or involuted. The difference is not in kind, but in degree.

This infinite power of the spirit, brought to bear upon matter evolves material development, made to act upon thought evolves intellectuality, and made to act upon itself makes of man a God.

First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods. "Be and make." Let this be our motto. Say not man is a sinner. Tell him that he is a God. Even if there were a devil, it would be our duty to remember God always, and not the devil.

If the room is dark, the constant feeling and repeating of darkness will not take it away, but bring in the light. Let us know that all that is negative, all that is destructive, all that is mere criticism, is bound to pass away; it is the positive, the affirmative, the constructive that is immortal, that will remain for ever. Let us say, "We are" and "God is" and "We are God", "Shivoham, Shivoham", and march on. Not matter but spirit. All that has name and form is subject to all that has none. This is the eternal truth the Shrutis preach. Bring in the light; the darkness will vanish of itself. Let the lion of Vedanta roar; the foxes will fly to their holes. Throw the ideas broadcast, and let the result take care of itself. Let us put the chemicals together; the crystallization will take its own course. Bring forth the power of the spirit, and pour it over the length and breadth of India; and all that is necessary will come by itself.

Manifest the divinity within you, and everything will be harmoniously arranged around it. Remember the illus-

tration of Indra and Virochana in the Vedas; both were taught their divinity. But the Asura, Virochana, took his body for his God. Indra, being a Deva, understood that the Atman was meant. You are the children of India. You are the descendants of the Devas. Matter can never be your God; body can never be your God.

India will be raised, not with the power of the flesh, but with the power of the spirit; not with the flag of destruction, but with the flag of peace and love, the garb of the Sannyâsin; not by the power of wealth, but by the power of the begging bowl. Say not that you are weak. The spirit is omnipotent. Look at that handful of young men called into existence by the divine touch of Ramakrishna's feet. They have preached the message from Assam to Sindh, from the Himalayas to Cape Comorin. They have crossed the Himalayas at a height of twenty thousand feet, over snow and ice on foot, and penetrated into the mysteries of Tibet. They have begged their bread, covered themselves with rags; they have been persecuted, followed by the police, kept in prison, and at last set free when the Government was convinced of their innocence.

They are now twenty. Make them two thousand tomorrow. Young men of Bengal, your country requires it. The world requires it. Call up the divinity within you, which will enable you to bear hunger and thirst, heat and cold. Sitting in luxurious homes, surrounded with all the comforts of life, and doling out a little amateur religion may be good for other lands, but India has a truer instinct. It intuitively detects the mask. You must give up. Be great. No great work can be done without sacrifice. The Purusha Himself sacrificed Himself to create this world. Lay down your comforts, your pleasures, your names, fame or position, nay even your lives, and make a bridge of human chains over which millions will cross this ocean of life. Bring all the forces of good together. Do not care under what banner you march. Do not care what be your colour — green, blue, or red — but mix up all the colours and produce that intense glow of white, the colour of love. Ours is to work. The results will take care of themselves. If any social institution stands in your way of becoming God, it will give way before the power of Spirit. I do not see into the future; nor do I care to see. But one vision I see dear as life before me: that the ancient Mother has awakened once more, sitting on Her throne rejuvenated, more glorious than ever. Proclaim Her to all the world with the voice of peace and benediction.

Yours ever in love and labour, Vivekananda.

Notes

[1] When the success of the Swami in America became well known in India, several meetings were held and addresses of thanks and congratulations were forwarded to him. The first reply which he wrote was that to the Address of the Hindus of Madras.

[2] ओ अग्नमीले पुरोहितं यज्जस्य देवमृत्वजिम् । होतारं रत्नधातमम् ॥ ऋग्वेदः ११ । १ ।

- [3] ओं इषेत्तवोर्जेत्वा वायवः स्थोपायवः स्थ देवो वः सवति
प्रापयत्तु श्रेष्ठतमाय कर्मणे । यजुर्वेदः ११ ११ ।
- [4] ओं शन्नो देवीरमीषटये आपो भवन्तु पीतये
शंयोरभस्त्रवन्तु नः ॥ अथर्ववेदः ११ ११ ।
- [5] Smaller than the smallest, greater than the greatest (Katha, II. 20).
- [6] The good teacher.
- [7] Atoms, Entities composed of two atoms, Entities composed of three atoms.
- [8] Genus, Substance, Quality, Inhesion or Inseparability.
- [9] Exists (Sat), Shines (Chit), Is beloved (Ânanda) — the three indicatives of Brahman.
- [10] The two divisions of the Ramanuja sect.
- [11] Victory to the Guru
- [12] “Courses”, viz, the Upanishad (Shruti), the Gita, and the *Shariraka-Sutras*.
- [13] In Nyaya, 'Determined', and 'determining attribute'.
- [14] United States of America
- [15] “But also (persons standing) between (are qualified for knowledge); for that is seen (in scripture).”— III. iv. 36. A person even if he does not belong to an Ashrama (possessing not the means to entitle him to one or other of the Ashramas, stages of life) and thus stands between, as it were, is qualified for the knowledge of Brahman; for we meet scriptural passages declaring that persons of such a class possessed the knowledge of Brahman. Vide Chhând. Upa. IV. i; Bri. Upa. III. vi. & viii.
- [16] "(The wise one) should not unsettle the understanding of the ignorant, attached to action." The line also occurs in the Gita (III. 26).
- [17] The well-wisher to all the world.
- [18] When a bride is brought to the house of her husband for the first time he shows her a very tiny star, called Arundhati. To do this, he has to direct her gaze the right way, which he does by asking her to look at something near and something big in the direction of the star, e.g., a branch of a tree. Next he draws her attention to a large bright star observed beyond this branch and so on, till by several steps, he succeeds in leading her eyes to the right thing. This method of leading to a subtle object through easy and gradual steps is called Arundhati Nyaya

Chapter 12

A Message of Sympathy to a Friend

A MESSAGE OF SYMPATHY TO A FRIEND^[1]

“Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither; the Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Thus said the old Jewish saint when suffering the greatest calamities that could befall man, and he erred not. Herein lies the whole secret of Existence. Waves may roll over the surface and tempest rage, but deep down there is the stratum of infinite calmness, infinite peace, and infinite bliss. “Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted.” And why? Because it is during these moments of visitations when the heart is wrung by hands which never stop for the father’s cries or the mother’s wail, when under the load of sorrow, dejection, and despair, the world seems to be cut off from under our feet, and when the whole horizon seems to be nothing but an impenetrable sheet of misery and utter despair — that the internal eyes open, light flashes all of a sudden, the dream vanishes, and intuitively we come face to face with the grandest mystery in nature — Existence. Yes, then it is — when the load would be sufficient to sink a lot of frail vessels — that the man of genius, of strength, the hero, sees that infinite, absolute, ever-blissful Existence *per se*, that infinite being who is called and worshipped under different names in different climes. Then it is, the shackles that bind the soul down to this hole of misery break, as it were, for a time, and unfettered it rises and rises until it reaches the throne of the Lord, “Where the wicked cease from troubling and the weary are at rest”. Cease not, brother, to send up petitions day and night, cease not to say day and night — THY WILL BE DONE.

“Ours not to question why,
Ours but to do and die.”

Blessed be Thy name, O Lord! And Thy will be done. Lord, we know that we are to submit; Lord, we know that it is the Mother’s hand that is striking, and “The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” There is. Father of Love, an agony at the heart which is fighting against that calm resignation which Thou teaches”. Give us strength, O Thou who sawest Thy whole family destroyed before Thine eyes, with Thine hands crossed on Thy breast. Come, Lord, Thou Great Teacher, who has taught us that the

soldier is only to obey and speak not. Come, Lord, come Arjuna’s Charioteer, and teach me as Thou once taughtest him, that resignation in *Thyself* is the highest end and aim of this life, so that with those great ones of old, I may also firmly and resignedly cry, Om Shri Krishnârpanamastu.

May the Lord send you peace is the prayer day and night of —

Vivekananda.

Notes

- [1] Written from Bombay on 23rd May, 1893 to D. R. Balaji Rao who just had a severe domestic affliction.

Chapter 13

What we Believe in

WHAT WE BELIEVE IN^[1]

I agree with you so far that faith is a wonderful insight and that it alone can save; but there is the danger in it of breeding fanaticism and barring further progress.

Jñāna is all right; but there is the danger of its becoming dry intellectualism. Love is great and noble; but it may die away in meaningless sentimentalism.

A harmony of all these is the thing required. Ramakrishna was such a harmony. Such beings are few and far between; but keeping him and his teachings as the ideal, we can move on. And if amongst us, each one may not individually attain to that perfection, still we may get it collectively by counteracting, equiposing, adjusting, and fulfilling one another. This would be harmony by a number of persons and a decided advance on all other forms and creeds.

For a religion to be effective, enthusiasm is necessary. At the same time we must try to avoid the danger of multiplying creeds. We avoid that by being a nonsectarian sect, having all the advantages of a sect and the broadness of a universal religion.

God, though everywhere, can be known to us in and through human character. No character was ever so perfect as Ramakrishna's, and that should be the centre round which we ought to rally, at the same time allowing everybody to regard him in his own light, either as God, saviour, teacher, model, or great man, just as he pleases. We preach neither social equality nor inequality, but that every being has the same rights, and insist upon freedom of thought and action in every way.

We reject none, neither theist, nor pantheist, monist, polytheist, agnostic, nor atheist; the only condition of being a disciple is modelling a character at once the broadest and the most intense. Nor do we insist upon particular codes of morality as to conduct, or character, or eating and drinking, except so far as it injures others.

Whatever retards the onward progress or helps the downward fall is *vice*; whatever helps in coming up and becoming harmonised is *virtue*.

We leave everybody free to know, select, and follow whatever suits and helps him. Thus, for example, eating

meat may help one, eating fruit another. Each is welcome to his own peculiarity, but he has no right to criticise the conduct of others, because that would, if followed by him, injure him, much less to insist that others should follow his way. A wife may help some people in this progress, to others she may be a positive injury. But the unmarried man has no right to say that the married disciple is wrong, much less to force his own ideal of morality upon his brother.

We believe that every being is divine, is God. Every soul is a sun covered over with clouds of ignorance, the difference between soul and soul is owing to the difference in density of these layers of clouds. We believe that this is the conscious or unconscious basis of all religions, and that this is the explanation of the whole history of human progress either in the material, intellectual, or spiritual plane — the same Spirit is manifesting through different planes.

We believe that this is the very essence of the Vedas.

We believe that it is the duty of every *soul* to treat, think of, and behave to other *souls* as such, i.e. as *Gods*, and not hate or despise, or vilify, or try to injure them by any manner or means. This is the duty not only of the Sannyasin, but of all men and women.

The soul has neither sex, nor caste, nor imperfection

We believe that nowhere throughout the Vedas, Darshanas, or Purānas, or Tantras, is it ever said that the soul has any sex, creed, or caste. Therefore we agree with those who say, "What has religion to do with social reforms?" But they must also agree with us when we tell them that religion has no business to formulate social laws and insist on the difference between beings, because its aim and end is to obliterate all such fictions and monstrosities.

If it be pleaded that through this difference we would reach the final equality and unity, we answer that the same religion has said over and over again that mud cannot be washed with mud. As if a man can be moral by being immoral!

Social laws were created by economic conditions under the sanction of religion. The terrible mistake of religion was to interfere in social matters. But how hypocritically

it says and thereby contradicts itself, "Social reform is not the business of religion"! True, what we want is that religion should not be a social reformer, but we insist at the same time that society has no right to become a religious law-giver. Hands off! Keep yourself to your own bounds and everything would come right.

Education is the manifestation of the perfection already in man.

Religion is the manifestation of the Divinity already in man.

Therefore the only duty of the teacher in both cases is to remove all obstructions from the way. Hands off! as I always say, and everything will be right. That is, our duty is to clear the way. The Lord does the rest.

Especially, therefore, you must bear in mind that religion has to do only with the soul and has no business to interfere in social matters; you must also bear in mind that this applies completely to the mischief which has already been done. It is as if a man after forcibly taking possession of another's property cries through the nose when that man tries to regain it — and preaches the doctrine of the sanctity of human right!

What business had the priests to interfere (to the misery of millions of human beings) in every social matter?

You speak of the meat-eating Kshatriya. Meat or no meat, it is they who are the fathers of all that is noble and beautiful in Hinduism. Who wrote the Upanishads? Who was Râma? Who was Krishna? Who was Buddha? Who were the Tirthankaras of the Jains? Whenever the Kshatriyas have preached religion, they have given it to everybody; and whenever the Brahmins wrote anything, they would deny all right to others. Read the Gitâ and the Sutras of Vyâsa, or get someone to read them to you. In the Gita the way is laid open to all men and women, to all caste and colour, but Vyasa tries to put meanings upon the Vedas to cheat the poor Shudras. Is God a nervous fool like you that the flow of His river of mercy would be dammed up by a piece of meat? If such be He, His value is not a pie!

Hope nothing from me, but I am convinced as I have written to you, and spoken to you, that India is to be saved by the Indians themselves. So you, young men of the motherland, can dozens of you become almost fanatics over this new ideal? Take thought, collect materials, write a sketch of the life of Ramakrishna, *studiously avoiding all miracles*. The life should be written as an illustration of the doctrines he preached. Only his — do not bring me or any living persons into that. The main aim should be to give to the world what he taught, and the life as illustrating that. I, unworthy though I am, had one commission — to bring out the casket of jewels that was placed in my charge and make it over to you. Why to you? Because the hypocrites, the jealous, the slavish, and the cowardly, those who believe in matter only, can never do anything. Jealousy is the bane of our national character, natural to slaves. Even the Lord with all His power could do nothing

on account of this jealousy. Think of me as one who has done all his duty and is now dead and gone. Think that the whole work is upon your shoulders. Think that you, young men of our motherland, are destined to do this. Put yourselves to the task. Lord bless you. Leave me, throw me quite out of sight. Preach the new ideal, the new doctrine, the new life. Preach against nobody, against no custom. Preach neither for nor against caste or any other social evil. Preach to let "hands off", and everything will come right.

My blessings on you all, my brave, steadfast, and loving souls.

Notes

- [1] Written to "Kidi" on March 3, 1894, from Chicago.

Chapter 14

Our Duty to the Masses

OUR DUTY TO THE MASSES^[1]

Shri Nârâyana bless you and yours. Through your Highness' kind help it has been possible for me to come to this country. Since then I have become well known here, and the hospitable people of this country have supplied all my wants. It is a wonderful country, and this is a wonderful nation in many respects. No other nation applies so much machinery in their everyday work as do the people of this country. Everything is machine. Then again, they are only one-twentieth of the whole population of the world. Yet they have fully one-sixth of all the wealth of the world. There is no limit to their wealth and luxuries. Yet everything here is so dear. The wages of labour are the highest in the world; yet the fight between labour and capital is constant.

Nowhere on earth have women so many privileges as in America. They are slowly taking everything into their hands; and, strange to say, the number of cultured women is much greater than that of cultured men. Of course, the higher geniuses are mostly from the rank of males. With all the criticism of the Westerners against our caste, they have a worse one — that of money. The almighty dollar, as the Americans say, can do anything here.

No country on earth has so many laws, and in no country are they so little regarded. On the whole our poor Hindu people are infinitely more moral than any of the Westerners. In religion they practice here either hypocrisy or fanaticism. Sober-minded men have become disgusted with their superstitious religions and are looking forward to India for new light. Your Highness cannot realise without seeing how eagerly they take in any little bit of the grand thoughts of the holy Vedas, which resist and are unharmed by the terrible onslaughts of modern science. The theories of creation out of nothing, of a created soul, and of the big tyrant of a God sitting on a throne in a place called heaven, and of the eternal hell-fires have disgusted all the educated; and the noble thoughts of the Vedas about the eternity of creation and of the soul, and about the God in our own soul, they are imbibing fast in one shape or other. Within fifty years the educated of the world will come to believe in the eternity of both soul and creation, and in God as our highest and perfect nature, as taught in our holy Vedas. Even now their learned priests

are interpreting the Bible in that way. My conclusion is that they require more spiritual civilisation, and we, more material.

The one thing that is at the root of all evils in India is the condition of the poor. The poor in the West are devils; compared to them ours are angels, and it is therefore so much the easier to raise our poor. The only service to be done for our lower classes is to give them education, *to develop their lost individuality*. That is the great task between our people and princes. Up to now nothing has been done in that direction. Priest-power and foreign conquest have trodden them down for centuries, and at last the poor of India have forgotten that they are human beings. They are to be given ideas; their eyes are to be opened to what is going on in the world around them; and then they will work out their own salvation. Every nation, every man and every woman must work out their own salvation. Give them ideas — that is the only help they require, and then the rest must follow as the effect. Ours is to put the chemicals together, the crystallization comes in the law of nature. Our duty is to put ideas into their heads, they will do the rest. This is what is to be done in India. It is this idea that has been in my mind for a long time. I could not accomplish it in India, and that was the reason of my coming to this country. The great difficulty in the way of educating the poor is this. Supposing even your Highness opens a free school in every village, still it would do no good, for the poverty in India is such, that the poor boys would rather go to help their fathers in the fields, or otherwise try to make a living, than come to the school. Now if the mountain does not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain. If the poor boy cannot come to education, education must go to him. There are thousands of single-minded, self-sacrificing Sannyâsins in our own country, going from village to village, teaching religion. If some of them can be organised as teachers of secular things also, they will go from place to place, from door to door, not only preaching, but teaching also. Suppose two of these men go to a village in the evening with a camera, a globe, some maps, etc. They can teach a great deal of astronomy and geography to the ignorant. By telling stories about different nations, they can give the poor a hundred times more information through the ear than they can get in a life-

time through books. This requires an organization, which again means money. Men enough there are in India to work out this plan, but alas! they have no money. It is very difficult to set a wheel in motion; but when once set, it goes on with increasing velocity. After seeking help in my own country and failing to get any sympathy from the rich, I came over to this country through your Highness' aid. The Americans do not care a bit whether the poor of India die or live. And why should they, when our own people never think of anything but their own selfish ends?

My noble Prince, this life is short, the vanities of the world are transient, but they alone live who live for others, the rest are more dead than alive. One such high, noble-minded, and royal son of India as your Highness can do much towards raising India on her feet again and thus leave a name to posterity which shall be worshipped.

That the Lord may make your noble heart feel intensely for the suffering millions of India, sunk in ignorance, is the prayer of —

Vivekananda.

Notes

- [1] Written from Chicago to H. H. the Maharaja of Mysore on June 23, 1894.

Chapter 15

Reply to the Calcutta Address

REPLY TO THE CALCUTTA ADDRESS^[1]

I am in receipt of the resolutions that were passed at the recent Town Hall meeting in Calcutta and the kind words my fellow-citizens sent over to me.

Accept, sir, my most heartfelt gratitude for your appreciation of my insignificant services.

I am thoroughly convinced that no individual or nation can live by holding itself apart from the community of others, and whenever such an attempt has been made under false ideas of greatness, policy, or holiness — the result has always been disastrous to the secluding one.

To my mind, the one great cause of the downfall and the degeneration of India was the building of a wall of custom — whose foundation was hatred of others — round the nation, and the real aim of which in ancient times was to prevent the Hindus from coming in contact with the surrounding Buddhistic nations.

Whatever cloak ancient or modern sophistry may try to throw over it, the inevitable result — the vindication of the moral law, that none can hate others without degenerating himself — is that the race that was foremost amongst the ancient races is now a byword, and a scorn among nations. We are object-lessons of the violation of that law which our ancestors were the first to discover and disseminate.

Give and take is the law; and if India wants to raise herself once more, it is absolutely necessary that she brings out her treasures and throws them broadcast among the nations of the earth, and in return be ready to receive what others have to give her. Expansion is life, contraction is death. Love is life, and hatred is death. We commenced to die the day we began to hate other races; and nothing can prevent our death unless we come back to expansion, which is life.

We must mix, therefore, with all the races of the earth. And every Hindu that goes out to travel in foreign parts renders more benefit to his country than hundreds of men who are bundles of superstitions and selfishness, and whose one aim in life seems to be like that of the dog in the manger. The wonderful structures of national life which the Western nations have raised, are supported by

the strong pillars of character, and until we can produce members of such, it is useless to fret and fume against this or that power.

Do any deserve liberty who are not ready to give it to others? Let us calmly and in a manly fashion go to work, instead of dissipating our energy in unnecessary frettings and fumings. I, for one, thoroughly believe that no power in the universe can withhold from anyone anything he really deserves. The past was great no doubt, but I sincerely believe that the future will be more glorious still.

May Shankara keep us steady in purity, patience, and perseverance!

Notes

- [1] Written from New York on Nov. 18, 1894, to Raja Pyari Mohan Mukherji, President of the public meeting held on Sept. 5, 1894 at the Calcutta Town Hall in appreciation of Swami Vivekananda's work in the West.

Chapter 16

To my Brave Boys

TO MY BRAVE BOYS^[1]

Push on with the organization. Nothing else is necessary but these — *love*, *sincerity*, and *patience*. What is life but growth, i.e. expansion, i.e. love? Therefore all love is life, it is the only law of life; all selfishness is death, and this is true here or hereafter. It is life to do good, it is death not to do good to others. Ninety per cent of human brutes you see are dead, are ghosts — for none lives, my boys, but he who loves. Feel, my children, feel; feel for the poor, the ignorant, the downtrodden; feel till the heart stops and the brain reels and you think you will go mad — then pour the soul out at the feet of the Lord, and then will come power, help, and indomitable energy. Struggle, struggle, was my motto for the last ten years. Struggle, still say I. When it was all dark, I used to say, struggle; when light is breaking in, I still say, struggle. Be not afraid, my children. Look not up in that attitude of fear towards that infinite starry vault as if it would crush you. Wait! In a few hours more, the whole of it will be under your feet. Wait, money does not pay, nor name; fame does not pay, nor learning. It is love that pays; it is character that cleaves its way through adamant walls of difficulties.

Now the question before us is this. There cannot be any growth without liberty. Our ancestors freed religious thought, and we have a wonderful religion. But they put a heavy chain on the feet of society, and our society is, in a word, horrid, diabolical. In the West, society always had freedom, and look at them. On the other hand, look at their religion.

Liberty is the first condition of growth. Just as man must have liberty to think and speak, so he must have liberty in food, dress, and marriage, and in every other thing, so long as he does not injure others.

We talk foolishly against material civilisation. The grapes are sour. Even taking all that foolishness for granted, in all India there are, say, a hundred thousand really spiritual men and women. Now, for the spiritualisation of these, must three hundred millions be sunk in savagery and starvation? Why should any starve? How was it possible for the Hindus to have been conquered by the Mohammedans? It was due to the Hindus' ignorance of material civilization. Even the Mohammedans taught them

to wear tailor-made clothes. Would the Hindus had learnt from the Mohammedans how to eat in a cleanly way without mixing their food with the dust of the streets! Material civilization, nay, even luxury, is necessary to create work for the poor. Bread! Bread! I do not believe in a God, who cannot give me bread here, giving me eternal bliss in heaven! Pooh! India is to be raised, the poor are to be fed, education is to be spread, and the evil of priestcraft is to be removed. No priestcraft, no social tyranny! More bread, more opportunity for everybody! Our young fools organise meetings to get more power from the English. They only laugh. None deserves liberty who is not ready to give liberty. Suppose the English give over to you all the power. Why, the powers that be then, will hold the people down, and let them not have it. Slaves want power to make slaves.

Now, this is to be brought about slowly, and by only insisting on our religion and giving liberty to society. Root up priestcraft from the old religion, and you get the best religion in the world. Do you understand me? Can you make a European society with India's religion? I believe it is possible, and must be.

The grand plan is to start a colony in Central India, where you can follow your own ideas independently, and then a little leaven will leaven all. In the meanwhile form a Central Association and go on branching off all over India. Start only on religious grounds now, and do not preach any violent social reform at present; only do not countenance foolish superstitions. Try to revive society on the old grounds of universal salvation and equality as laid down by the old Masters, such as Shankarâchârya, Râmânûja, and Chaitanya.

Have fire and spread all over. Work, work. Be the servant while leading. Be unselfish, and *never listen to one friend in private accusing another*. Have infinite patience, and success is yours.

Now take care of this: Do not try to "boss" others, as the Yankees say. Because I always direct my letters to you, you need not try to show your consequence over my other friends. I know you never can be such a fool, but still I think it my duty to warn you. This is what kills all organizations. Work, work, for, to work only for the good of others is life.

I want that there should be no hypocrisy, no Jesuitism, no roguery. I have depended always on the Lord, always on Truth broad as the light of day. Let me not die with stains on my conscience for having played Jesuitism to get up name or fame, or even to do good. There should not be a breath of immorality, nor a stain of policy which is bad.

No shilly-shally, no *esoteric blackguardism*, no secret humbug, nothing should be done in a corner. No special favouritism of the Master, no Master at that, even. Onward, my brave boys — money or no money — men or no men! Have you love? Have you God? Onward and forward to the breach, you are irresistible.

How absurd! The Theosophical magazines saying that they, the Theosophists, prepared the way to my success! Indeed! Pure nonsense! Theosophists prepared the way!

Take care! Beware of everything that is untrue; stick to truth and we shall succeed, maybe slowly, but surely. Work on as if I never existed. Work as if on each of you depended the whole work. Fifty centuries are looking on you, the future of India depends on you. Work on. I do not know when I shall be able to come. This is a great field for work. They can at best praise in India, but they will not give a cent for anything; and where shall they get it, *beggars* themselves? Then, they have lost the faculty of doing public good for the last two thousand years or more. They are just learning the ideas of nation, public, etc. So I need not blame them.

Blessings to you all!

Notes

- [1] Written to Alasinga Perumal from New York on 19th November, 1894.

Chapter 17

A Plan of Work for India

A PLAN OF WORK FOR INDIA^[1]

It is with a heart full of love, gratitude, and trust that I take up my pen to write to you. Let me tell you first, that you are one of the few men that I have met in my life who are thorough in their convictions. You have a whole-souled possession of a wonderful combination of feeling and knowledge, and withal a practical ability to bring ideas into realised forms. Above all, you are sincere, and as such I confide to you some of my ideas.

The work has begun well in India, and it should not only be kept up, but pushed on with the greatest vigour. Now or never is the time. After taking a far and wide view of things, my mind has now been concentrated on the following plan. First, it would be well to open a Theological College in Madras, and then gradually extend its scope, to give a thorough education to young men in the Vedas and the different Bhâshyas and philosophies, including a knowledge of the other religions of the world. At the same time a paper in English and the vernacular should be started as an organ of the College.

This is the first step to be taken, and huge things grow out of small undertakings. Madras just now is following the golden mean by appreciating both the ancient and modern phases of life.

I fully agree with the educated classes in India that a thorough overhauling of society is necessary. But how to do it? The destructive plans of reformers have failed. My plan is this. We have not done *badly* in the past, certainly not. Our society is not *bad* but good, only I want it to be better still. Not from error to truth, nor from bad to good, but from truth to higher truth, from good to better, best. I tell my countrymen that so far they have done well — now is the time to do better.

Now, take the case of caste — in Sanskrit, Jâti, i.e. species. Now, this is the first idea of creation. Variation (Vichitrâtâ), that is to say Jati, means creation. “I am One, I become many” (various Vedas). Unity is before creation, diversity is creation. Now if this diversity stops, creation will be destroyed. So long as any species is vigorous and active, it must throw out varieties. When it ceases or is stopped from breeding varieties, it dies. Now the original idea of Jati was this freedom of the individual to express his nature, his Prakriti, his Jati, his caste;

and so it remained for thousands of years. Not even in the latest books is inter-dining prohibited; nor in any of the older books is inter-marriage forbidden. Then what was the cause of India’s downfall? — the giving up of this idea of caste. As Gitâ says, with the extinction of caste the world will be destroyed. Now does it seem true that with the stoppage of these variations the world will be destroyed? The present caste is not the real Jati, but a hindrance to its progress. It really has prevented the free action of Jati, i.e. caste or variation. Any crystallized custom or privilege or hereditary class in any shape really prevents caste (Jati) from having its full sway; and whenever any nation ceases to produce this immense variety, it must die. Therefore what I have to tell you, my countrymen, is this, that India fell because you prevented and abolished caste. Every frozen aristocracy or privileged class is a blow to caste and is not-caste. Let Jati have its sway; break down every barrier in the way of caste, and we shall rise. Now look at Europe. When it succeeded in giving free scope to caste and took away most of the barriers that stood in the way of individuals, each developing his caste — Europe rose. In America, there is the best scope for caste (real Jati) to develop, and so the people are great. Every Hindu knows that astrologers try to fix the caste of every boy or girl as soon as he or she is born. That is the real caste — the individuality, and Jyotisha (astrology) recognises that. And we can only rise by giving it full sway again. This variety does not mean inequality, nor any special privilege.

This is my method — to show the Hindus that they have to give up nothing, but only to move on in the line laid down by the sages and shake off their inertia, the result of centuries of servitude. Of course, we had to stop advancing during the Mohammedan tyranny, for then it was not a question of progress but of life and death. Now that that pressure has gone, we must move forward, not on the lines of destruction directed by renegades and missionaries, but along our own line, our own road. Everything is hideous because the building is unfinished. We had to stop building during centuries of oppression. Now finish the building and everything will look beautiful in its own place. This is all my plan. I am thoroughly convinced of this. Each nation has a main current in life; in India it is religion. Make it strong and the waters on either side must move along with it. This is one phase of my line

of thought. In time, I hope to bring them all out, but at present I find I have a mission in this country also. Moreover, I expect help in this country and from here alone. But up to date I could not do anything except spreading my ideas. Now I want that a similar attempt be made in India.

I do not know when I shall go over to India. I obey the leading of the Lord. I am in His hands.

“In this world in search of wealth, Thou art, O Lord, the greatest jewel I have found. I sacrifice myself unto Thee.”

“In search of some one to love, Thou art the One Beloved I have found. I sacrifice myself unto Thee.” (Yajurveda Samhitâ).

May the Lord bless you for ever and ever!

Notes

- [1] Written to Justice Sir Subrahmanya Iyer from Chicago, 3rd Jan., 1895.

Chapter 18

Fundamentals of Religion

FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION^[1]

My mind can best grasp the religions of the world, ancient or modern, dead or living, through this fourfold division:

1. Symbology — The employment of various external aids to preserve and develop the religious faculty of man.
2. History — The philosophy of each religion as illustrated in the lives of divine or human teachers acknowledged by each religion. This includes mythology; for what is mythology to one race, or period, is or was history to other races or periods. Even in cases of human teachers, much of their history is taken as mythology by successive generations.
3. Philosophy — The rationale of the whole scope of each religion.
4. Mysticism — The assertion of something superior to sense-knowledge and reason which particular persons, or all persons under certain circumstances, possess; runs through the other divisions also.

All the religions of the world, past or present, embrace one or more of these principles, the highly developed ones having all the four.

Of these highly developed religions again, some had no sacred book or books and they have disappeared; but those which were based on sacred books are living to the present day. As such, all the great religions of the world today are founded on sacred books.

The Vedic on the Vedas (misnamed the Hindu or Brahminic).

The Avestic on the Avesta.

The Mosaic on the Old Testament.

The Buddhistic on the Tripitaka.

The Christian on the New Testament.

The Mohammedan on the Koran.

The Taoists and the Confucianists in China, having also books, are so inextricably mixed up with the Buddhistic form of religion as to be catalogued with Buddhism.

Again, although strictly speaking there are no absolutely racial religions, yet it may be said that, of this group,

the Vedic, the Mosaic, and the Avestic religions are confined to the races to which they originally belonged; while the Buddhistic, the Christian, and the Mohammedan religions have been from their very beginning spreading religions.

The struggle will be between the Buddhists and Christians and Mohammedans to conquer the world, and the racial religions also will have unavoidably to join in the struggle. Each one of these religions, racial or spreading, has been already split into various branches and has undergone vast changes consciously or unconsciously to adapt itself to varying circumstances. This very fact shows that not one of them is fitted alone to be the religion of the entire human race. Each religion being the effect of certain peculiarities of the race it sprang from, and being in turn the cause of the intensification and preservation of those very peculiarities, not one of them can fit the universal human nature. Not only so, but there is a negative element in each. Each one helps the growth of a certain part of human nature, but represses everything else which the race from which it sprang had not. Thus one religion to become universal would be dangerous and degenerating to man.

Now the history of the world shows that these two dreams — that of a universal political Empire and that of a universal religious Empire — have been long before mankind, but that again and again the plans of the greatest conquerors had been frustrated by the splitting up of his territories before he could conquer only a little part of the earth; and similarly every religion has been split into sects before it was fairly out of its cradle.

Yet it seems to be true, that the solidarity of the human race, social as well as religious, with a scope for infinite variation, is the plan of nature; and if the line of least resistance is the true line of action, it seems to me that this splitting up of each religion into sects is the preservation of religion by frustrating the tendency to rigid sameness, as well as the dear indication to us of the line of procedure.

The end seems, therefore, to be not destruction but a multiplication of sects until each individual is a sect unto himself. Again a background of unity will come by the fusion of all the existing religions into one grand philosophy. In

the mythologies or the ceremonials there never will be unity, because we differ more in the concrete than in the abstract. Even while admitting the same *principle*, men will differ as to the greatness of each of his ideal teacher.

So, by this fusion will be found out a union of philosophy as the basis of union, leaving each at liberty to choose his teacher or his form as illustrations of that unity. This fusion is what is naturally going on for thousands of years; only, by mutual antagonism, it has been woefully held back.

Instead of antagonising, therefore, we must help all such interchange of ideas between different races, by sending teachers to each other, so as to educate humanity in all the various religions of the world; but we must insist as the great Buddhist Emperor of India, Asoka, did, in the second century before Christ, not to abuse others, or to try to make a living out of others' faults; but to help, to sympathise, and to enlighten.

There is a great outcry going over the world against metaphysical knowledge as opposed to what is styled physical knowledge. This crusade against the metaphysical and the beyond-this-life, to establish the present life and the present world on a firmer basis, is fast becoming a fashion to which even the preachers of religion one after the other are fast succumbing. Of course, the unthinking multitude are always following things which present to them a pleasing surface; but when those who ought to know better, follow unmeaning fashions, pseudo-philosophical though they profess to be, it becomes a mournful fact.

Now, no one denies that our senses, as long as they are normal, are the most trustworthy guides we have, and the facts they gather in for us form the very foundation of the structure of human knowledge. But if they mean that all human knowledge is only sense-perception and nothing but that, we deny it. If by physical sciences are meant systems of knowledge which are entirely based and built upon sense-perception, and nothing but that, we contend that such a science never existed nor will ever exist. Nor will any system of knowledge, built upon sense-perception alone, ever be a science.

Senses no doubt cull the materials of knowledge and find similarities and dissimilarities; but there they have to stop. In the first place the physical gatherings of facts are conditioned by certain metaphysical conceptions, such as space and time. Secondly, grouping facts, or generalisation, is impossible without some abstract notion as the background. The higher the generalization, the more metaphysical is the abstract background upon which the detached facts are arranged. Now, such ideas as matter, force, mind, law, causation, time, and space are the results of very high abstractions, and nobody has ever sensed any one of them; in other words, they are entirely metaphysical. Yet without these metaphysical conceptions, no physical fact is possible to be understood. Thus a certain motion becomes understood when it is referred to a force; certain sensations, to matter; certain changes outside, to

law; certain changes in thought, to mind; certain order singly, to causation — and joined to time, to law. Yet nobody has seen or even imagined matter or force, law or causation, time or space.

It may be urged that these, as abstracted concepts do not exist, and that these abstractions are nothing separate or separable from the groups of which they are, so to say, only qualities.

Apart from the question whether abstractions are possible or not, or whether there is something besides the generalized groups or not, it is plain that these notions of matter or force, time or space, causation, law, or mind, are held to be units abstracted and independent (by themselves) of the groups, and that it is only when they are thought of as such, they furnish themselves as explanations of the facts in sense-perception. That is to say, apart from the validity of these notions, we see two facts about them — first, they are metaphysical; second, that only as metaphysical do they explain the physical and not otherwise.

Whether the external conforms to the internal, or the internal to the external, whether matter conforms to mind, or mind to matter, whether the surroundings mould the mind, or the mind moulds the circumstances, is old, old question, and is still today as new and vigorous as it ever was. Apart from the question of precedence or causation — without trying to solve the problem as to whether the mind is the cause of matter or matter the cause of mind — it is evident that whether the external was formed by the internal or not, it must conform itself to the internal for us to be able to know it. Supposing that the external world is the cause of the internal, yet we shall have to admit that the external world, as cause of our mind, is unknown and unknowable, because the mind can only know that much or that view of the external or that view which conforms to or is a reflection of its own nature. That which is its own reflection could not have been its cause. Now that view of the whole mass of existence, which is cut off by mind and known, certainly cannot be the cause of mind, as its very existence is known in and through the mind.

Thus it is impossible to deduce a mind from matter. Nay, it is absurd. Because on the very face of it that portion of existence which is bereft of the qualities of thought and life and endowed with the quality of externality is called matter, and that portion which is bereft of externality and endowed with the qualities of thought and life is called mind. Now to prove matter from mind, or mind from matter, is to deduce from each the very qualities we have taken away from each; and, therefore, all the fight about the causality of mind or matter is merely a word puzzle and nothing more. Again, throughout all these controversies runs, as a rule, the fallacy of imparting different meanings to the words mind and matter. If sometimes the word mind is used as something opposed and external to matter, at others as something which embraces both the mind and matter, i.e. of which both the external and internal are parts on the materialistic side; the word matter

is sometimes used in is the restricted sense of something external which we sense, and again it means something which is the cause of all the phenomena both external and internal. The materialist frightens the idealist by claiming to derive his mind from the elements of the laboratory, while all the time he is struggling to express something higher than all elements and atoms, something of which both the external and the internal phenomena are results, and which he terms matter. The idealist, on the other hand, wants to derive all the elements and atoms of the materialist from his own thought, even while catching glimpses of something which is the cause of both mind and matter, and which he oft-times calls God. That is to say, one party wants to explain the whole universe by a portion of it which is external, the other by another portion which is internal. Both of these attempts are impossible. Mind and matter cannot explain each other. The only explanation is to be sought for in something which will embrace both matter and mind.

It may be argued that thought cannot exist without mind, for supposing there was a time when there was no thought, matter, as we know it, certainly could not have existed. On the other hand, it may be said that knowledge being impossible without experience, and experience presupposing the external world, the existence of mind, as we know it, is impossible without the existence of matter.

Nor is it possible that either of them had a beginning. Generalisation is the essence of knowledge. Generalisation is impossible without a storage of similarities. Even the fact of comparison is impossible without previous experience. Knowledge thus is impossible without previous knowledge — and knowledge necessitating the existence of both thought and matter, both of them are without beginning.

Again generalization, the essence of sense-knowledge, is impossible without something upon which the detached facts of perception unite. The whole world of external perceptions requires something upon which to unite in order to form a concept of the world, as painting must have its canvas. If thought or mind be this canvas to the external world, it, in its turn requires another. Mind being a series of different feelings and willing — and not a unit, requires something besides itself as its background of unity. Here all analysis is bound to stop, for a real unity has been found. The analysis of a compound cannot stop until an indivisible unit has been reached. The fact that presents us with such a *unity* for both thought and matter must necessarily be the last indivisible basis of every phenomenon, for we cannot conceive any further analysis; nor is any further analysis necessary, as this includes an analysis of all our external and internal perceptions.

So far then, we see that a totality of mental and material phenomena, *and* something beyond, upon which they are both playing, are the results of our investigation.

Now this something beyond is not in sense-perception; it is a logical necessity, and a feeling of its indefinable pres-

ence runs through all our sense-perceptions. We see also that to this something we are driven by the sheer necessity of being true to our reason and generalising faculty.

It may be urged that there is no necessity whatsoever of postulating any such substance or being beyond the mass of mental and material phenomena. The totality of phenomena is all that we know or can know, and it requires nothing beyond itself to explain itself. An analysis beyond the senses is impossible, and the feeling of a substance in which everything inheres is simply an illusion.

We see, that from the most ancient times, there has been these two schools among thinkers. One party claims that the unavoidable necessity of the human mind to form concepts and abstractions is the natural guide to knowledge, and that it can stop nowhere until we have transcended all phenomena and formed a concept which is absolute in all directions, transcending time and space and causality. Now if this ultimate concept is arrived at by analysing the whole phenomena of thought and matter, step by step, taking the cruder first and resolving it into a finer, and still finer, until we arrive at something which stands as the solution of everything else, it is obvious that everything else beyond this final result is a momentary modification of itself, and as such, this final result alone is real and everything else is but its shadow. The reality, therefore, is not in the senses but beyond them.

On the other hand, the other party holds that the only reality in the universe is what our senses bring to us, and although a sense of something beyond hangs on to all our sense-perceptions, that is only a trick of the mind, and therefore unreal.

Now a changing something can never be understood, without the idea of something unchanging; and if it be said that that unchanging something, to which the changing is referred, is also a changing phenomenon only relatively unchanging, and is therefore to be referred to something else, and so on, we say that however infinitely long this series be, the very fact of our inability to understand a changeable without an unchangeable forces us to postulate one as the background of all the changeable. And no one has the right to take one part of a whole as right and reject the other at will. If one takes the obverse he must take the reverse of the same coin also, however he may dislike it.

Again, with every movement, man asserts his freedom. From the highest thinker to the most ignorant man everyone knows that he is free. Now every man at the same time finds out with a little thinking that every action of his had motives and conditions, and given those motives and conditions his particular action can be as rigorously deduced as any other fact in causation.

Here, again, the same difficulty occurs. Man's will is as rigorously bound by the law of causation as the growth of any little plant or the falling of a stone, and yet, through all this bondage runs the indestructible idea of freedom. Here also the totality side will declare that the idea of

freedom is an illusion and man is wholly a creature of necessity.

Now, on one hand, this denial of freedom as an illusion is no explanation; on the other hand, why not say that the idea of necessity or bondage or causation is an illusion of the ignorant? Any theory which can fit itself to facts which it wants to explain, by first cutting as many of them as prevents its fitting itself into them, is on the face of it wrong. Therefore the only way left to us is to admit first that the body is not free, neither is the will but that there must be something beyond both the mind and body which is free and

(incomplete)

Notes

- [1] This incomplete article was found in the papers of Miss S. E. Waldo. The heading is inserted by us — *Publisher*.

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18.1.1 Text

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