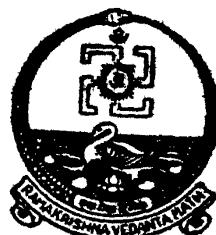


COMPLETE WORKS
OF
SWAMI ABHEDANANDA

VOLUME VI



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ABOUT THIS COMPLETE WORKS

SIXTH VOLUME

Now we offer to the reading public the sixth volume of the COMPLETE WORKS OF SWAMI ABHEDANANDA, published on the occasion of the Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration, 1966-67. This volume contains "A Study of Heliocentric Science", which was delivered in five illuminating lectures on scientific and historical accounts of Indian astronomy, before talented American audiences, sometimes between 1907 and 1910, and which was hitherto unpublished. This volume also contains "Religion of the Twentieth Century", and "Universal Religion and Vedanta", comprising five lectures on universal religion and progressive Hinduism and message of Vedanta, etc delivered at Jamshedpur, Bihar. We have also published in this volume "The Ideal of a Religious Institution", "The Universal and Synthetic Religion", "Philosophy of the Vedanta Society", "The Universal Ideal of the Vedantic Religion" and "Vedanta as Interpreted by the Western Scholars", and "Vedanta Towards Religion", and also two appendices.

It is to note that all the lectures contained in this sixth volume, have been critically edited and Prefaces have been added in respective books

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA,
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Swami Abhedananda Centenary Celebration,
1966-67.

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4th March, 1968

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A STUDY OF HELIOCENTRIC SCIENCE

PREFACE

I

Astronomy (Gr. *astron*, a star, *nomos*, a law) teaches whatever is known of the heavenly bodies, may be divided into three main heads (1) *Geometrical or mathematical astronomy*, (2) *physical astronomy*, and (3) *sidereal astronomy*. (1) *Geometrical or mathematical astronomy* is concerned with the exact determination of the numerical and geometrical elements, magnitudes, and the figures they describe in their motions. (2) *Physical astronomy* is concerned with the nature of the powers or forces that carry on the heavenly motions, the laws that they observe, and the calculation of the motions from a knowledge of these laws (3) *Sidereal astronomy* is concerned with whatever is ascertained regarding the universe of the fixed stars. Besides these, another practical astronomy may be taken into consideration for various accounts of the astronomical instruments which are concerned with the astronomical requirements (vide Chambers' *Encyclopædia*, vol. I, 1877, p. 506).

The Hindus, the Chinese, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and other ancient civilized nations of the world are known to have investigated the heaven long before the Christian era. Generally we come to know that the Greeks have the honour of elevating astronomy into a reliable history. But, before the Greeks, the Hindus were interested in the science of astronomy and its evidence is found in the Vedic literature. In ancient Greece, Thales (640 B.C.), the founder of the Ionic school of philosophy, laid the foundation of Greek astronomy. It is said that he, for the first time, propagated the theory of the earth's sphericity, as he divided the sphere into five zones. Anaxagoras also devoted his energy in the culture of this science of astronomy. In 500 B.C., Pythagoras propagated the science of astronomy as an able predecessor of Thales and taught that the morning and evening stars were in reality one and the same planet. But physicists are of the opinion that the views of Pythagoras got no support from his successors until the advent of Copernicus. The advent of the

Alexandrian school is also remarkable in that period. In 432 B.C. Meton introduced the luni-solar cycle (Metonic Cycle) "as already intimated, and in conjunction with Euctemon, observed a solstice at Athens in the year 424 B.C.". The Alexandrian school determined the positions of the fixed stars by systematic arrangements of the planets and ultimately presented the trigonometrical methods and the first system of theoretical astronomy that had ever comprehended an entire plan of the celestial motions. "The most interesting circumstances connected with the early history of the Alexandrian school are the attempts made to determine the distance of the earth from the sun and the magnitude of the terrestrial globe. Aristarchus of Samos—the pioneer of the Copernicus system, as Humboldt calls him—is the author of an ingenious plan to ascertain the former. Now there arose many noted astronomers like Timocharis, Aristyllus, Hipparchus of Bithynia (160-125 B.C.) who belonged to the Alexandrian school. Hipparchus catalogued no less than 1801 stars and his is the first reliable catalogue.

In 130-150 A.D., we come across Ptolemy who was known as a practical astronomer and who discovered the libration or evection of the moon. He also was the first to point out the effect of refraction. As a musician, a geographer, and a mathematician also, he was reputed and he improved many of the theories advanced by Hipparchus. In 762 A.D., we notice the remarkable works in the field of astronomy "in the reign of the Caliph Al Mansur who gave great encouragement to science, as did also his successors, the 'good Haroun Al Rashid' and 'Al Mamoun'". The most illustrious of the Arabian school were Albategnius or Al Batani (880 A.D.), who discovered the motion of the solar apogee, and who was the first to make use of *sines* and *versed sines* instead of chords. He also corrected the Greek observations, and was altogether the most distinguished observer between Hipparchus and the Copernican era; and Ibn-Yunis (1000 A.D.), an excellent mathematician, who made observations of great importance in determining the disturbances and eccentricities of Jupiter and Saturn, and who was the first to use cotangents and secants.

In the northern part of Persia, an observatory was erected (in 1322 A.D.) by a descendant of the renowned warrior Chenghis Khan, where some tablets were constructed by Nasir-ud-din, and

at Samarkand, Ulugh Beg, a grandson of Timur, made many observations and published some correct catalogues of stars. In 13th-14th centuries, we find the first translation from the *Almagest*, made under the Emperor Frederick II of Germany in about 1230 A.D., and in 1252 A.D., an impulse was given to science by the formation of astronomical tablets under the auspices of Alfonso X of Castile. From 1220 A.D. to 1476 A.D., we find names of some astronomers like Holywood (Sacrobosco), Purbach, Regiomontanus (John Müller), Waltherus.

Then we find many names of the astronomers in the field of astronomical science, and they are Copernicus (1473-1543), Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), Kepler (1571-1630), Galileo Galilei (1564-1642), Newton (1642-1727), Laplace (1799-1808) and others. A noted astronomer remarked. "If the 18th century opened with lustre derived from the physical demonstrations of Newton, it closed magnificently with the telescopic discoveries of Sir William Herschel, who added to our universe a primary planet (Uranus) with its satellites, gave two more satellites to Saturn, resolved the milky-way into countless myriads of stars, and unravelled the mystery of nebulae and of double and triple stars. Laland, Lagrance, Lacaille, and Delambre in the latter half of the 18th century did much by their researches and analyses to systematize and improve the science of astronomy. The instrumental means of observation were also, during that time, brought to high perfection. Laplace in his great work, the *Mecanique Celeste* (1799-1808) gave what further proof was needed of the truth and sufficiency of the Newtonian theory" (vide Chamber's *Encyclopaedia*, 1877, pp 509). The twentieth century has produced eminent scientists like Profs. Whitehead, Max Planck, Eddington, Jeans, Sullivan, Crowther and others who have given precious contributions to the domain of astronomical science, and explored many mysteries of the solar system and the heavenly bodies. In recent years, Prof Fred Hoyle and his young Indian colleague Dr. J V Narlikar have created a stir among mathematicians and physicists and their new investigations and ideas will cause some re-thinking on some fundamental problems of theoretical physics. Dr. Hideki Yukawa of Kyoto University, one of the Nobel Prize-winners has also explored in the recent time the particles in the nucleus or the core of the atom and this has revolutionized the orthodox and past theories when he suggests

that the particles in the core of the atom are not pointlike objects, but are billowing objects like silk handkerchief

Prof Fred Hoyle and Dr Jayant Vishnu Narlikar have contributed a new and novel theory in the field of gravitation and of other orthodox theories. It is familiar to everyone that Sir Issac Newton discovered the theory of gravitation from the fall of an apple Prof Einstein also threw some new lights on the theory of attraction and repulsion, i.e. of gravitation. Profs. Hoyle and Narlikar have shown that gravitation in the Einsteinian formulation is not dependant on matter, but in the Hoyle-Narlikar view, gravitation is a property of the sum of all matter in the universe and would disappear in the absence of any matter It has been reported, "Hoyle hopes that the new theory may offer a way of unifying gravitational and electromagnetic forces in a single system, a task which Einstein left unfinished." We are also familiar with the three dimensions of space, and in the Einsteinian view, these cannot be separated from a fourth dimension—time, and everything exists in a space-time continuum So gravitation, according to Prof Einstein, is a property of space-time , that is why it is always there But the Hoyle-Narlikar theory has added some new things to Einstein's theory, reviving the idea of action at a distance, as maintained by the Newtonian law in a much more sophisticated form. Profs. Hoyle and Narlikar have shown that the difficulties arising from the idea of action travelling at finite speed from one body to another can be removed, if the reactions of all the remaining particles in the universe are taken into account In place of the concept of interaction between two particles, we are now presented with the idea of interaction of a particle with the universe. Now it is known from the facts that Einstein's gravitation affects the geometry of space-time, whereas Hoyle-Narlikar's gravitation becomes a property of the universe To make the difference between the two views it can be further quoted from the article of Dr. Narlikar which was written for *New Scientist*, London that "according to the Newtonian and Einsteinian theories, addition of new matter to the universe or removal of some of the existing matter will not, for example, make any difference to the earth's gravity (G). But according to the Hoyle-Narlikar theory, the value of ' G ' will go up by a factor of two if half of the matter in the universe is suddenly removed And since gravitation

arises from interaction between all matter in the universe, there cannot be any gravitation when there is nothing for an object to interact with, as Dr. Narlikar says that there would be no 'physics' if the number of particles in the universe were less than two (cf. *The Statesman*, Sunday, June 21, 1964).

Again, from the recent records of different investigations in the field of physics and mathematics, we come to know that today the nuclear physicists have advanced one stage further into the science-fiction realm of anti-matter and have substantiated, both theoretically and experimentally, that anti-matter does exist in nature. The properties of anti-matter are opposite of the familiar matter of which we and our world are made of. Today physicists and specially the Russian scientists are opening the door to the mysterious realm of micro-physics where nature is still hiding many secrets. A few years ago the very idea of observing an electron seemed fantastic. In the study of anti-matter and fundamental nuclear exploration, a good many results have been obtained. The scientists at Novosibirsk Institute of Nuclear Physics have discovered many things of science or physics. The ring-currents of electrons and positrons are visible today to the naked eye, and it has also been shown that the simplest complex atomic nucleus in nature belongs to a heavy form of hydrogen called deuterium. "The nucleus of this atom is made up of one proton and one neutron held together by the strong nuclear force. This force is basic to the world and the whole universe; it holds the particles inside all atoms together. Without it atoms could not exist" (vide *The A. B. Patrika*, May 8, 1967).

The study of calendars are also very important in astronomy. The study of calendars marked by zodiacal constellations, says Hon. Emmelmi M. Plunket, necessitates an acquaintance with the position of those constellations as they were to be observed through the many ages during which they held the important office of presiding over the year and its changing seasons. Such acquaintanceship depends upon careful and accurate calculations of the positions of the sun, the moon, the stars, and other heavenly bodies.

In the original sense, the constellations are configurations of stars. Regarding zodiacal constellation, Sir Arthur Stanley Eddington and Prof. Charles Everett say that from the earliest

times the star-groups known as constellations, the small groups (parts of constellations) known as astaisms, and also individual stars, have received names connoting some meteorological phenomena, or symbolizing religious or mythological beliefs. In astronomy, the names given to certain groupings of stars (from the Lat. *Constellatus*, studded with stars: *con*, with and *stella*, a star) They are of the opinion that, at one time, it was held that the constellation names and myths were of Greek origin. This view has not been disproved, and an examination of the Hellenic myths associated with the stars and stargroups in the light of the records revealed by the decipherment of Euphratean cuneiforms leads to the conclusion that in many, if not all cases the Greek myth has a Euphratean parallel, and so renders it probable that the Greek constellation system and the cognate legends are primarily of Semitic or even pre-Semitic origin (cf. *Eugele*)

Regarding the zodiac, its signs and constellation, Dr. Baker's account is also illuminating. It has already been said that "zodiac is the band of the heavens 16° wide through which the ecliptic runs centrally. It contains the sun and moon at all times, and the bright planets as well with the occasional exception of Venus". Twelve constellations of the zodiac are placed along this band of the heavens. The names of the twelve signs or constellations of the zodiac are: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpio, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces. Meanwhile, the vernal equinox has moved westward among the stars, and the whole train of signs has followed along, because the signs are counted off from the equinox "Each sign has shifted past its constellation into the adjoining figure to the west. So when the sun arrives on March 21, at the vernal equinox or 'first of Aries', and the almanac says 'sun enters Aries; spring begins', the sun is entering the zodiacal sign Aries. But it is then in the constellation Pisces and will not enter the constellation Aries itself for another month. This westward shifting of the vernal equinox is caused by a slow motion of the earth which now claims our attention". (vide *An Introduction to Astronomy*, 1935, p. 55).

It is a fact that from very early times the Hindus have employed luni-solar cycles made by the combination of solar

years and lunar years, so treated as to keep the beginning of the lunar year near that of the solar year. It has already been said that in India, we find that astronomical calculation was in practice even from very ancient days. Some of the Western scholars are of the opinion that India borrowed this idea of accurate calculation of astronomy mainly from ancient Greece, and further they admit that history does not tell of communication between Greece and India sufficient to account for this similarity of astronomical method till after the date of Alexander's conquest—about 300 B. C. Hon. Plunket is of the opinion that the Greeks could not at that late date have first become acquainted with the figures of the zodiac, for in Grecian literature of a much earlier age the figures of the zodiac and other constellations are alluded to as already perfectly well-known. As the Greeks could not have learnt all their astronomic lore from the Indian, so the Indians also could not have learnt theirs from the Greeks.

As regards the Indian lunar zodiac, the Indians make use at present for calendrical purposes, not only of the twelve-fold, solar zodiac but also of the *nakshatras* or lunar mansions. Zodiac, used in astronomy and astrology, means a zone of the heavens within which lie the paths of the sun, the moon, and the principal planets. It is bounded by two circles equidistant from the ecliptic, about 16 degrees apart, and it is divided into 12 signs, and marked by 12 constellations. Now, the fixation of the initial point of this lunar zodiac (a point at the end of Revati and the beginning of Ashvini, 10° degrees west of the 'first point of our constellation Aries) was due to an astronomical reform of the Hindu calendar "probably carried out under Grecian auspices at a date not much earlier than 600 A. D. While editing Burgess' translation of the Hindu *Suryasiddhanta*, Prof. Whitney writes: "The initial point of the fixed Hindu sphere from which longitudes are reckoned, and at which the planetary motions are held by all schools of Hindu astronomy to have commenced at the creation, is the end of the asterism Revati, or the beginning of Ashvini. Its situation is most nearly marked by that of the principal star Revati . that star is by all authorities identified with Piacum, of which the longitude at present, as reckoned by us, from the vernal equinox, is 17°/54'. Making due allowance for the

precession (of the equinoxes), we find that it coincided in position with the vernal equinox, not far from the middle of the sixth century, or about A.D. 570. *As such coincidence was the occasion of the point being fixed upon as the beginning of the sphere*, the time of its occurrence marks approximately the era of the fixation of the sphere, and of the commencement of the history of modern Hindu astronomy”

Now, to make the Hindu point of Indian calendar more explicit, it can be said that the present names of the lunar months in India were derived from the *nakshatras*, which are certain conspicuous stars or groups of stars lying more or less along the neighbourhood of the ecliptic. The *nakshatras* are regarded sometimes as 27 in number, sometimes 28, and are grouped in 12 sets of two or three each, beginning, according to the earlier arrangement of the list, with the pair of Krittika and Rohini, and including in the sixth place Chitra and Svati, and ending with the triplet Revati, Ashvini, and Bharani. The almanacs show the course of the sun through them, as well as the course of the moon ; and the Hindus began to use the 12 signs of the solar Zodiac. “A lunar month may be regarded as ending either with the new moon, which is called *amavasya*, or with full-moon which is called *purnamasi*, *purnima* ; a month of the former kind is termed *amanta* ; ‘ending with the new-moon’, or *shuklaadi*, beginning with the bright fortnight’ ; a month of the latter kind is termed *purnimanta*, ‘ending with the full-moon, or *krishnadi* ‘beginning with the dark fortnight’ *** The connection between the lunar and the solar months is maintained by the point that the name Chaitra is applied according to one practice to the solar Mīna, in which the lunar Chaitra begins, and according to another practice to the solar Mesha, in which the lunar Chaitra ends. Like the lunar year, the lunar month begins for religious purposes with its first lunar day, and for civil purposes with its first civil day. One mean lunar year of 12 lunations measures very nearly 354 days 6 hours 48 minutes 34 seconds, and one Hindu solar year measures 365 days 6 hours 12 minutes 30 seconds, according to Arya-Bhatta, or slightly more according to the other two authorities”. (vide *Encyclopædia Britannica*, 14th ed., Vol IV pp 577-578). The era of the Hejra of the Muslim is used principally in Turkey, Persia, Arabia, Egypt, and some parts

of India. The era is dated from the first day of the month preceding the flight of Mohammed from Mecca to Medina. This day was Thursday, July 16 in the year 622 A.D. Hejra years are purely lunar, always consisting of 12 lunar months, beginning approximately with new-moon.

The Chinese lunar zodiac is divided into 28 star groups named Sion, and they have been elaborately discussed by Gustav Schlegel in his book, *Uranographic Chinoise*. But it should be noted that the Chinese and the Hindu initial points are diametrically opposite to each other on the ecliptic. Calendrically speaking, "such opposite points may be taken to mark the same season and the same month—as for instance, in the old Accadian calendar the month names referred to the stars in conjunction with the sun * * *".

II

Swami Abhedananda delivered five lectures before talented American audiences sometime between 1907 and 1910, explaining the method of heliocentric science in a comparative manner so as to contribute the treasure of astronomical knowledge among the civilized nations of the world. Those lectures are now offered for the first time to the reading public in book form which will prove the profound knowledge of Swami Abhedananda in astronomical science also.

This book, *A Study of Heliocentric Science*, contains five informative chapters. The first chapter deals with the study of constellations of the zodiac. Swami Abhedananda says that India was the original home of astronomy, where from the very ancient times, the Aryans used to investigate into the movements and mystery of the stars and the planets. They were very eager to know the secret of the celestial sphere which was dominated or ruled by the burning sun. The Swami says that "from the dawn of the human history the stars were arranged in groups of constellations for the purpose of more readily distinguishing them * * . The constellations of the solar zodiac with figures representing twelve signs have been in use in all historical periods of all ancient nations, having nearly the same characteristics among the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Hindus, and the Chinese. From this fact it would be

reasonable to suppose that the idea of the celestial sphere and of the solar zodiac was a common possession of all the migrating nomadic tribes of Asia” The names and the signs of the constellation of the solar zodiac like the ram, the bull, the goat, the scorpion, etc evolved in pre-historic India, and they bear some significances. Swami Abhedananda shows in a comparative manner how the bull, the fish, and other animals were sacred among the ancient civilized nations of the world, and how their forms were adopted in the method of the Indian astronomy so as to represent the signs or symbols of the constellations of the Hindus, the Persians, the Egyptians, the Chinese, and others. According to the laws of the ancient astronomy, the solar zodiac is recognized as the imaginary route through the medium of which the sun travels around the earth during the period of one year

The Greek and Roman mythologies have described many stories in connection with different constellations or the signs or symbols of the zodiac. The Hindu astronomers of ancient India divided the ecliptic or the solar zodiac into twenty-eight parts so as to correspond with the twenty-eight lunar mansions, and although the solar zodiac was retained by one class of astronomers, yet the lunar mansions were preferred by another class. The lunar astorians were called the *nakshatras* or stars. Afterwards they were adopted by other nations like the Chinese, the Egyptians and the Arabs. Swami Abhedananda has mentioned the names of the twenty-eight stars as used in the Indian astronomy. He says that Hindu astronomers knew about the five main planets and also the ascending the descending notes on the ecliptic. “In this age of scepticism and agnosticism, we may laugh at the claims of the science of true astronomy, but it is certainly a study of the power fascination which it has extended over the greatest men through 7000 or 8000 years, and a vast number of well-authenticated fulfilment of prophecies by the astrologers which have been handed down through generations will prove that there is some underlying truth at the bottom of its claims”

The second chapter deals with the sun and the solar forces. Swami Abhedananda says that the word ‘astronomy’ is composed of the words *astron* and *nomos*, which mean ‘the star’ and ‘the law’. Therefore the word ‘astronomy’ connotes the

idea of 'the law of the stars' In fact, astronomy is a science which teaches the position, motion, action, or influence of the sun, the moon, stars, and other planets It is very oldest science which has been handed down to us from time immemorial. In the vedic period, the Hindus used to consider astronomy as an indispensable science There was a Newton in India and his name was Arya-Bhatta. He discovered the law of gravitation (*madhyakarshana*) which is attraction towards the centre. Heliocentric science says that the sun is the centre of the solar system and the earth and other planets move around the sun and the earth rotates around its axis once in twenty-four hours.

After Arya-Bhatta, came Ptolemy He was a Greek and wrote a book, the *Almagest*, in which he described the details of the solar system describing the motions and the positions of different planets including the sun, the moon, the earth, etc. In the 6th century A.D., Copernicus appeared in the field of astronomy or astronomical science and revived the old theory of Pythagoras who declared some hundreds of years ago that the sun is the centre of the solar system and the earth and other planets are rotating around the sun annually After Copernicus appeared Galileo, Kepler, Newton, and others, and all of them contributed their share to the growth of the wonderful science of astronomy. Galileo was the first who invented the telescope Again Galileo was also the first to discover that Venus has her phases like the phase of the moon. Copernicus prophesied it but he had no telescope. Galileo proved afterwards the truth of the Copernican theory by the help of his telescope.

In connection with astronomical science and its contribution, Swami Abhedananda says that astronomy has rendered a great service to the field of investigation of the heavenly bodies, but it should be remembered that man's intellect and intuition are the best instruments for such investigation and new discoveries So everything of astronomical science and enquiry depends upon man's intellect and intellectual investigations. Sometimes it is believed that a man is an instrument in the hand of the influence of the planets or the heavenly bodies and his destiny entirely depends upon the mercy of the planetary influence. But that is not correct, because men of intellect and intuition of different nations of different ages have laid their

heads to discover the laws of nature and of the heavenly bodies and have thus enriched the domain of astronomical science of the world. They can, therefore, design their destiny by dint of their thoughts and deeds.

Swami Abhedananda has also dealt with the theories of heat and light which are constantly radiating from the sun through space. He has described the diameter, size, and weight of the sun and other planets and has said about the solar spots in the vast surface of the sun, which were noticed as early as 807 A.D. Regarding the sun's weight, age, and radiation of heat or energy, we can mention here the approximate calculation as given by Prof H. H. Jeans in his book, *The Universe Around Us* (1933). Prof Jeans writes: "Thus the sun must have weighed 360,000 million tons more than now at this time tomorrow. And 360,000 million tons a day is 131 million million tons a year ** If the sun continued to radiate at precisely its present rate until it had turned absolutely the whole of its present mass into radiation, a simple sum in division shows that it would last for just about 15 million million years, by which time its last ounce of weight would be disappearing** A series of investigations, which culminated in a paper published by Eddington in 1924, disclosed that, in a general sort of way, a star's luminosity depends mainly on its weight" However, newer thoughts in this regard are arising with the progress of science

Regarding the sun's distance from the earth and its other particulars, Prof Jeans further says that the sun's distance is a little less than 93 million miles—probably about 92,900,000 miles. Again the sun is about 400 times as distant as the moon. The sun's diameter is about 400 times the moon's diameter, or 109 times as big in each direction as the earth—in length and in breadth and height, and Prof. Jeans is of opinion that no fewer than 1,300,000 earths could be packed inside the sun. And approximately it can be said that the sun is not only losing weight at the rate of 4 million tons a second, but is also shrinking in size and brilliancy (vide Chapter III, pp. 168-204).

Swami Abhedananda has even given some approximate informations about heat and light which are radiated from the burning sun. But while describing the immensity of power

and volume of energy of the sun and the stars, the Swami also compares these with the immensity and power of the human mind which can be said to be greater than the solar system. Regarding the power of the human mind, the Swami says: "The mind is greater than the solar system.* * It can reach the pole star in an instant and scrutinize every minute detail, even measure its weight, its length and breadth." The immensity or vastness of the sun has been measured by scientists, and they say that the sun is a gigantic magnet and forms the centre of the solar system. Moreover, the magnetic currents start out from the centre of the sun and polarize on our and on different planets. Sir William Herschel advanced the theory that the whole humankind is more or less affected by these magnetic currents. The magnetic currents are the source of life or life-force, and all living beings draw their energy from these currents.

Swami Abhedananda says that astronomers are of different opinions regarding the colour of the sun. It is an interesting thing to know that the sun's body in itself is not hot, but its surrounding atmosphere is at a high temperature. The Swami adds: "The heat of the sun is caused by condensation, whereby the size of the sun is constantly decreasing, and its potential energy is converted into kinetic one. The heart is coming out and the sun is shrinking." Therefore, in course of time the sun will cease to shine, as our earth has ceased to shine. The Swami has further said that many dead suns (the suns without heat and light) are still revolving in the vast heavenly space. In fact, solar forces and magnetic currents are constantly radiating from the sun, and that radiation is causing all changes in the sun.

The Swami then describes the purity and solemnity of the conception of the sun. In the vedic age, he says, we find that the Aryans used to pray to the sun for their vegetation, nourishment and welfare of the communities. They regarded the sun as the supreme God and also as the eternal source of material and spiritual prosperity. The Swami is of the opinion that this reverential attitude of the Aryans in the remote days evolved from the vastness and infinite power of the sun and from their knowledge that for the heat and the light of the sun all the animate and inanimate objects of the universe maintain their life and existence.

Swami Abhedananda says that by studying science of astronomy we can diagnose all diseases and, therefore, can cure them ; and not only can we thus know the causes of diseases, but also can know purpose and end of our earthly life. It is an inevitable law that the souls after passing away from this phenomenal world come back again to the world for enjoying the fruits of their works, done in the past life. The Hindu scriptures say that this is possible for the law of *karma*. Here it should be remembered that there is not only a cause-on the spiritual side in the law of *karma*, but also a physical law that is to be discovered by this science of astronomy and there would be a perfect harmony between the physical plane and the mental-spiritual plane and that is what we need today. If the whole universe is one and if God is the centre of the universe like the soul, then we are just like the small cells in the body of that universal Being and that body is the phenomenal universe. The Swami says: "So we are all related to each other, and that will lead us to the belief that the universe is one stupendous whole and we are but parts, and, in reality, we live and move and have our beings in God".

The third chapter deals with the planets and the planetary influences. The Swami has stated that solar magnetic science is the most wonderful science. The planets really make up the whole structure of the solar system. There are eight main planets, including hundreds of planetoids or smaller planets. There are also innumerable burning stars of different sizes in the heavens. Sir James Jeans says that, as it is impossible to count the numberless sands on the shore of an ocean, so it is not possible to count the stars that are scattered in the vast sky. And we know that luminous band of countless stars (star-cloud) encircling the heavens have built the grand structure of the Milky Way. The main eight planets are again divided into two groups: one is called the *inferior group* with Mercury, Venus, etc. whose orbits are within the orbit of the earth ; and the other is called the *superior group*, whose orbits are beyond the orbit of the earth, and these superior planets are Mars, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, Neptune. Between the Mercury and the sun there exist innumerable planets which are really unknown to us. The Mercury is the youngest planet and the Neptune the oldest one of the solar system. Swami

Abhedananda has mentioned their motion and velocity and has given detailed descriptions of each planet. He says: "Each of these planets being a magnet, the magnetic currents start from them and go in the space all around, just as the sun sends forth its rays in all directions. The magnetic currents are also emitting and going from the sun in all directions and sustaining the vitality of all the living beings of the universe". Each of the planets has its own velocity and motion around the sun and is distributing the magnetic currents in the ocean of ether. This ocean of ether is vast and all the planets and comets and other luminous heavenly bodies are rotating around their own axis. Each planet has a repellent force which makes it go off in a straight line. The sun is pulling towards it and the planet is trying to get off and the resultant is the planet's revolution around the sun.

Now, from the study of the solar magnetic science we come to know that the zodiac is a scale or measure which has been regarded as the foundation for working out of different effects and changes, produced by the polarity and position of the planets in relation to the sun, the central planet. The sun may be compared with the soul which forms the centre of the physical system. The sun has also an influence on the human and the animal souls and so it is regarded by the scientists as the soul of the solar system. Astronomical science says that the sun and other planets exert their influence upon our body, nervous system, and mind. Some are of the opinion that it is an inevitable law of nature that the planets have their influences upon body and mind of the human beings and the animals and no man can escape from that planetary influence. The Swami says that it is true that the planets have certain powers and can exert those powers upon body and mind of all beings, but it is also a fact that through correct knowledge of the law of nature that regulates the powers or influences of the planets, men can control those planetary influences. Really our souls are more powerful than the planets and even than the sun and if the souls are conscious of their infinite powers, they can govern all the laws of nature.

The fourth chapter deals with the earth and its relation to the sun. Swami Abhedananda says that before the time of Copernicus, astronomy was based upon the Ptolemyic system.

which enunciated that each planet revolves in circle around the earth which is fixed. But Copernicus broke away from this system in the beginning of the sixteenth century. It has been said that he revived the Pythagorean theory which proved that the sun is the centre around which all the planets including the earth are revolving. Copernicus brought a new change in the domain of astronomy. After Copernicus Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer and his disciple, Kepler discovered the truth that the planets revolve in circular motion around the sun. In 1609, Kepler firmly declared that the planets revolve in ellipses with the sun at one focus, and there is a difference between the centre of a circle and the focus of this ellipse. Kepler also discovered that the velocity of a planet varies at different parts of its orbit.

After Kepler, Newton appeared and discovered the law of gravitation by observing the falling of an apple and this law cleared away all those former theories which were forwarded by the followers of the Ptolemyic system. But still there rang a question as to how the earth is related to the sun and what is the birthright of the earth. And it has already been explained before how Prof. Einstein remodelled the theory of Newton to some extent and afterwards this gravitation theory got a new and novel interpretation in the hands of Profs. F. Hoyle and I. V. Narlikar. However, Swami Abhedananda says that Kepler's hypothesis was considered as most satisfactory in view of this question. But this hypothesis was first started by the German philosopher, Immanuel Kant and was further reinforced by Laplace, the great French astronomer and mathematician. Both Kant and Laplace tried to explain the formation of the solar system which we have and this is known as the nebular hypothesis. This hypothesis explained that at one time our solar system was a gyrating mass of nebulous matter which was a gaseous substance. Swami Abhedananda says that this gaseous substance or "this gas was all in a state of agitation, and it was all moving in a spiral form, having one centre like a nucleus, then going around in a spiral form, all revolving in that direction and making a central nucleus here, and gradually throwing little pieces or masses of the gaseous substance away from the centre, and this was the nebulous mass and that was the foundation of our solar system".

Now, what are the nebulous masses or nebulae which are the source or matrix of hundreds and thousands of planets and also of the gigantic solar system? The nebulae are the cloudy or foggy patches, or a cluster of burning stars. Swami Abhedananda has already stated in course of his discussion that Immanuel Kant had already suggested that there are immensely distant planets and also sister-galaxies, which are in fact the objects termed 'nebulae' which appear as pale, elliptical, or hazy patches of light. This suggestion of Kant was energetically discussed by different astronomers and at last in 1791, it was confirmed by William Herschel, as he himself discovered such thousands of new nebulae which were known as thick clusters of cloudy patches or stars or 'the shining fluid'. In 1850, the German astronomer, Humboldt also accepted the discovery of Herschel and named them 'island universes'. In 1664, Huygens also discovered by means of spectroscopic analysis many of the planetary and diffuse nebulae (such as that in Orion), which were not composed of stars, but were at highly rarified gas "whose spectrum consists of isolated bright lines". Huygens found those diffuse nebulae as foggy patches which are recognized today as other galaxies far beyond our own and also as extragalactic nebulae, while the clouds of gas dust in our own galaxy are the galactic nebulae. The nebulae are of different sizes and of different colours. Some of them are of the same general type as that of the sun. The planetary nebulae are on the average about ten million million miles in diameter and their central stars have surface temperature of 50,000°K, though their absolute brightness is considerably less than that of stars of this class outside the planetaries. Generally stars and nebulae constitute the basic material of the star cloud around us and the star-clouds form the framework of the vast Milky Way which was called by Galileo as "a mass of innumerable stars planted in clusters". When Swami Abhedananda was in America (1898 to 1921 A.D.), he observed the sun, the moon and hundreds of thousands of stars, nebulae, and other bright blazing planets through the Mount Wilson 100 inch reflector giving a view of a portion of the sky something like 10 light years in diameter (10 miles, or 10,000 times the diameter of the galaxy; and the volume of space that can be explored by the Mount Palomar 200 inch reuector has a

radius of about 10 light years). The Swami reported that within this region of space, explored by the Mount Wilson 100 inch reflector, about a million nebulae brighter than those of the 18th magnitude can be photographed.

The extragalactic nebulae appear as faint, diffuse or light, spiral, circular or elliptical in shape, brighter at the centre than towards the edges, but showing no trace of internal structure. Covering several hundred of the brightest nebulae and some thousands of the fainter ones, astronomer Hubble classified the extragalactic nebulae into three main categories: (1) *globular and elliptical nebulae*, (2) *spiral nebulae*, and (3) *irregular nebulae*. The *spiral nebulae* were divided again into two: *normal spirals* and *barred spirals*. The *irregular nebulae* are less in number and about half of them are objects like the 'Magellanic Clouds' which are characterised by the absence of a nucleus and a general lack of symmetry. Now, distances and dimensions of the extragalactic nebulae were investigated by Prof. Capheid between 1922 and 1924 and found to be about 70,000 to 80,000 light years. Profs. Lucian Rudaux and G. E. Vancoubers are of the opinion that knowledge of the distances of the extragalactic nebulae allures their linear dimensions to be directly calculated from their angular dimensions. In this way, Hubble has further shown "that the mean diameters of the bright central regions of the nebulae (which coincide more or less with their photographic images) are of the order of 2,000 light years for globular nebulae, 4,000—5,000 light years for 'late' elliptical nebulae and 6,000—9,000 in the case of irregular nebulae and spirals" (vide *Larousse Encyclopædia of Astronomy*, 1959, Chapter 17, pp 395-415 and Robert H. Baker: *An Introduction to Astronomy*, 1935, pp. 264-271). Celebrated scientists like Profs. Jeans, Eddington, Max Planck, Whitehead, Crowther, Sullivan and others have also discussed the particulars of the planets and the nebulae.

Regarding equinox, Swami Abhedananda says that Hipparchus who lived in the second century B.C., discovered for the first time in Europe the precession of equinox. Now, what do we understand by equinox? Equinox is the plane of the equator which is extended to the celestial sphere and the orbit of the earth strikes in two points of that celestial equinox and that becomes the *vernal equinox* and the *autumnal equinox*,

when the sun is overhead at the equinox. The Swami has mentioned here the astronomers' calculation of both the *vernal* and the *autumnal equinoxes*, which first happened in 3958 b.c. (*autumnal equinox*) and in 6403 b.c. (*vernal equinox*). The discussions about the dates and positions of the equinoxes in connection with the winter and summer solstice are very interesting and historical too. Swami Abhedananda has discussed briefly about them in his lecture on *Christ and Christmas*.

Swami Abhedananda says that the size of the earth has been measured and it has been seen that the earth's circumference is nearly 25,000 miles and its diameter is nearly 8000 miles. Dr. Robert H. Baker says that measurement of the size of the earth seem to have begun as long ago as the fourth century b.c. The best-known and perhaps the most accurate of the early attempts was made in the third century b.c. by Eratosthenes, the celebrated geographer and librarian of the great museum in Alexandria. He observed that the sun stood a fiftieth of the circumference of the heavens away from the point overhead at noon on the longest day of the year. At Syene (near Assuan) in Upper Egypt, some five hundred miles south of Alexandria, the sun was said to be directly overhead at noon on that day. The earth's circumference, therefore, came out to be about 25,000 miles (cf. *An Introduction to Astronomy*, 1935, pp. 4-5).

The sun's distance from the earth averages a little less than 92,900,000 miles. But its distance varies and it varies from 91,300,000 miles in January to 94,000,000 miles in July. The earth's orbit is in ellipse. Now, according to the *law of equal areas*, speed of the revolving earth around the sun varies. The earth revolves faster in winter and slower in summer. Dr. Baker has given an account that the flight of the earth around the sun is $18\frac{1}{2}$ miles a second, or about 66,000 miles an hour. The speed increases a little more than a quarter of a mile a second at the most in winter and reduces by the same amount in summer. The whole variation is rather small, because the earth's orbit is so nearly circular.

The sun moves north and south during the year as well and withdraws as much as $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ from the equator in each direction before it returns. Swami Abhedananda has discussed this movement of the earth as well as the ecliptic. The ecliptic

is the sun's apparent annual path around the heavens. Dr. Baker says that ecliptic is a great circle inclined $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ to the celestial equator. This circle of the celestial sphere must not be confused with the earth's orbit, the slightly elliptical course 180 million miles across, in which the earth revolves around the sun. Dr. Baker says: "The ecliptic and the earth's orbit lie in the same plane, one 'over' the other, like the celestial equator and the earth's equator. The $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ inclination of the celestial equator to the ecliptic shows that the earth's equator is inclined $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ to its orbit around the sun". Swami Abhedananda has also forwarded its account in a similar way

The Swami's accounts of equinoxes and solstices are also informative. The equinoxes are the two points where the ecliptic crosses the celestial equator. The solstices are also the two points on the ecliptic where the sun is farthest north or south from the celestial equator. Two equinoxes are the *vernal equinox* and the *autumnal equinox* and two solstices are the *summer solstice* and *winter solstice*. Dr. Baker says that the *vernal equinox* is the point where the sun crosses the celestial equator in its way north. This occurs on March 21, when spring begins. The *summer solstice* is the northern-most point of the ecliptic $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ north of the celestial equator. The sun comes here on June 22, when summer begins. The *autumnal equinox* is the point where the sun crosses the celestial equator on its way south. This occurs on September 23, when autumn begins. The *winter solstice* is the southern-most point of the ecliptic, $23\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ south from the celestial equator. Here the sun comes on December 22, when winter begins. These dates vary a little from year to year owing to the plan of leap years.

After discussing about the earth, Swami Abhedananda has given some accounts of the moon. Of all the satellites, says Dr Baker, our moon has the distinction of being the most nearly comparable with its primary in size and mass. The moon is 2160 miles in diameter, or more than a quarter of the earth's diameter, while its mass is one eighty-second part of the earth's mass. The Swami's account is similar to that of Dr Baker. Two apparent motions of the moon are: it circles westward around us and moves steadily eastward against the turning background of the stars. Moon's orbit is an ellipse having the earth at one focus. At *perigee*, where the moon is nearest the earth, its distance

from the earth is 221,463 miles and at *apogee*, where it is the most remote, the distance increases to 252,710 miles. The moon's equator is tilted about $6\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}$ to the plane of its orbit. The moon's revolution is not uniform. There are only a few irregularities of the moon's surface that reminds us of some mountain ranges. There are also some lunar craters which exceed 30,000 in number. There are many *rills* as well. They are irregular clefts as much as half a mile wide and of unknown depths. It has no atmosphere or air around, or at least no atmosphere comparable with our own. Eclipses can occur at the two opposite seasons when the sun is passing by a node of the moon's path. Now the recent Sputnik investigations have thrown sufficient light of new informations which, we believe, will revolutionize many old theories and beliefs of the past and we may imagine that in this new atomic age, the Russian and the American scientific attempts in the space will make possible for the men of this earth to descend on the surface of the moon in near future.

Swami Abhedananda says that everything in this universe is moving in a cycle and everything is shifting or changing and nothing is stationary. But in the midst of the changes there is something which does not change and that unchanging substance is the Soul or the *Atman*. The earth is just like a child of the gigantic sun. All the particles of matter and all the forces and the magnetic currents which they possess, have come out from the sun. The sun is, therefore, regarded as the source of life or vital energy.

The fifth chapter deals with the mystery of heliocentric science. Swami Abhedananda says that the study of astronomy used to be made by the ancients for the purpose of divination. In the Vedas, astronomy has been mentioned as one of the limbs (*angas*) of the holy scriptures. The Magi priests of ancient Persia had their temples on the top of the hills for accurately observing the movements of the heavenly bodies. The old remains of the *Yantra-Mantras* at different places of India prove that in ancient and mediæval times the study of science of astronomy was in practice among the Indian scientists. Tiberius, the Emperor of Rome, encouraged the culture of astronomy and astrology among the people of his country. It is said that Hippocrates borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India. The

Hindu astronomers brought the influence of the stars in minute details in all the affairs of life. The Arabs and the Moorish astronomers popularized the study of this phase of astronomy in Western Europe. The Arabs learned a great deal of the science and art of astronomy from India (vide Swami Abhedananda. *India and Her People*). Europe is also indebted to India for her culture of astronomical science and trigonometry. History tells us that in Europe in the middle ages, the people used to draw up a horoscope, placing the sun, the moon and the stars in different signs of the zodiac. The Greek and the Roman mythologies have described many stories in connection with different constellations or the signs of the zodiac.

Swami Abhedananda says that ancient astronomy was founded upon the geocentric system of Ptolemy which held that the earth was the centre, around which the sun with all other planets, including their moons, revolved in twentyfour hours. The earth was placed in this ancient system at a position where the sun is at present and the sun was placed in one corner. But the Copernican system explained the opposite way. It states that the sun is the centre, while all other planets are revolving around the sun. Now, apart from this geocentric system, there is the heliocentric system which is based not upon the apparent motion of the sun and the planets, but upon the real motion of the earth and other planets around the sun. The position of a planet, when seen from the centre of the sun, is called the heliocentric place, while the geocentric place of a planet is that at which as it is seen from the centre of the earth.

While explaining further the meaning of both heliocentric and geocentric science, Swami Abhedananda says: "So heliocentric science means that an observer stands at the centre of the sun and looks at the position of the planets as the actual position is, but geocentric science means that both these planets are moving in the same direction around the sun, and when you look at any of these planets from the earth, if you look toward the sun, the sun would appear to you as in this direction * * That is, the heliocentric position is the real position, and the geocentric one is the apparent, just as the apparent motion of the sun is from the east to the west, but, in reality, the sun is not rising in the east and setting in the west, but the earth itself is moving from the west toward the east and facing the sun.

'That is the real motion, while the apparent motion is just the opposite' In fact, heliocentric science is based upon the perfect harmony between the earth and the celestial bodies, whereas the geocentric one is apparent.

Swami Abhedananda has further raised some questions about the inferior planets, Venus and Mercury and the superior planets, Mars and Jupiter, because he says that when the inferior planet, Venus, is between the earth and the sun, then an observer at the centre of the sun would see it at the opposite part of the zodiac from that which it appears to us from the earth and that causes a great deal of the retrograde motion. Now the retrograde motions have been explained by the astronomers in course of study of the system of the planets. So before going into the problem of the retrograde motions of the planets, let us have some ideas about the planets, together with their names and classifications and with their systems of revolutions and configurations.

Originally planets were supposed to be only seven in the heavens and they were the sun, the moon, and the five bright planets. By 'planet' we mean a heavenly body which revolves round the sun. The planet Uranus was discovered in 1781 and Neptune was found in 1846. The discovery of Pluto was announced in 1930 and that of Ceres in 1801. The earth is one of the nine principal planets which revolves round the sun. The moon is one of the twenty-six satellites. Besides, there are hundreds and thousands of comets and meteors. These planets, satellites, comets, and meteors, together with the sun as their centre and source, form the celestial family or the solar system.

The planets are divided into two main classes, inferior and superior. Besides these two classes the planets are again known as the inner ones, the minor ones, and the outer ones. The inferior planets are nearer to the sun than we are, while the superior ones revolve outside the earth's orbit. The astronomers have called the four inner planets (including the earth) as the terrestrial planets and the five outer planets revolve outside the main zone of the asteroids. Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune were often known as the major planets, and afterwards, the tiny Pluto was added to this group.

All the planets revolve from the west to the east. The majority of the satellites revolve in this way. The orbits of the

planets and the satellites are nearly like circles. Astronomers maintain that they are the ellipses of small eccentricity. Mercury and Pluto have considerably flattened orbits. Further, it is noticed that the orbits of the majority of the planets and the satellites lie nearly in the same plane. Now the inferior planets like Mercury and Venus oscillate to the east and the west of the sun's place. The superior planets like Mars and Jupiter move continually westward relative to the sun's place (cf. Dr Baker. *An Introduction to Astronomy* pp 158-159). Now, "owing to the earth's swift movement in its orbit around the sun, the planets are shifted backward against the more distant background of the stars". And it has been seen that a superior planet, Mars, retrogrades about the time of its opposition, for the earth then overtakes the planet and leaves it behind. Similarly an inferior planet like Venus retrogrades near conjunction. So, generally it is found that a planet retrogrades or apparently moves westward among the stars when it is nearest the planet earth. Swami Abhedananda says that we ought to have knowledge and charts and signs (though he has already discussed them in the earlier part of the book), which will give us an idea how the different retrograde motions that are to be calculated in the geocentric system, happen. The Swami has also explained the system of the retrograde motions of the planets which are shifted backward against the more distant background of the stars, owing to the earth's swift movements in its orbit around the sun.

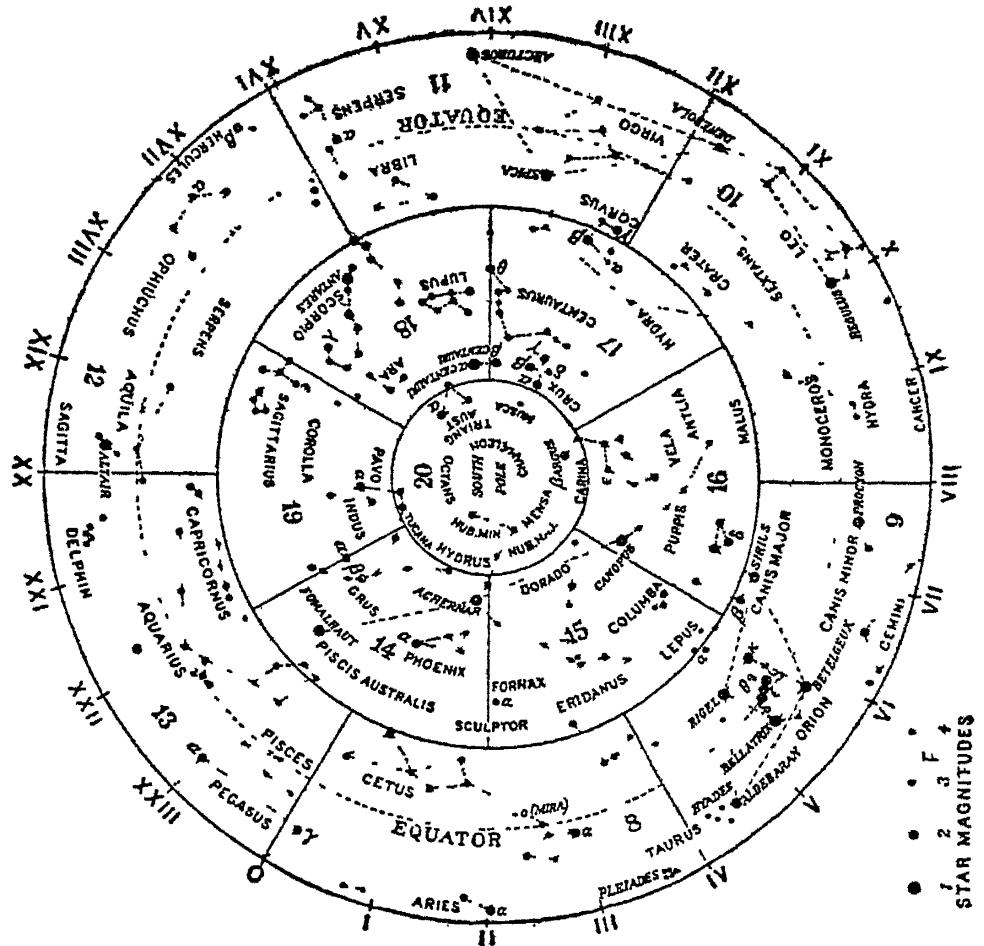
The Swami has further discussed the signs of the zodiac and has shown their influence upon the mind of the living beings of the universe. As for example, the whole zodiac is divided into four quarters. The first quarter, from Aries to Cancer is called the 'quarter of love'. The second quarter, from Cancer to Libra, is the 'quarter of wisdom'. Similarly there are the 'quarter of wealth' and the 'quarter of labour'. Now it is found that the four quarters of the zodiac are named after love, wisdom, wealth, and labour. Swami Abhedananda says that the zodiac has, therefore, an intimate relation with the minds of the human beings, and its psychology or science say that there lies a perfect harmony between the universal cosmic mind and the individual mind. (And so the Indian Yoga Psychology says that as the individual minds are parts and parcels of the

universal cosmic mind and as the universal cosmic mind is known as *Isvara* or the Divine *Prakriti* which is all-pervading, so an individual mind can communicate with other individual minds and can transfer its thought and power to other minds) Swami Abhedananda has elaborately discussed this secret in the fifth chapter of the book. He has stated that there is an universal man and his solar plexus is at Libra, his heart is at Leo, his lungs are at Gemini, and his neck is at Taurus, and he is standing on Pisces, and this universal man, or the *Virata Purusha*, can be compared to a sychometer. This *Virata Purusha* or the 'planetary man' is related with the solar system and has some particular sensitive vibrations which attract and affect our earth and its beings on account of their relative position. Regarding the signs of the planets it can be said that, according to astronomy, a man born in Aries is intellectual and active in mental pursuits. Besides, Aries is the fire-sign, Taurus is the earth sign, Gemini is the air sign, and Cancer is the water sign, and from this it is concluded that the elements like fire, water, air, earth are the representations of the planets. Again, in the zodiac, there are three crosses, male, female, and vital or male, vital and neutral, and they have influence over the minds and the physical bodies of the living beings. The Swami says that solar magnetic (heliocentric) science therefore teaches us that "zodiac, based upon the law of matter and upon the positive head of our solar system, is known as the gigantic magnet. * * Its magnetic currents are the strongest, when it is nearest the sun, at its perihelion. When the planet is nearest the sun, it is called *perihelion* and when it is farthest away, it is called *aphelion*"

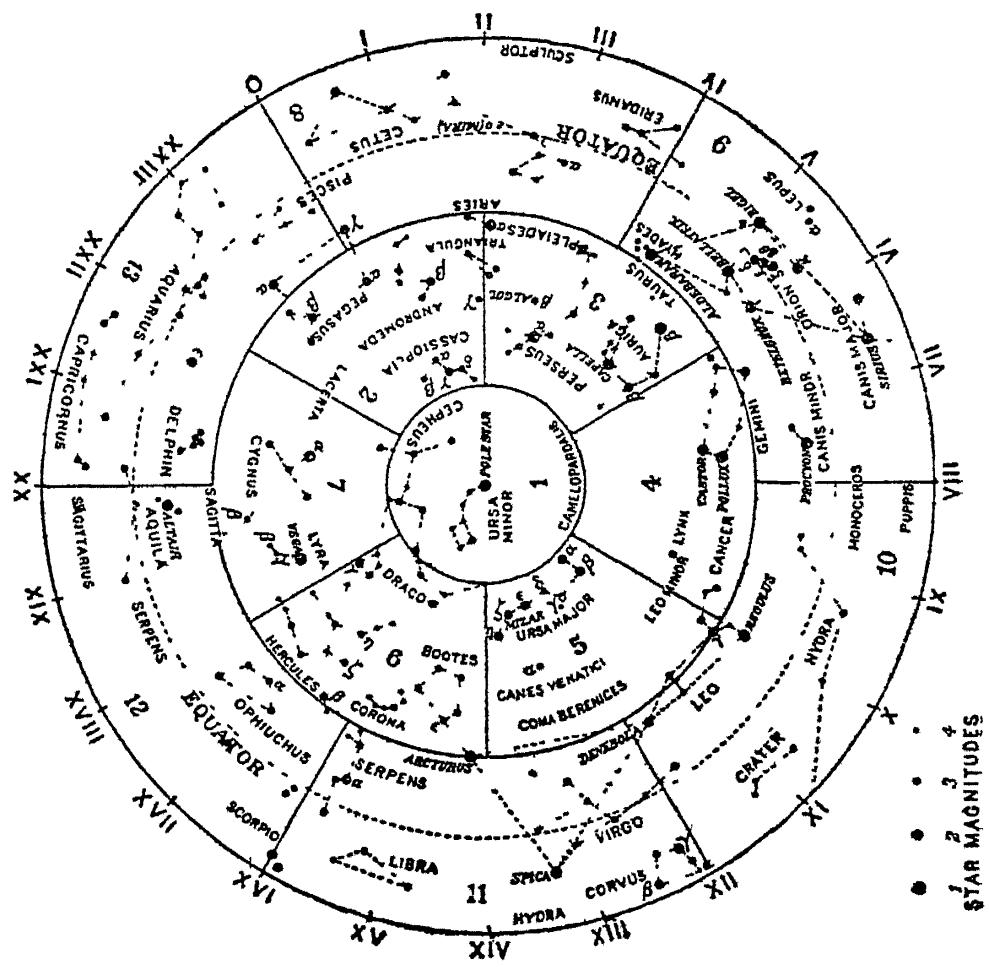
In conclusion, Swami Abhedananda says that the souls of all living beings are greater and mightier than the solar system. "The soul is a part of the omnipotent Divine Being, and it has absolute power to change all these conditions, no matter how the planets are against you. If you can send out your vibrations i.e. the soul vibrations which are no other than the spiritual forces, then that will overcome all these planetary influences. The planetary influences are phenomenal and are subject to changes, whereas the spiritual influences are divine and changeless, and, therefore, the spiritual influences are the means for removing obstructions, created by planetary and other influ-

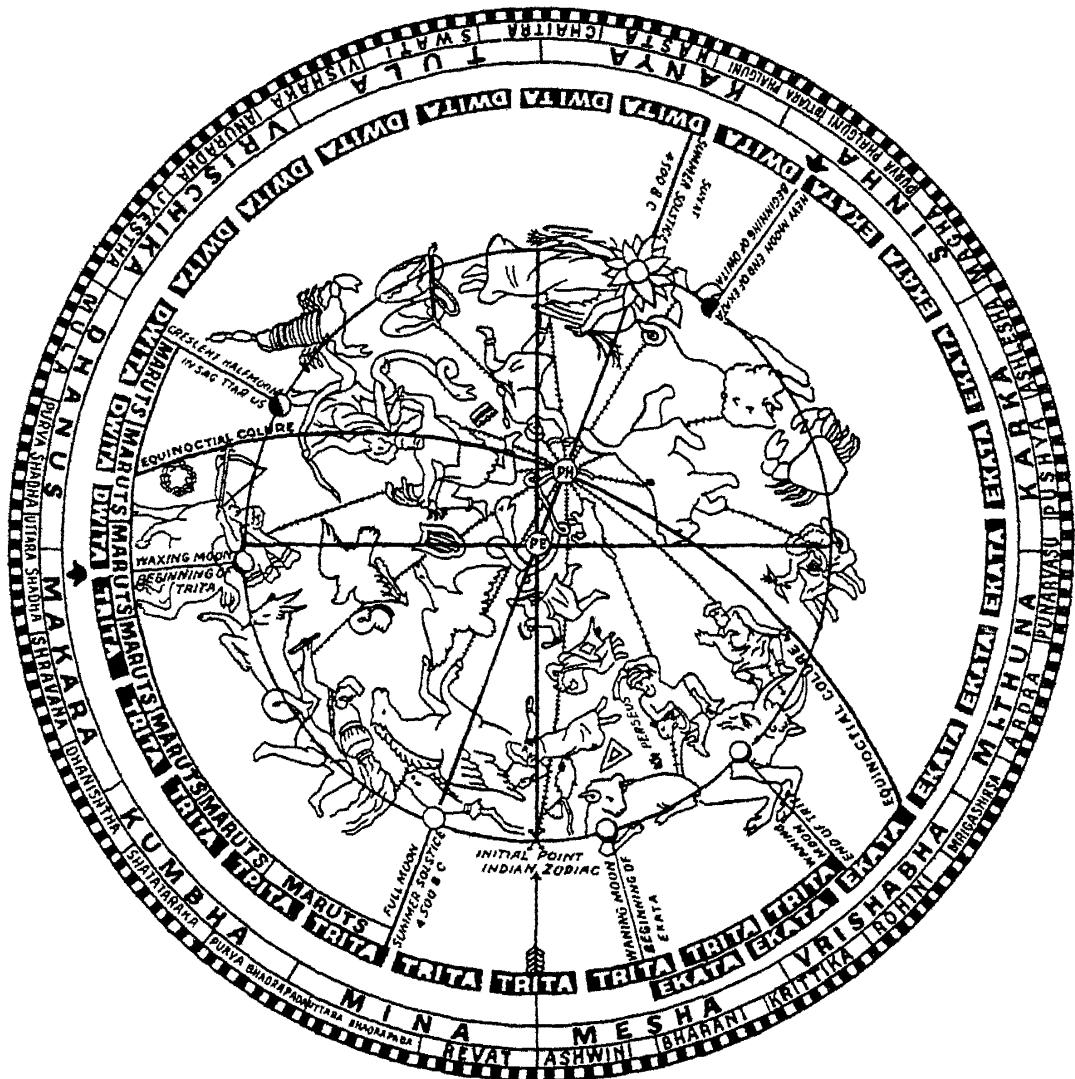
ences". In fact, a man is a creator of his own destiny ; he can do or undo everything by his will-power, and so the influences of the planets or of any other things cannot do any harm to him who cultivates spiritual power or struggles hard for his spiritual enlightenment.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA



CONSTELLATIONS OF THE STARS





Outer circle divided into 360 degrees

2nd circle The names and extent of the twenty-seven Indian "Nakshatras" or divisions of the Lunar Zodiac

3rd circle Names and extent of the twelve Indian "Rashis" or divisions of the Solar Zodiac

4th circle Proposed three-fold division of the Vedic Lunar Month at Season of Summer Solstice

Section of 5th circle. Proposed identification of "Maruts" with Moon's course through seven "Nakshatras" at Season of Summer Solstice

The Constellations here appear as drawn on the celestial globe; they have not been reversed as in the other illustrations, hence an apparent, though not real, contradiction ensues

DIVISIONS OF THE SOLAR AND LUNAR ZODIACS (CONSTELLATIONS)

CHAPTER I

THE CONSTELLATIONS OF THE ZODIAC

From prehistoric times, when the ancient forefathers of the Aryan tribes migrated from their common home in Central Asia they carried with them to different parts of the world certain knowledge of the law and science of the stars and the planets which was gained through close observation of the movement of the heavenly bodies. But there are some controversies as to whether the Aryan tribes came from outside of India and settled on the soil of India as the foreign nation. My predecessor Swami Vivekananda and many scholars did not believe that the Aryans came from outside India, as, he said, India was the original home of the Aryans, and they made India civilized gradually with their culture and wisdom. However, from the dawn of human history the stars have been arranged in groups of constellations for the purpose of more readily distinguishing them. Some of them were named such as, Ram, Bull, Crab etc from their supposed resemblance to the figures of those animals. The constellations of the solar zodiac with figures representing 12 signs have been in use in all historical periods of all ancient nations, having nearly the same characteristics among the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Persians, the Hindus, and the Chinese. From this fact it would be reasonable to suppose that the idea of the celestial sphere and of the solar zodiac was a common possession of all the migrating nomadic tribes of Asia. They watched their flocks at night and studied the constant motion of the sidereal sphere, and night after night they could observe with an unobstructed view, the same stars rising in the east and pursuing an even course through the sky and setting a little earlier each succeeding night. Thus having become familiar with the forms of the groups of the stars as they were constantly presented in their view, they could naturally imagine the nature of the celestial orbs and give them the aims and the objects which they were most familiar with. Thus originated the names and the signs of the constellations of the solar zodiac among the prehistoric nomads of Central Asia.

from whom have descended the civilized races of the modern world.

The names were: the Ram, the Bull, the Goat and Kids, the Virgin Reaper or Gleaner of Cora, the Archer, who in defence of the flock, must have had conflicts with the lion, the bearer of water to the cattle, the crab and fish of the lakes and rivers which they frequented, the poisonous scorpion and the balance showing the time when the days and nights were equal. Again to the nomadic tribes may be ascribed the discovery that when the sun in summer rose at a point of the horizon nearest to the north and furthest in amplitude from the east, its place in the ecliptic was the northern solstice, which then rose with the sun and that then it was a time of most solemn import—a day when progress and sacrifices should be offered to the Almighty. Such religious practices and equinoxes were prevalent among all the migrating tribes.

Then again the bull became a sacred animal in prehistoric times among migrating tribes and afterwards among the Egyptians and Hindus, because the equinox was retrograding through the constellation of Taurus between 2426 B.C. and 266 B.C. So also about the time when the other tribes were migrating from Central Asia, the bright star Cor Leonis must have been an interesting object to the primitive astronomers of that period, for this star was then at or near the summer solstice and a parallel of declination through it in the year 2305 B.C. might be properly termed as the 'Tropic of Leo'. The Persian priests of Mithra clothed in the skins of the lions at the mysteries called Leontices, were therefore called Lions. Again about 120 years before this time the solstice was at the point of dividing the two constellations, Leo and Virgo, which probably gave rise to the riddle of the Sphinx of the Egyptian image which had the head and breast of a Virgin and the body of a Lion, implying a doubt whether the Lion or the Virgin was most to be adored.

In Persian zodiac twins were represented by two kids. The Constellations of the Chinese zodiac were represented by:

- | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|
| 1. The Mouse, | 4. The Hare, |
| 2. The Ox or Cow, | 5. The Dragon, |
| 3. The Tiger, | 6. The Serpent, |

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| 7. The Horse, | 10. The Cock, |
| 8. The Sheep, | 11. The Dog, |
| 9. The Archer, | 12. The Boar. |

Although the names and figures of the Chinese zodiac are different, still the number of the whole is the same. In the astronomical tablets of the 1st and 2nd century B.C., the twelve constellations of the Babylonian zodiac are referred to. Their names are:

1. Aries	.	..	ku (sarikku),
2. Taurus			te (mennu),
3. Gemini	.	.	(masu),
4. Cancer	.	.	(pulukku),
5. Leo		.	(aru),
7. Libra			(seru),
6. Virgo	..	.	(zibantu),
8. Scorpion	.	.	(agrabu),
9. Arcitener	.	.	(pa),
10. Caper	...		(onzu),
11. Amphora (Aquarius)			(gu),
12. Pisces	..	.	(zib).

Prof Sayce in his thesis on *Astronomy and Astrology of the Babylonians* (pp. 189, 190) has mentioned the names of the constellations in cuneiform group and has identified the 'gu' with 'Gula' which is a mythological goddess to preside over Aquarius, and the goddess Babu (or Bahu) was personified with the *dark water* or chaos, which can be compared with the Perfect Holy One, the First Pure One of the Taoist Trinity and God the Father of Christianity. It can also be compared with the *karana-salila* of the *maha-pralaya* and that 'causal water' is no other than the primordial Energy of the Hindu epic mythology and also of the Hindu philosophy.

Now, according to the ancient astronomy, the solar zodiac is the imaginary route by which the sun travels around the earth, during a period of one year. Of course, now-a-days we say it is the earth that is travelling around the sun and not the sun travels around the earth.

It was the name given to the belt of the celestial sphere 8° across each side of the ecliptic and it was divided into 12 parts of 30° each called the signs or the houses of the sun and fanciful name was given to each, such as Aries, the Ram sign—the horn of the Ram. It was so called because it rose with the sun in the spring time, and the nomadic shepherds named it after their flocks, their most valued possession. Then came Taurus the Bull and Gemini the Twins. At the summer solstice the sun appears to stop. When the sun is in Leo, the brooks being dry the Lion leaves his lurking place and becomes a terror to all. Virgo comes next when the Virgins glean in the summer harvest.

At the autumnal equinox the days and nights are equally balanced and this is beautifully represented by Libra the scales. Then comes Scorpio which stings. Then Sagittarius, the Archer, tells of the hunting mouth. Then Capricornus the goat which delights in climbing high precipice denotes that at the winter solstice the sun begins to climb the sky on its return to the north. The Aquarius, water bearer, is a natural sign of the rainy season. The Pisces, the fishes is the mouth for fishing. Two fishes, tied with a string, are the signs and names of the zodiac. Each of those names refer to a constellation of stars in the heavens. The principal star in Aries is Arietis (Alpha of Aries) in the right horn. This lies in the path of the moon and is one of the stars by which terrestrial longitude is reckoned.

Aries was at first the first constellation of the zodiac as well as the first sign. But now it is the first sign but the second constellation because the signs have fallen back along the ecliptic about 30° by the precession of the equinoxes.

This change has taken place in thousands of years, because every year the earth goes back $50\frac{1}{4}$ seconds of space during its revolution. The earth comes back to the same position $30' 23''$ earlier every year. The principal stars of Taurus are Hyades, the brightest of these is Aldebaran, a fiery red star of the first magnitude, the Pleiades or the seven sisters, Alcyone, Gemini, the twin brothers, Castor and Pollux. Castor is resolved into 2 stars by telescopes. Cancer includes the stars that lie scattered irregularly between Gemini, Head of Hydra, Procyon and Leo.

The principal star in Virgo is Spica in the ear of Cora of the first magnitude. This is used for determining longitude.

in the sea. Libra is like a quadrilateral figure formed by its 4 principal stars. The principal star in Scorpio is Antares, a fiery star of the first magnitude It is the heart of the Scorpio The head has several stars and the tail winds around in the Milky Way in a graceful manner Antares, Aries or Mars is so called, because it rivals Mars in colour and brightness Sagittarius is represented as Centaur with his bow bent as if to let fly an arrow at Scorpio Capricornus has no conspicuous star The southern fish has one star of the first magnitude

The Greek and the Roman mythologies described many stories in connection with different constellations or the signs of the zodiac. For instance, Taurus is the animal whose form Jupiter assumed when he bore off Europa. Gemini, the twin brothers were transferred to heaven after death by Jupiter, and were thus immortalized by him The Hindu astronomers of ancient India divided the ecliptic or the solar zodiac into 28 parts to correspond with the 28 lunar mansions Although the solar zodiac was retained by one class, yet the lunar mansions were preferred by another class. The former were known as the children of the sun, and the latter the children of the moon. The lunar asterians were called the stars or *nakshatras*. These lunar mansions were afterwards taken by the Chinese, the Egyptians and the Arabs Each star or *nakshatra* was of 12 degrees of each sign But the later astronomers improved upon this ancient sub-division by reducing into 27 divisions of the ecliptic, each extending $13^{\circ} 20'$ or 800 minutes of arc on the ecliptic. This was a more convenient number for calculation. "By thus confining attention to the stellar spaces in the vicinity of the ecliptic, their system was rendered, in the main, independent of the use of astronomical instruments and dependent mostly on calculation for the accuracy of their observation" The brightest star of each of these lunar mansions was called the Yogatara, while the cluster was called the *nakshatras*:

1. Asvini	.	.. Arietis
2. Bharani	.	.. Musca
3. Krittika Alcyone
4. Rohini	.	. Aldebaran

5.	Mriga	Orionis
6.	Ardra			Tauri
7.	Punarvasu	..	.	Pollock
8.	Pushya		.	Cancri
9.	Aslesha	..		Hydra
10.	Magha	.		Leonis
11.	Purva-Phalguni			Regulus
12.	Uttara	Leonis
13.	Hasta		..	Gorvi
14.	Chitra	Spica
15.	Svati	.	.	Bootis
16.	Visakha	Librae
17.	Anuradha	.	..	Scorpionis
18.	Jyeshtha	Antares
19.	Mula	Scorpionis
20.	Purvashadha		..	Sagittari
21.	Uttarashadha		.	Sagittari
22.	Abhijit		...	Lyrae
23.	Sravana	Aquilee
24.	Dhanishtha	Delphini
25.	Satataraka	Acquirii
26.	Purva-Bhadrapada		.	Pegasi
27.	Uttara-Bhadrapada	.	.	Audramedi
28.	Revati	Piscium

Thus we see that the Hindu astronomers were acquainted with the constellations of the northern sky circumpolar constellations on equatorial constellations and southern constellations. They knew of the 5 planets and the ascending and descending notes on the ecliptic. We all know that the study of the astronomy was kept up by the ancients for purposes of divinization and the prevailing belief among the Chaldeans Hindus, Egyptians, Chinese was that the stars rule the destinies of people. With this belief they studied the movements of the stars and planets, thinking that they would discover the law which controls the human destinies. It became almost a part of their religions, and they called it science and laws of the stars.

The Chinese boast that their Emperor claims his descent from the sun, just as in India Rama, the great hero of the epic *Ramayana*, is described as belonging to the solar dynasty. The

Chinese have a record of a conjunction of four planets and the moon which occurred in the 25th century B.C. They also claim the first record of the eclipse of the sun. In the year 2150 B.C. one of the Chinese Emperors put to death two astronomers Ho and Hi for failing to announce a solar eclipse. In India as early as the vedic period which is between 5000 to 2000 B.C. the study of astronomy was considered so indispensable that this science of astronomy was regarded as one of the six principal limbs of the Vedas. Without knowing astronomy no one could study the Vedas or perform the vedic sacrifices. Like the Hindus the ancient Egyptians made a great progress in this science of astronomy. History tells us that when Alexander took Babylon (331 B.C.), he found a record of their observations reaching back 19 centuries. It is said that the Chaldeans divided the day into hours, invented the sun dial and discovered the *Saros*, a period of time, in which eclipses of the sun and the moon repeat themselves in the same order. The ancient Hindus of the vedic period were familiar with these. Thus we see that Asia was the home of ancient astronomy.

The ancient Greeks learned the astronomical truths from the Asiatics and the Egyptians and classified their knowledge and thus made a basis for a science. Thales (B.C. 640—548), who is called the father of astronomy, was one of them. Tiberius, the Emperor of Rome, studied astrology. Hippocrates, the father of medicine, who lived about 400 B.C. and borrowed his *materia medica* from the Hindus in India, also learned the truths of astrology as they were taught in India at that time. The medical practitioners in India in diagnosing any disease always observed the influence of the planets and the stars and the position of the earth and the moon in the signs of the zodiac at the time of the birth of the patient and also at the time of the patient's sickness.

In this age of scepticism and agnosticism, we may laugh at the claims of the science of true astrology, but it is certainly a study of the powerful fascination which has exerted over the great men throughout 7000 or 8000 years and a vast number of well-authenticated fulfilment of prophecies by astrologers which have been handed down through generations, will prove that there is some underlying truth at the bottom of its claims.

Allow me to quote here from Bacon's *Essay of Prophecies*: "When I was in France I heard from one Dr Pena, that the queen mother, who was given to curious arts, caused the king, her husband's nativity to be calculated, under a false name, and the astrologer gave a judgment that he should be killed in a duel, at which the queen laughed, thinking her husband to be above challenges and duels, but he was slain upon a course at tilt. the splinters of the lance of Montgomery piercing his neck.

Tycho Brahe predicted in 1577 by observing the course of a comet which was then visible that in the north, in Finland, there should be born a prince who should lay waste Germany and vanish in 1632. Gustavos Adolphus, king of Sweden, was born in Finland, overran Germany and, when he was killed in 1632 in the battle of Luctzen, his dead body was never found

CHAPTER II

THE SUN AND THE SOLAR FORCES

The solar magnetic science is that branch of science of astronomy which deals with the special dynamic centre of bodies within our solar system. These bodies influence the birth, growth and progress of everything that exists upon the face of the earth. Primarily it is based on the science of astronomy 'Astronomy', as we all know, comes from the two words, 'astron'—star, and 'nomos'—law. It literally means 'the law of the stars'. And it is a science, because through observation and experiment all the facts that have been gathered, have been recorded and classified and systematised, and, therefore, astronomy has become a science.

We all know that astronomy deals with the sun, moon, stars, comets, and all the planets with our earth as well, because earth is one of the planets in the solar system. The study of astronomy has been one of the oldest studies. This is the oldest science that has been handed down to us from the time when the first appearance of man was on this earth. Centuries before the Christian era, when the Chaldean shepherds were following their flocks at night under a clear and brilliant sky, they discovered the movements of the heavenly bodies and recorded them. Their priests were astronomers, and their temples were the observatories.

The Chinese boast that their Emperor claims his descent from the sun just as we find in the great Hindu epic, the *Ramayana*, the hero of this epic, Rama, who claimed his descent from the sun. Rama belonged to the solar dynasty. And there are many Kshatriyas, or the warrior castes in India today, who belong to this solar dynasty. They call themselves as the descendants of the sun. The Chinese claim that they got the record of the first conjunction of the four planets and the moon which occurred about the twenty-fifth century before the birth of Christ. And you know that one of the ancient Chinese Emperors put to death two astronomers, Ho and He, because they failed to announce the eclipse of the sun. That was in the year 2150.

b.c The Chinese claim that they have the first record of the solar eclipse.

As with the Chinese, so with other nations of Asia. The Egyptians developed the study of astronomy to a great extent, their temples were also the observatories, and their priests were astronomers

Among the Hindus we find that as early as the vedic period, which lasted from 5000 to 2000 b.c., the study of astronomy was regarded as indispensable; and no one could study the Vedas and perform the vedic rituals and sacrifices without being an astronomer, because they had to keep the exact time and calculate exactly. So the study of astronomy was so indispensable at that time that it has been called one of the six principal limbs (*angas*) of the Vedas.

When we find that Alexander the Great took Babylon in the year 331 b.c. he found that these Chaldeans had the records of their observations of the heavenly bodies which we know as far back as nineteen century. These Chaldeans divided the day into hours. They invented the sun-dial and discovered the method of dividing the hours. You know that is the period in which the eclipse of the sun and moon repeat themselves in the same order. These were also known in India to the Hindus. Or it can be said that the Asiatics were the first teachers in astronomy, and then the Egyptians were in direct touch with the Asiatics, the Chaldeans and the Hindus. They all interchanged their ideas and observations; and afterwards these were studied by the Greek philosophers Thales, who is called the father of astronomy, was one of the seven sages of Greece. He lived between 640 and 548 b.c. He taught that the earth was round and the moon received its light from the sun. He predicted the solar eclipse, and that solar eclipse was a total eclipse, and it terminated the war that existed at that time between the Medos and the Lydians. When they were engaged in a fierce battle, there came a total eclipse of the sun, and the whole space was made so dark that they were frightened, and they left their arms and hastened to make peace. They thought that it was a terrible thing that was going to happen to both the parties and so they ended the war.

After Thales, Pythagoras was a great astronomer in Greece. Pythagoras travelled all through Asia, especially through Persia

and India, and also through Egypt He lived in the sixth century B.C. i.e. 540 to 500 B.C. During that time he came in contact with the Chaldeans, the Hindus and the Egyptians, and learned their methods of observation. Then when he came back, he opened his celebrated school at Crotona in Italy, and there he used to teach the discoveries which he considered as most scientific at that time. Pythagoras was a kind of dreamer, but he taught some of the great truths which are accepted by the astronomers today. For instance, he found that the sun was the centre of the solar system and the earth is rotating upon its axis and revolves around the sun annually; and other planets also revolve around the sun, and Venus is the morning and evening star. He also placed the planets at such a distance corresponding to the scale of music, and it was he who said that all these planets in their annual revolution around the sun made a music, and that was the music of the spheres; but this celestial concert is heard only by the gods. The human ears are too gross to hear that divine melody. And it was Pythagoras who gave us all these truths. After Pythagoras there was Hipparchus, who was a great astronomer. He lived in the second century B.C. He is regarded as the Newton of Greece. He calculated the length of the year so exactly that it came almost within six minutes of the present calculation. He also discovered the precession of equinox, and made a calendar of the stars. The stars which were named by him at that time, numbered a little over one thousand.

There was a Newton of India. He lived in the first century before Christ. His name is Arya-Bhatta. He also declared that the sun was the centre of the solar system, and the earth and other planets moved around the sun, and that the earth rotates around its own axis once in twenty-four hours. He discovered all that, and it was he who first gave the idea of gravitation. He called it *madhyakarshana*, that is, the attraction towards the centre. He was a great mathematician, and his name was mentioned in the *Jewish Encyclopædia*. You will find that he is recognized as one of the great astronomers of ancient India. And, therefore, it is proved that the astronomical study in India is very old.

After that came Ptolemy. He lived about 120 A.D. He was a Greek, and he wrote a book called the *Almagest*. In that

book, he described the system, known as the Ptolemaic system, which has been used as a text-book for fourteen centuries in Europe, and every astronomer followed it until the time of Copernicus who lived in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and it was Copernicus who revived the old theory of Pythagoras, that is, the sun is the centre of the solar system and the earth and other planets are revolving around the sun. Astronomer Copernicus was such a diligent, honest and sincere seeker of truth and the law that governed the heavenly bodies, that he spent forty years in an old dilapidated farm-house. Through the roof of that old house he used to observe day and night all the movements of the planets and the heavenly bodies. Then he discovered all these truths, which are considered as truth today.

After Copernicus came Galileo and Tycho Brahe and Kepler. All of them came one after another. Then Sir Isaac Newton appeared. They all contributed their shares to the growth of this wonderful science of astronomy. Kepler was a disciple of Tycho Brahe, the great Danish astronomer. Galileo was the first who invented the telescope. He put two glasses on a lead pipe, and then observed what was going on in the the heavenly bodies. He turned his telescope for the first time on January 7, 1610, towards Jupiter, and the result was that he discovered many unknown stars. I will speak some other time about his discovery. He was the one who also saw the rings of Saturn in different positions.

Today we know through modern astronomy that the sun is about 93,000,000 miles away from us. Ordinarily we cannot comprehend this distance of 93,000,000 miles. Have you any idea what distance that will be? I will give you an illustration. Perhaps a few illustrations will make this familiar to you. If a child were born with an arm long enough to touch the sun, and if he stretched his arm towards the sun and put it in the sun, he would grow old, and would die before that sensation would traverse this distance from his hand to his brain, before he would have any feeling of burning. That will give you a little idea of how great is that distance.

Then again, if there were air which would carry a sound from the sun to the earth, and if a noise loud enough be made in the sun, that noise would travel through this space and would

reach our ears in about fourteen years. It will take about fourteen years for that sound to come to us to the earth

If a railroad were built and the express train travelled at the rate of thirty miles per hour, day and night, do you know how long it will take? It will take 352 years to reach the sun from the earth. Ten generations will be born and will be dead, and the eleventh generation will reach the destination, and they would forget the beginning of this wonderful journey, and they will read about it just as we read today the history of Queen Elizabeth or of Shakespeare. And that will give you a little idea of how vast this distance is.

The light of the sun, when we think of its brightness, we can compare this brightness of the light of the sun with the candle power. Now if we burn six thousand wax candles at a distance of one foot from the eye, that will give you an idea of the brightness of the full moon. Now compare the light of the sun with the moonlight. It would require six million full moons to produce a day as brilliant as one of cloudless sunshine.

Think of the comparison between the moonlight and the sunlight. Think of the heat that we receive from the sun. Every year we receive the heat sufficiently to melt a layer of ice nearly two hundred feet thick, extending over the whole surface of the earth. Yet the sunbeam is about one forty-six thousandth as intense here as it is on the surface of the sun. That is, we get only one forty-six thousandth of the real intensity of heat that is on the surface of the sun. Moreover all these light and heat are constantly radiated from the sun in the infinite space. And how much does our earth get from that? Our earth gets only two hundred and twenty millionth part of that heat and light, that is radiated in space. Think of one two hundred and twenty millionth part we get.

Now, if we can think that the heat of the sun could be produced on this earth by burning coal, what would be the comparison? It would require a layer more than twenty feet in thickness all over the earth and the flame to be fed every hour. That would be the kind of heat which you can imagine, the intensity of heat, twenty feet of thick coal, covering every small corner of the earth and burning, and every hour you are feeding the furnace of that fire, the central fire. Now, if we imagine that the sun were a solid body of coal, how long will

it burn at this rate? It would take about fifty centuries to burn that mass of coal, if it were a solid body of coal

Sir John Herschel said if a solid cylinder of ice fortyfive miles in diameter and two hundred thousand miles in length were plunged into the sun with the end first, can you imagine how long it will take to melt? It will take one second. If you take fortyfive miles diameter and 200,000 miles long a cylinder of ice and plunge it into the sun, then within one second it is gone. Now, when we think of the solar energy that we receive on this earth, also think of that energy and try to interpret in terms of horse-power, and then we can get an idea from this illustration. If the whole surface of the earth were covered with horses standing as closely as possible and exerting themselves all their strength continuously, still the energy will be less than what the earth gets from the sun.

Now think of the size of the sun. The diameter of the sun is 8,65,400 miles. Pythagoras imagined only 75 miles, and the distance of the sun from the earth he imagined that it was only 44,000 miles. That was his guess. We shall be able to understand the vast diameter of the sun by comparison. You know the highest mountain range on this earth is the Himalayas, and its highest peak is 29,200 feet, nearly five miles, and to get the same proportion in the sun, if you can imagine a mountain, do you know how high that mountain must be in order to produce the same proportion? It would be six hundred times high. That will give you an idea of the size, the vastness of the sun.

Suppose the sun were hollow and the earth were placed in the centre with our moon revolving in her orbit around the earth, then there would be a spare space of 200,000 miles left all around in that shell, and the moon will be revolving around the earth, and the earth is in the centre of the sun. Now, when we think of the volume of the sun, it is 1,300,000 times that of the earth. It would require 1,300,000 earths to make up the size of the sun. So, in comparison with the sun, our earth is too small. It would require millions and millions of the size of the earth.

Can you imagine the weight of the sun? If we express it in figures, we will have to write 198 and put twentyfive zeros after it. That will be of twentyeight figures. A man weighing

here at the equator, say 150 pounds, would weigh about two tons on the sun's equator, and the attraction of gravity is so strong that instantly he will be crushed. That will give you an idea of the sun's force of attraction. What a tremendous force of attraction there is on the sun's surface. A human being would be crushed to death and could not live and would be dragged and made flat on the surface. Weight is nothing but that which measures the force of attraction.

We know that a stone falls on the earth at the equator 16 feet at the first second, but at the sun's equator it will fall 444 feet in the first second. Now, we will consider the solar spots. These are the most important things, and they reveal a great deal of truth about the sun. The sun is so far away from us and appears to be so small that human mind gets staggered at the very thought of its dimensions, its powers, its grandeur, and its relation not only to our earth, but also to the whole solar system. But human ingenuity has been so great and the mathematical figures have been computed so correctly that human mind can reach the sun, and his thought discovered everything that is going on there. The mind is greater than the solar system. When we think of our bodies, as Victor Cousin said once, our bodies seem infinitesimally small like a grain of sand on the seashore; but when we think of our mind, it is greater than the solar system. It can reach the pole star in an instant and scrutinize every minute detail, even measure its weight, its length and breadth. Such is the human mind. So the solar spots will reveal to us many of the forces that are working upon the surface of the sun. These solar spots were noticed as early as 807 A.D. They have motion. They change from day to day, and take fourteen days to pass across the disk from the east to the west. One spot that you see at the eastern end of the sun, will go to the western end after fourteen days. It will take fourteen days to cross that distance. In another fourteen days it will re-appear on the eastern side.

Now that gives a clue for finding out the size of the sun and also its rotation upon its axis. This proves the sun's rotation upon its axis, which takes twenty-five and a quarter days at the sun's equator, but it is curious that a spot will take a longer time to complete a rotation half way to either pole,

even if it is not directly at the equator, that is, half way towards the north pole, it will take two or three days longer to come round.

These observations also have proved that the sun's axis is inclined to the ecliptic about seven degrees. Various theories have been advanced by the astronomers to explain the sun-spots. Some say that immense cyclones pass over the surface of the sun, causing these spots, which are like the whirls in the atmosphere, resembling the shadows of huge craters of gigantic volcanoes from two to six thousand miles deep. Now these hollows, crater-like vortices, or you may call them whirls or eddies of the atmosphere of the sun, increase and decrease at a regular interval of eleven years. They come periodically, and, at one time they would increase, and then they would disappear, and again come back. They begin in solar latitudes about thirty degrees on both sides of the equator, gradually reach their maximum in middle latitudes and die out in low latitudes. This regular variation is called the law of zones. These spot periods are probably caused by the action of forces originating in the sun itself, and are closely connected with similar variations in the aurora boreals and magnetic earth currents, which interfere with the operation of the telegraph.

Now this gives rise to the theory that the sun is a gigantic magnet. The magnetic currents start out from the centre of the sun and polarise our earth and on different planets. The solar magnetic science teaches that these sun-spots increase at the approach of Mercury and Venus, on account of their nearness to the sun, and of Jupiter on account of its immense size. Now you see when Mercury or Venus or Jupiter would come in a straight line with the sun, they would produce a tremendous disturbance, or a magnetic disturbance and that magnetic disturbance will cause a great many changes, not only on the surface of the sun, but also on the surface of other planets. We will feel the change, and our atmosphere will also change. The weather conditions will also change. The electrical periods apparatus will be sensitive with those changes. These spots invariably increase when any two large planets, like Venus and Jupiter, come in line with the sun. It has been observed carefully. The magnetic currents starting from the sun strike the surface of these planets and those other

currents are radiated from these planets, striking the sun. This counter action of electric currents gives the solar spots, which are the apparent results of magnetic disturbances on the atmosphere of the sun. They affect also the atmosphere of our earth. The weather changes take place, and the temperature falls, as these spots are much cooler in temperature than the surrounding surface. Now wherever we find a sun-spot, if you can gauge than the surrounding surface where there is no spot at all, and do you wonder that these spots will produce changes in the atmospheric currents and in the temperature of our earth and of the other planets as well? The force is so great and the magnetic currents that are coming from the sun are so powerful that they would produce changes not only in temperature but also in everything that exists on the surface of the earth. Sir John Herschel advanced the theory that the sun-spots influence our vegetation and harvest. The solar magnetic science takes up that particular phase and says that it not only influences the vegetables and plants but also the animal kingdom. The whole human beings are affected more or less by these magnetic currents which are coming from the sun. Our organic functions and everything that we possess, are affected and influenced by the magnetic currents proceeding from this gigantic centre of our solar system.

When we think of the physical constitution of the sun, the present theory that has been accepted by the astronomers of today, is resting upon the results of the spectrum analysis. It tells us that the sun is a vast fiery and gaseous body, containing many substances like iron, copper, and other minerals, volatilized by immense heat. They are in a molten state. Have you seen iron in a molten state? I went to the Carnegie Steel-mill in Pittsburgh, and there we watched the furnace where the iron in a molten state was 4,000 degrees above zero. And I saw waves in that molten surface. Now imagine the heat of these metals that exists in the sun's atmosphere in that state just like water. They go down and come up again. When they get cooled off, they would go down towards the bottom, and then the other hot currents of this molten metallic substance come up again. The outer portion of the sun radiates heat and light, and becoming cooler sinks. The hotter matter in the interior then rises to take its place. The cooler descending currents

are darkened and the hotter ascending currents are lighter. These two, up rushing and down rushing currents, produce spots That is another cause of the sun-spots ,

Some of the astronomers say that the sun itself is not white ; it is blue Others say it is dark. The sun's body is not hot , it is only the atmosphere around in a tremendously high temperature The heat is caused by condensation, whereby the size of the sun is constantly decreasing, and its potential energy is converted into kinetic The heat is coming out, and the sun is shrinking. There is potentiality of heat, as you find it in coal lying unmanifested in the coal, and when you handle a piece of coal, there you also get the potential heat. It is not manifested, but when you burn it, then that fire lets the potentiality loose, and it gets out in the form of a kinetic energy which is heat, and when that heat is taken out the coal is dead There is nothing left of the coal. The same thing happens in the sun, according to this theory. This heat could be kept up by an annual contraction of three hundred feet in its diameter , and if every year the sun shrinks three hundred feet in its diameter, then this heat will be kept up for some time, perhaps five millions of years.

The dynamic theory accounts for the heat and the sun-spots by assuming that a vast number of meteors run upon the surface of this luminary, and they feed the central fire , but that theory is not accepted as a correct theory, because it is considered that there are not many meteors so close to the sun. It is not probable for meteors to be so near the sun without being already burned up If the planet Mercury strikes the sun, it will generate sufficient heat to compensate the radiation for seven years If mercury falls into the furnace of the sun, that contraction will produce that heat which would compensate the radiation of the sun for seven years. In time, the sun will cease to shine, as our earth has ceased to shine Newcomb, the great astronomer, says that the sun will shrink to half its size at the present rate in five millions of years, and it cannot sustain life on earth for more than ten million years yet to come

There is another theory which has been started lately, the radio-activity theory of electrons. This has not been sanctioned and accepted by all, but this theory makes the sun the source of a gigantic electrical dynamo Now it is radiated by these

electrons, and these electrons are coming out of the sun, and when they strike the earth, heat is generated¹. There is no heat in the inter-stellar space. The diameter of the atmospheric space from our earth is about fifty miles. If you go about fifty miles you come out of the limit of our atmosphere and air, and then if you go beyond that, you find the temperature is about four hundred degrees below zero. And that would produce liquid air. It is very cold. So when you think of going to heaven and if the heaven be in the inter-stellar space, you might be worse than frozen. Now think of going and living in a space overhead under the blue dome where the temperature is four hundred degrees below zero. What will you do there? You cannot imagine those things. Science helps us to understand the real situation. So this other theory may be the correct one. Of course, all these theories are not the truths. The easiest or simplest explanation that can be given under the present circumstances, as far as human minds are known, is called theory. If this theory of electrons be true, and if the sun be like a gigantic radio-like substance, or like the magnet with its tremendous magnetism, or that force, then it is shooting out the minute particles of matter which are known as the electrons. The electrons are those corpuscles or infinitesimally small particles of matter that make up the atoms, and these electrons contain all the energy; and if these electrons are coming and attracting our earth, imagine the magnetic current that we are receiving constantly. What is it? This magnetic current is the source of life. Everything that is living, contains that magnetic current. That magnetic current is the life-force. So a man who possesses magnetism, must require tremendous

¹ Young's *General Astronomy for Colleges and Scientific Schools*, p 202 "It has generally been inferred hitherto that the lower heat radiation of a sun spot indicates a lower temperature than that of the surrounding photosphere, but this does not necessarily follow. Two masses in contact and at the same temperature, but of different constitution, may differ widely both in luminosity and in their radiating power for the invisible rays, for instance, the mantle and the gas flame of a Welsbach-burner. At present it is perhaps uncertain whether the spots are cooler or warmer than the photospheric mantle" (August, 1904).

I wish you could have mentioned incidentally Kepler's harmonic law and I trust you will do so when you write your first book on Solar Magnetic Science. I recall vividly the day, thirty years ago, when I first learned of it. I was awe struck when for the first time I realized that there was an order and a scientific mind in the universe

vitality. It is the life-force that produces that magnetism. We know the magnetic pole of the earth, and you have heard of it. And there is truth about it, because as soon as you find a compass, the needle turns towards the North Pole all the time, and it attracts. That will show that this earth is like a gigantic magnet itself, as the sun is. All these planets are like so many gigantic magnets, and nothing is dead. Wherever there is magnetism, there is vitality or vital energy at the bottom. So the sun has been the source of our life on earth. It is the giver of everything, and we have not received anything from any other source. Whatever the earth possesses, has come from the sun. No wonder that the sun has been the object of worship and veneration from ancient times. It has been regarded even as the saviour.

Adonis, Osiris, Attis, etc., were the different names of the sun. In fact, all religious names can be traced back to the solar myths, and the solar forces were regarded as the powers of the Almighty. These solar forces and magnetic currents that are constantly radiating from the sun, are causing all changes. Even our mental, organic and functional changes are caused by these magnetic currents that are constantly coming from that wonderful source. When you think of the great religious festivals that you observe every year like the Christmas and so on, consciously or unconsciously you are commemorating the sun's progress around the earth, or the earth's progress around the sun. The sun has been the source of these great religious myths and ideas from the very ancient times. In the Vedas, we find that the sun has been described as the giver and sustainer of life, health and prosperity we possess. The vedic people used to pray to the sun. Every priest used to pray to the sun with some *mantrams*. The famous *mantram* which the priests would repeat, was the *Gayatri* which would bring salvation and freedom to the souls. The priests or the Brahmins used to recite "O Sabita (sun), Thou art the source of all light, the leader of our body and mind, the guide in the path of spiritual life; to Thee we bow down and salute". Then there is another passage in the Vedas which is a prayer also. The sun-worshippers even now repeat: "Oh the self-effulgent sun, open the door of Thy disk, and uncover Thyself. Let me see Thy spirit. Thy spirit is divine. Thou art the Lord of the universe". That

feeling came to the ancient vedic poets. They thought that the spirit behind the sun is the spirit of the universe. Therefore the sun may be considered the soul of the solar system. As in our body there is the soul, so outwardly the sun contains the soul of all the planets of the solar system. It is the world-soul that governs and controls the planetary system. So when we look at the spiritual side of the sun, we think that not only the magnetic currents are coming from the sun, but the spiritual powers are also emanating from that gigantic world-spirit or the soul of the sun and are influencing our individual souls. So we all are related to the sun i.e. with the soul. If you think of your soul as a part of the universal soul which is radiating through this luminous body, then you will come to a communion with that which has been the ideal of the sun-worshippers of all countries of the ancient times.

The Zoroastrians were the sun-worshippers, and still the followers of Zoroaster are living today. If you go to Bombay there you will see that the Parsees are kneeling down before the rising and setting sun, uttering their prayers and praying to the sun as you would pray to the Lord of the universe. They try to see the spiritual light behind the physical light. When you once realize that spiritual light, you will feel that the light within you is a part of the same spiritual light, and that light will enlighten not only our own minds, but also will reveal to us the secrets of nature. It will explain all the mysteries and the finer forces that are working in this universe. It also helps us to understand the laws that are governing the universe and the solar system.

So the solar magnetic science is the most wonderful science. It is the future science. It takes in all the planets and the stars and the constellations and everything that we see over our head that exists in the universe. It is the most important science, but its origin has not been traced correctly, because it has been in the minds of all these great teachers of ancient times who understood the process of evolution and realized that from one common source everything had come. After studying the external phenomena, when they tried to go to the bottom of all phenomena, there they discovered the law, and that law was explained again and again, but it has been forgotten for a long time. Now it has been revived again, but has not been revived

entirely. It is just the beginning, and this science will revolutionise all the materialistic sciences. When you realize that these magnetic forces are influencing the plants, the vegetable and animal kingdom, and your whole life depends upon it, then you will be benefited. Then you will come to know that it is not a science for fortune telling, but is a science. You can study it just as you would study astronomy. It is nothing but an applied astronomy on a scientific basis, and this includes not only all the demonstrable truths that are to be found in astrology, but also the truths of phenology, of physiognomy and of character reading ; and all the occult and hidden forces that exist in nature, are to be included in this science. So its study will take a lifetime. Perhaps a lifetime will not be long enough to go to the limits of knowledge in the minute details of the phenomenal world , but for our purpose, if we get a glimpse of the truths of nature through this science, it will be a help, not only in our daily life, but also in our business, when studying the causes of our diseases and imperfections that we see around us, and we shall be able to trace the cause far deeper to their sources than we do today, because the whole universe is one. When you are moving any limb, you are making a motion which is leaving an impression in the ether and which will last through eternity. Just as when you throw a stone into water, the ripples become larger and larger, and if there were no limit around the water, it would grow larger and larger and continue to grow forever. The same thing is happening here. You are influencing me ; I am influencing you ; and we are all influenced by other planets, by all the stars, and especially by the sun, which is the gigantic magnet and which is the source of life and strength of the solar system and consequently of us also. So by studying this science we shall be able to diagnose the causes of our diseases and to live a better life and find the remedy by regulating our diet, by following the laws which govern our life on this plane , and eventually we shall be able to realize the end of our soul and the cause as to why do individual souls come back on this plane. Some say that the souls come back to this world for enjoying the fruit of *karma* that he did in his past life, and, therefore, it is possible for the law of *karma*. Again there is not only a cause on the spiritual side by the law *karma*, but also a physical law that is to be discovered

by this science ; and there would be a perfect harmony between the physical planes and the mental and spiritual planes, and that is what we need today. It is the perfect harmony that we must not neglect anything. If the whole universe is one and if God is the centre of the universe like the soul, then we form just like small cells in the body of that universal Being ; and that body is this phenomenal universe. So we are all related to each other, and that will lead us to the belief that the universe is one stupendous whole and we are but parts, and, in reality, we live and move and have our being in God.

CHAPTER III

THE PLANETS AND THE PLANETARY INFLUENCE

Now we shall study the different planets and their influences on our earthly life. These planets which make up the solar system, are both inside and outside, but I mean, if the sun be in the centre of the solar system, then our earth is the third planet from the centre. There are two planets between the earth and the sun, and the rest are outside the earth. The same law which produced the earth, has also formed the other planets which revolve around the gigantic magnet, the sun, which may be called the father of the solar system. The sun is in the centre of the solar system, and all the other planets, including our earth, are like the children of this father, belonging to the same family as it were.

There are eight planets altogether in our solar system, and hundreds of planetoids or smaller planets also form a ring and revolve around the sun from west to east. They all revolve around the sun in the opposite direction in which way the hands of the clock move. These eight planets are divided into two groups; one is called the inferior group like Mercury, Venus, etc., whose orbits are within that of the earth, and the other is called the superior group, whose orbits are beyond that of the earth—viz Mars with the small planets, and Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Mercury is next to the sun, in the first of the inferior group, Venus is next; then the earth, then Mars, then Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Between Mercury and the sun may exist one or more planets, but they are unknown to us. Various observers are diligently engaged in watching to discover intra-Mercurial planet and some have already given its name Vulcan. But it remains to be discovered. If it does exist, it is too near the sun. The dazzling light of the sun makes it invisible.

As far as we know today we may say that Mercury is the last one that had been thrown out by the sun. The first one thrown out was Neptune. That has gone far away. Next in rotation came Uranus, Saturn, Jupiter, Mars, earth, Venus, and

lastly, Mercury. Mercury is the youngest and Neptune is the oldest of the solar system. Mercury travels around the sun at a mean distance of 36,000,000 miles and our earth at 93,000,000 miles. Its path around the sun is more eccentric than that of any other planet. Its eccentricity, that is, the distance of its centre from the focus of the ellipse. Its orbit is not a circle, but elliptic and it is very eccentric. At its perihelion, that is, when Mercury is nearest to the sun, its distance from the sun is reduced to 28,500,000 miles ; and at its aphelion it increases to 43,300,000 miles. Consequently its orbit is more elongated than that of other planets. 36,000,000 is the mean distance, between 28,000,000 and 43,000,000 ; that is the average.

Its motion has a velocity of 30 miles a second. Any steamer moving at this rate would cross the Atlantic Ocean in two minutes. Mercury takes 88 days, i.e. nearly three months, to complete a revolution around the sun. Therefore the Mercurial year is of 88 days of our earth. So one year of the inhabitants of Mercury would be like 88 days on this earth. Formerly it was believed that Mercury rotates on its axis like the earth ; but now it is discovered that it turns on its axis only once during the complete revolution around the sun. It does not rotate around its axis like the earth, so it has no day and night as we have here. Therefore, on one-half of the hemisphere it is day, and that day is perpetual, and on the other half it is perpetual night. One-half is exposed towards the sun, and the other is in perpetual darkness, almost the same as it is with our moon. Its distance from the earth is from 48,500,000 miles to 137,500,000 miles ; that is, its distance would be added to the aphelion distance of the earth and the perihelion distance of the earth from the sun. Its diameter is 3,000 miles, and it is 1/20 of the size of the earth in volume or, in other words, twenty globes like Mercury will make up the size of the earth. Our earth is twenty times larger than Mercury. Its axis is almost perpendicular to the plane of its orbit. The axis of the moon has five degrees inclination. At perihelion it receives ten times more heat than we receive on this earth, and at aphelion four and a half times as much as we get from the sun. So you see it is pretty hot. No human being could live there, because it is ten times hotter than our earth at perihelion, and at aphelion it is four and a half times hotter. The average heat is so great that water

will be turned instantly into steam on Mercury, and that even zinc will be melted by that heat instantly.

Murcury is spherical in shape. Its ends are not flattened like those of the earth, but it is opaque, as all planets are opaque. It shines by the reflected rays of the sun, like our moon satellite. The globe of Mercury has no smooth surface, but has enormous irregularities. There are mountains. The highest peak of cordelers of Mercury must rise 63,000 ft. In old mythology, Mercury was described as the fleetest of the gods. His sign is a circle with a crescent on the top. The inhabitants of Mercury will mature in 10 years and old in 20 of our years. A man of 24 will be 100 years old in Mercury.

Mercury has phases like those of our moon. It sometimes appears as the morning star. In ancient times, the morning star or Mercury was called Apollo or the god of the day, and when Mercury is seen in the evening, it is called Mercury, the god of thieves, because Mercury's motion is oscillating like a pendulam from one side of the sun to the other. Then it flies off and comes back, and flies again. At first the people believed that Mercury which is seen in the morning, is another star, different from the Mercury that is seen in the evening, because it oscillates so much, and they did not have powerful telescopes and other instruments to calculate whether it was the same planet or not.¹

¹ According to modern investigation, Mercury is the nearest planet to the sun and it travels along a comparatively eccentric orbit. The mean distance of Mercury is 36,000,000 miles. Its perihelion distance is only 28,750,000 miles, whilst its aphelion distance is 43,750,000 miles. "Consequently its velocity varies considerably at various points round the orbit, of which it makes one complete circuit in 87 97 days. Mercury's velocity is 35 5 miles per second at perihelion and 24 375 miles per second at aphelion". Mercury actually passes between the earth and the sun, where it becomes lost in the glare of the latter, and this is called inferior conjunction. "Mercury will emerge on the other side of the sun into the morning sky, finally reaching greatest western elongation. Between these two extremes (eastern and western elongation) there is an interval of 44 days on the average . ". Mercury can be seen as a black dot passing across the face of the sun. Transits of Mercury occur at intervals of 13, 7, 10 and 3 years and the earth arrives at the points where the line of the nodes of Mercury's orbit cuts the ecliptic on May 7 and November 9.

Because of the way in which Mercury moves round the sun, only a little more than half of its globe is visible from the earth. Generally speaking, Mercury has a quite pronounced yellowish colour, with fairly distinct grey patches here and there, whilst there are also some small areas of a higher tone, shown exactly alike by different observers. The astronomers are of the opinion that there exists in the sunward side of

Next to Mercury, outward from the sun, is Venus I need not go into details as you are already familiar with them She is the queen of beauty. Her sign is a looking glass. The ancients called her Phosphorus and Lucifer when the morning star, and Hesperus or Vesper when the evening star. Sometimes she is so brilliant that she can be seen with the naked eye in broad daylight

It is reported that when Napoleon, after conquering Italy, came to Luxemburg palace, his directors announced a fete for him commemorating the conquest of Italy; but the people did not pay any attention to the announcement They were looking overhead above the palace towards the heavens. Napoleon's attention was called, and he inquired what the matter was, why did they not look at him. They were looking at the heavens, and afterwards Napoleon found they were looking at the glorious and brilliant light of Venus which was shining in midday in commemoration of his victory. The most ancient observation of Venus was in the Babylonian record in 685 B.C. It was known in India in vedic age.

Venus revolves around the sun at the rate of 22 miles a second. It is a little less than that of Mercury. Mercury has 30 miles a second, and Venus has 22 miles a second. It completes a revolution around the sun in 225 days Hence her year is about $7\frac{1}{2}$ months of our earthly time, of our years While Mercury travels twice as fast as the earth, Venus is only one-sixth faster than our planet. When nearest to us, Venus is 25,000,000 miles away. That is the nearest position. Her diameter is 7,600 miles, about $326\frac{1}{2}$ miles less than the equatorial diameter of the earth, which is $7,926\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Her heat and light are double than that of the earth. Her seasons are like those of Mercury. We see only one side just like the moon. One half is turned toward the sun, while the other half is in perpetual darkness and has never been illumined by the sunlight. That is unfortunate for those who live on the other side of Venus, which is away from the sun, and it must be terribly cold. Venus has all the phases of our moon, which are full

Mercury extremely high temperature, and it is calculated and confirmed by radiometric measurements made at Mount Wilson Observatory that to melt lead, and, therefore, there exists neither water, nor any kind of fluid substance in Mercury

Venus and new Venus, and the first quarter and the last quarter. This was one of the first things that Galileo discovered through his telescope. Galileo was the first to discover that Venus has her phases like the phases of the moon. Copernicus prophesied it, but he did not have the telescope, but he said that if there should be any instrument invented by which we could see Venus nearer, then we would be able to notice all the phases which Venus goes through, like those of our moon. Galileo discovered it and proved the Copernicus system as true, because Copernicus explained why the sun is stationary and Venus is moving around the sun. So Galileo proved the truth of the Copernicus theory.²

After Venus, comes the earth in order with one moon. These two objects have already been exhaustively described by Mrs L and Mrs. C. Therefore we shall pass the earth and come to the next planet outside of our earth, that is Mars. Mars is the most beautiful planet. It is the god of war, as the ancients called him, with a sign of shield and a spear. The sign of earth is a circle with the equator and the meridian. Mars is the first of the superior planets. It is nearest in resemblance to our earth. It has almost all the seasons and the same conditions, as we have on earth. Sometimes Mars, when near perihelion, shines as clearly as Jupiter itself. Therefore the Jews called Mars the blazing star, because it was red, and at the same time it was as brilliant as we see now.

Mars is 141,500,000 miles from the sun. So we are going far away from the sun. Mars travels at the rate of 15 miles a second. It is slower even than the earth. The earth travels 18 miles a second. Its day is 41 minutes longer than that of ours, i.e. the Martian day. Its year is 687 days, or nearly two years of

² According to modern investigation, Venus nearly resembles the earth in size and mass. The diameter of Venus is 7,700 miles and its volume is 0.92 and mass is 0.81. It is the second planet reckoning outwards from the sun and moves at a mean distance of 67,200,000 miles. "This distance is almost constant, since the orbital eccentricity (0.006) is lower than for any other planet in the solar system". Apart from the moon, Venus is our nearest neighbour, and it can approach us within 25,000,000 miles, whereas Mars is always more than 34,000,000 miles away. Venus is at its most brilliance during the present stage, "when its angular distance from the sun is about 39° east or west—about one month before or after inferior conjunction". When it is at its closest to us, at inferior conjunction, Venus has its dark side facing us, it lies close to the sun in the sky, and is difficult to see even with a telescope".

our early time. The diameter of Mars is only 4,200 miles, and its volume is 1/7 of the earth, and density 4/5. Like our earth, it is flattened at the poles. Light and heat are almost one-half of what we get from the sun. It does not get much heat or much light, because it is farther away. Its axis is inclined 27 degrees from the perpendicular to its orbit. For this reason, like our earth, Mars has seasons like the torrid zone, temperate zone, and arctic zone, but the seasons are much longer than that of ours. On account of the year being twice as long, the seasons would be twice as long as ours on the earth. Our 100 lbs would weigh 37 lbs in Mars. It has the weakest intensity of gravity.

It has an atmosphere and clouds, as we have. Mars has two moons. The earth has one moon. Now two moons are going with the planet Mars. They are named as Deimos, which means dread, and Phobos, which means terror. These are the sons of the war-god. Phobos, or the Terror, is the inner moon, that is nearer the planet, and it travels around Mars in 7 hours and 39 minutes. It takes a very short time to go around the planet, at a distance of 3,760 miles. It is not much further than from here to New York, the outer one revolves in 30 hours and 18 minutes at a distance of 12,500 miles around the planet. These two moons are revolving all the time and pass through all the phases of our moon. They are small globes with a diameter of about 15 miles each. A man could go around in a bicycle in a day very easily.

No other planet has been observed through the telescope so minutely as Mars. Its red colour is caused by the ochre tinge of the soil, and also its atmosphere and clouds have a great deal to do with the colour. No mountains have been seen or discovered on Mars. The proportion of land and water on our planet is reversed in Mars. Here every continent is an island, but there in Mars every ocean is a lake, surrounded by land. So you see our earth has two-thirds water and one-third land, so there would be just the reverse. The Italian astronomer, Schiaparelli was the first to discover these dark lines, which are now called canals, and the circular spots at the intersection of these lines. These spots were first called lakes, but now they are called cases. They are points of land. Professor Lowell has added many discoveries and has given

more particulars about these canals and so on. And the globe of Mars has been made now. It is more perfect in many ways than the globe of our earth. From Mars our earth would appear not as a night star as it is for Mercury and Venus but as a morning and evening star³

Now we come outside of Mars to Jupiter, but, before we come to Jupiter, we have to consider the ring of planetoids, smaller planets, probably the fragments of a planet that was there, and has gone to pieces for some reason or other. It is a belt of planetoids numbering, according to Leverrier, about 150,000 altogether, like 150,000 meteors. They are whirling around in the same direction around the sun. Some of these have names, such as Ceres and Vesta and Pallas and so on. The Ceres is about 500 miles in diameter. It is the largest of the planetoids. Vesta is 250 miles in diameter, and Pallas is 350 miles in diameter. Others have no names, but they are photographed and marked with numbers—Planet No. 4, Planet No. 8, Planet No. 11, and so on. Only the German astronomers have the patience to observe their motions. The English and the French astronomers have not that patience. These planetoids revolve around the sun in regular orbits. They do not collide. Each one takes its path and completes the circle. The zone in which they travel is not very wide, but is only 260,000,000 miles wide. The nearest to the sun is Eros, the god of love. Its distance is less than that of Mars. It is 135,000,000 miles. Next,

³ According to modern investigation, Mars is only a medium-sized planet compared with the earth and it has a diameter of 4,200 miles, which is only just over half of the earth's, and this means that the surface area of Mars is 3.6 times and its volume is 7 times smaller than those of the earth. The distance of Mars from the sun undergoes considerable variations from 128,750,000 miles at perihelion. It increases to 155,000,000 miles at aphelion. On account of its shape, its orbit is far from being concentric with that of the earth. Regarding motion or speed, the Mars moves more slowly than the earth does and the two bodies only come into the line again after 780 days "This period of 780 days equals two complete revolutions of the earth, plus an extra 50 days, corresponding to one-seventh of its orbit". Mars never approaches the earth as closely as Venus, but, on the other hand, Mars has the advantage of being much the easier to observe. Whether Mars actually has an atmosphere or not, it remains yet a question of investigation. Mars has two satellites and the orbits of the two satellites are almost circular and both lie in much the same plane, within one or two degrees of the Martian equator. The names of the two satellites of Mars are Phobos and Deimos at 14,600 miles and these distances are between centres, "however, so if we subtract the radius of Mars we find that Phobos travels at a height of 3,700 miles, and Deimos at 12,500 miles above the surface of the planet".

we come to Jupiter which is the king of the gods, with his sign of the bird of love, represented by the hieroglyphic of an eagel. This is the largest of all planets, having a diameter of 90,000 miles. So think of the size. Its volume is 1400 times that of the earth, and much exceeds all other planets combined. So this one planet has more volume than all the other planets combined.⁴

Jupiter revolves around the sun at a mean distance of 483,000,000 miles. At perihelion it goes 23,500 000 miles less than the mean distance of 459,000,000 miles nearer to the sun, and so much should be added 506,000,000 miles at its aphelion. The earth moves 18 miles a second, while Jupiter 8 miles per second or about 473 miles a minute. A day on Jupiter is only about our ten hours. Its day lasts only ten hours, of which five hours are sunlight and five hours dark night. Its year is equal to our twelve years, that is, in other words, Jupiter completes its circle around the sun in twelve of our years, and it stays in each sign of the zodiac one terrestrial year.

Its poles are the most flattened than that of any other planet. The diameter at the equator is 5,000 miles longer than the polar diameter. It is very protruded and flattened, more than that of any other planet. At the exact pole the sun is visible steadily for six years, and at the other pole the sun is not seen. Its axis is not much inclined, hence Jupiter has very little variation in seasons like Venus and Mercury, like our moon. The seasons depend upon the inclination of the axis.

⁴ According to modern investigation Jupitar is one of the noted planets. Its mean diameter is 85,750 miles, i e 10 08 times the size of the earth's size and its volume is 1,312 times as great as the earth's volume "But this enormous globe is surprisingly light, its mass is only 414 times the earth's, hence its low density of 1 34". The rotation period of Jupiter is the shortest in the solar system, being only about 9 h 58 m "The eccentricity of Jupiter's orbit (0 484) means that the planet's distance from the sun varies considerably, at perihelion it is 459,800,000 miles and at aphelion 506,800,000 miles When Jupiter is closest to the earth (at a perihelion opposition) the two bodies are separated by a distance of about 363,000,000 miles" It is very difficult to ascertain the exact nature of Jupitar, but it seems from the appearance that it is composed of a substance which behaves like a fluid in certain respects, and pictures it as a huge sphere of gas at such high pressure through its own gravity that it has become almost liquid.

Jupitar is accompanied by 12 satellites; only 4 of these, however, are of any great size, and they were discovered by Galileo. The first 5 satellites, whose orbits are almost circular, revolve in more or less the same plane which practically coincides with the planes of Jupitar's equator

upon the orbit. Light and heat which Jupiter receives are only $1/37$ of what we receive from the sun, being so far away it gets less light and heat than Mars.

Jupiter has ten satellites, of which Titan is the largest, as large as Mercury. One may see during the Jovian year 4,500 eclipses of the moon and the same number of the sun every year. So seven moons must produce a very beautiful sight. They have all the phases of the moon—bright on one side. Probably one has full moon on one side and new moon on the other and quarter moon and so on. It must be like electric arc lights, most beautiful.

It is believed that Jupiter and Saturn have intense heat there. In the process of evolution, although Jupiter and Saturn were thrown off at a period earlier than the earth, but on account of its volume it has not cooled off yet. It is too hot. They say that its surface is not solid yet. It is still in a liquefied state. That is the theory of most of the astronomers that on account of intense heat, it would take a longer time to radiate, but our earth and Mars, being smaller, have thrown off all heat and have become solid. Mars and earth may be called in their middle ages in their progress of evolution; but Jupiter and Saturn are in their young age; and Uranus and Neptune are in their infancy, because they are still farther away.

Next to Jupiter is Saturn, the god of time, with an ancient scythe in hand as the sign. I have said that Jupiter stays for one year in each of the signs of the zodiac, while Saturn stays two and a half years in each sign.

Saturn is 886,000,000 miles away from the sun. The mean distance is increasing now, 886,000,000 miles away from the sun. At perihelion it comes 4,500,000 miles nearer than the mean distance. Saturn travels at the rate of 22,000 miles per hour (6 2 miles per second). It is not moving very fast. Our earth travels pretty nearly a thousand miles an hour, and this Saturn travels 22,000 miles per hour. Our 30 years will make one year of Saturn, with 25,000 days, and each day would be $10\frac{1}{4}$ hours long; so their days are not very long. Jupiter has days ten hours long, and Saturn has $10\frac{1}{4}$.

Its diameter is 73,000 miles. It is smaller than Jupiter. Its volume is 700 times than that of the earth. Its density is $2/3$ that of water. Its heat and light are $1/100$ of what we receive from

the sun. That heat would be one hundred times less than what we receive here. So I do not believe there is much heat there, except the heat that is already in the planet. But it does not get much heat or light from the sun.

The axis again is inclined to 27 degrees, like Mars, and therefore the seasons of Saturn are similar to ours. One planet has all the seasons like Mars. That is very peculiar. Our ordinary belief is that all planets have the same condition that our earth has. Only earth, Mars and Saturn have seasons. Jupiter has no season, because its axis is not inclined. But each season on Saturn will last more than seven of our years, so the interval between spring and autumn would be fifteen years—seven years each season. The sun shines for fifteen years on the north pole, and on the south pole there would be darkness for fifteen years.

Saturn has three rings of unequal width. They revolve around it in the same direction. They all revolve from left to right in the same direction as the planet revolves on its axis. Jupiter goes straight on one side, but the earth moves the same way as Saturn, and Mars goes the same way, revolving upon the axis. The thickness of the rings is a hundred miles. Many people do not know exactly what these rings are made of. Some think they are a kind of gas. Others believe that they are liquid substance. Others again think that they are solid substance. For centuries there have been discussions among the great astronomers and scientists, but the latest discovery is that the rings consist of a cloud of tiny satellites revolving around the planet. The rings are neither solid nor liquid nor gaseous. They are so minute that our most powerful telescopes cannot separate the one from the other, and these innumerable little satellites are revolving around the planet, and they form that ring. The rings are sometimes seen in their full size. At other times we see only the profile, only a straight line across. It created a great disturbance in the time of Galileo when he did not know what was the matter with the planet Saturn. He thought it had something like a handle attached to it, because he did not see the ring in its complete circle. He could not explain what it was, but afterwards discovered that it has different positions, and that made it look like a profile at one time and full circle at other times.

I have already said that Saturn has ten moons besides those

rings. It has three separate rings, one ring separate from the other, all around it. That must be a beautiful sight. The diameters of these moons vary from 2700 miles to 40 miles. There are grades—some 500 miles, some 600, some 1100, and so on. The largest of them has 2700 miles; and there are two smaller ones which are 40 miles⁵.

Next to Saturn comes Uranus. There are two planets, Uranus and Neptune. Modern astronomers know very little of them. They are so far away. They cannot tell exactly what has happened on those two planets. Uranus was not known to the ancients. The ancient astronomers knew as far as Saturn. It was not known to the Egyptians, to the Hindus, or to any of the old astrologers. On March 13, 1781, Uranus was discovered by Sir William Herschel. Its name signifies heaven, the most ancient of the gods; and its sign is like this. That is the initial of Herschel, with a planet hanging at the crossbar.

It revolves at a distance of 1,900,000,000 miles from the sun. Its one year is over 84 of our years. That is, Uranus would take 84 years of our time to make the complete circle. Its diameter is 35,000 miles. Heat and light it receives is 1/300 of what we receive, being so far away 1/300 of our heat Uranus receives. It has four moons, and these moons have

⁵ The modern astronomers are of the opinion that Saturn is the second largest planet in the solar system. Its diameter is 75,100 miles and is 9.5 times larger than the earth, and is 763 times greater in volume. The axis of rotation of Saturn is inclined at the angle of 26°49' to the perpendicular to the plane of its orbit. "Because of its constantly changing orientation to the sun, seasonal effects on Saturn are quite marked. Since, for these purposes, we may consider the earth and the sun as being in the same place, the seasonal effects are revealed to us in the form of a constant change in the orientation of the planet's axis with respect to the earth". Because of the long revolution period, the season on Saturn last about 7½ of our years. Although the rings which are about 170,000 miles across and situated in the plane of Saturn's equator, are independent of the planet.

Saturn revolves round the sun at a mean distance of 886 million miles, "but because its orbit is eccentric, Saturn's distance varies between aphelion and perihelion, by just over 95 million miles, which is approximately equal to the radius of the earth's orbit". Saturn never appears to us as anything but a very small disc. Even at its largest this disc is only 18" in apparent diameter, whilst the ring is only 43" across. When Saturn is at one of its solstices, either the northern or the southern hemisphere is inclined towards the sun and therefore towards the earth. The same applies for the corresponding face of the ring. The distribution of the nine satellites and also the orientation of their orbits seem to be divided into two groups. The first 5, relatively close to Saturn, revolve in the same plane as the rings; the other 4, which are much farther out, revolve in orbits which are increasingly inclined to the plane of the rings.

their diameter from 250 miles to 500 miles ; two have 250 and the other two have 500 miles diameter each⁶

After Uranus we come to Neptune. That is the last of our solar system. It is the god of the sea with his trident, and its sign is the trident. It was discovered in September, 1846 by Leverrier of Paris, and by Adams of Cambridge. Sir William Herschel said that Uranus did not keep the time in coming around the sun, while Saturn and other planets kept the time exactly. What caused this disturbance? They did not know where the cause was, so they gave out a proposition to be solved, that had given the disturbance in time, then what was the attraction that was making that disturbance and keeping it away from coming to its starting point in regular time. Then these two young mathematicians, Leverrier of Paris and Adams of Cambridge were asked to calculate and find out the cause. Both of them started and mathematically located the planet in a particular position near some star, and then Leverrier asked the Berlin observatory to watch, and so then it was found exactly at the place where Leverrier described it should be, only within less than a degree. So that proved how a human mind can calculate and understand the law which governs the planetary system. The human mind is greater than all the physical forces and the laws that are governing those forces.

The distance of this planet from the sun is 2,800,000,000 miles. That is the distance from the sun to Neptune. That is, one half of the diameter of the solar system is 2,800,000,000 miles. The time which Neptune takes to complete a revolution around the sun is 165 of our years. Its velocity is 12,000 miles per hour. It does not move very fast. The heat and light that Neptune receives from the sun is very small, 1/1000 part of what we get.

⁶ According to modern calculation, Uranus is considerably smaller than either Jupiter or Saturn. The diameter of Uranus has been measured as 29,300 miles, which is under 4 times that of the earth. The globe of it is flattened at the poles, and its axis of rotation is unique. Uranus revolves at a mean distance of 1,783 million miles, "but because of the eccentricity of its orbit, its distance from the sun may vary by 166 million miles between aphelion and perihelion". Each of Uranus' seasons lasts for 21½ of our year on average. It travels along an orbit which is not very steeply inclined to the plane of the ecliptic, the angle between them being 0°46'. "With its slow movement, therefore, it moves round the sky along much the same path as the sun, and comes to opposition every 369.7 days".

At present there are 5 known satellites of Uranus, but all are seen even by the help of the powerful telescope, and only the last one, Miranda, was discovered photographically.

It is the coldest place among all these planets Neptune has one moon, as large as ours. I have already said, very little is known about these two planets, because they are so far away. They cannot tell whether they have any seasons or any kind of day and night. It is very difficult to calculate, being so far away.⁷

Now we have seen from the sun to Neptune, that all these planets make up our solar system. Each planet is revolving day after day, night after night, year after year, performing its duty ; and the sun is like the greatest magnet that is holding each of these planets within its power. And each of these planets again is a magnet by itself. It is produced by the great magnet, and at the same time it has become a magnet. Just as, when we hold a piece of metal, iron, or steel, close to the magnet for some time, it will be magnetised, and it will become a magnet. So, according to our nebular hypothesis, these planets were thrown off as the portions of the nebulous matter from the common centre ; or we may say that this whole solar system with this distance was a mass of nebulous matter, and then it threw off a nucleus there, then it threw off another nucleus, while it was gyrating. Again another was thrown off, and in this way these planets were formed. In the process of evolution it must have taken millions and millions of years. Now if we study astronomy, our old superstition that the whole world was created in six days will disappear. How can we imagine such a thing? Think of the vastness of the universe, and think of the grandeur.

Each of these planets being a magnet, there are magnetic currents starting from them, going in the space all around, just as the sun sends its rays in all directions ; and there is magnetic current going out from the sun in all directions. So each of the planets, having its velocity and rapid motion around the sun, is disturbing the ocean of the ether of space. There is no vacuum anywhere, but there is what we call ether of

⁷ From the latest information it is known that Neptune's immense orbit is almost circular, having an eccentricity of only 0.0087. The planet's mean distance from the sun is 2,793 million miles. The mass of Neptune is calculated to be 17.3 times that of the earth ; its density is therefore 0.41 that of the earth's, and its specific gravity 1.5. The minute disc of Neptune is of a greenish-blue colour. At present, Neptune is known to have 2 satellites : the larger, Triton, revolving at a distance of 220,000 miles from its primary, was discovered by Lassel in 1846, whilst the second, Nereid, was discovered as recently as in 1949, by Kuiper.

eternity. Only on account of resistance its motion is obstructed, and it produces heat and other phenomenal changes.

If all the planets are magnets, then all human beings are also magnets. They attract each other, as they are aggregates of atoms and molecules. Ether is the medium through which these forces travel. Ether is the wire through which this current travels, from the sun to Neptune, to Uranus, to Saturn, and holding them in their own places and making them revolve around the sun. Each planet has a repellent force, which makes it go off in a straight line. The sun is pulling the planet towards it, and the planet is trying to get off, and the resultant is the planet's revolution around the sun.

The effects of the planets upon the earth are the result of the vibrations of their bodies. These vibrations, as I have already described, traverse the other space and strike the sun like the clicks of telegraphic instruments. A call will come from Mercury or Venus, and it is constantly coming and beating on the atmosphere of the sun. These waves again are reflected. When they strike the sun—they cannot go through the sun. They are reflected back, and they go back in all directions and strike all other planets. Similar are the conditions of the solar planets. The solar magnetic science tells us that this magnetic current is most important thing to study. We find that each planet influences the sun and the sun is throwing off those influences to other planets in all directions, and this influence is going on from one planet to another, and nothing can stop it. And the study of this magnetic influence, produced by these different planets, will help us in understanding what conditions and what changes take place in the weather, in our mental conditions, and in our physical conditions. These waves of energy produce force and vitality, and they are reflected upon the earth. Suppose Neptune sends out a current 2,800,000,000 miles from the sun, and that distance is nothing in going through that ocean of ether. If it is once started, it will produce waves after waves until it will strike the sun. Then it will go back and strike the planets. The energy that is in the sun, is reflected in the same way to the earth. The heat and light and everything contain the *prana* or animating principle within it. Mercury vibrates life on account of its quick motion and revolution around the sun. And after a long study these great

seers and observers and astronomers of ancient times as well as of modern times have discovered that under the influence of each planet we find that the human beings are more or less affected. That is, that branch of astronomy which deals with magnetic currents, is called the solar magnetic science. Of course, it explains in a scientific manner the truths which underlie the ancient system of astrology as far as the physical side is concerned, but the ancient astronomers did not study so much the physical side as they did not believe in occult forces. For our present purpose, let us understand the physical side. The magnetic currents are physical. These vibrations affect human bodies and minds. and the Mercurial vibrations would produce quickness, activity, changeableness, hilarity, and so on. Now the scientists have described that these different vibrations that come from different planets, have different forms They say Mercury has the vibration that goes very quick, and on account of it, its quickness is short. That is, it goes quick and short. Then the vibration that comes from Venus, will be a little slower and a little rounder and flatter. The vibrations of Mars will be a little different again Of course, the earth radiates the vibrations also, and it sends them just like Venus radiates Mars will come in between them. It is almost like Mercury, only it is broader at the base, like the spear-top in triangular shape ; and that is very strong, because it produces the vibrations like that of Mercury and Venus mixed Venus has pleasant and soothing harmonious vibrations. So when the vibrations of Venus strike on any one, that effect is produced in human beings and it has pleasant, soothing and harmonious influence. All people, who are born under the influence of Venus, have that characteristic. The co-ordination is very complete. because the more you study, you will find that like attracts the like, and there is perfect harmony between the planets and the individuals. We are all individual magnets. Mars is like Mercury in force and like Venus in quantity. It is like Mercury in force, but broader, like Venus, in quantity Jupiter has longer and more powerful and elastic but slower vibrations. Saturn will have a still longer vibration Uranus will have again different. It is flatter. Jupiter is longer than any of these. It is longer and more powerful but slower in vibrations, because it is very huge. It is the largest of all the planets and its power is tremendous It has the absorbent

quality, and those who are born under Jupiter, are strong and healthy and have tremendous vitality and force. There are great many magnets. They absorb other people's earnings and they absorb in quantities.

Saturn is the heaviest and most vital. It is very strong, stronger than any of those, and it has a disintegrating effect. Uranus has a delicate fine wave, like Venus in fineness and like Mars in intensity. Neptune has fine but longer drawn out. Each of these different vibrations has different effects upon our system and also upon the characteristics of human beings.

Now starting always outside of the solar system i.e. from Neptune (Neptune being the outside sentinel of the solar system) we find that solar magnetic science tells us that Neptune governs the outside of everybody, that is, the skin and hair of the human bodies. Uranus is more inside, and it has the influence upon the mind. It brings the influence for knowledge. Uranus governs the nervous system. Next to the skin would be the nervous system which is governed by Uranus. The magnetic currents that go from Neptune, will produce effect first of all upon the skin and hair; that go from Uranus produce effect on the nervous system. So by Uranus people have more influence on the nervous system, according to this science. Saturn, being more inside, has more influence on flesh and bones. This is like a human body, the outside is the skin and hair, and we go inside until we come to the soul. The sun is the soul. Saturn is the ruler of flesh and bones, and its vibrations would produce stricture and all kinds of disintegrating effects and most of the diseases, various kinds of disfigurement, lameness and blindness. If Saturn vibrations would strike upon the eyes of the child at the time of birth, the child would be blind; and if Uranus vibrations fall on the neck, it being the centre of the nervous system, nervous troubles follow. So Saturn is the ruler of flesh and bones and produces those changes. Then Jupiter has the influence over the muscular vibrations of the entire frame. That brings strength. From the bones we are going to the muscular fibres, and Jupiter governs the health and brings strength. Mars brings still further strength and is the ruler of the alimentary canal and glands and cells. It influences these three parts. Venus controls the fluids of the human system; and Mercury is the governor of the circula-

tion. The vibrations of each of these planets are good by themselves, but when they come in conjunction with other planets, some become destructive. If they do not harmonize, they cross one against the other, and that produces the trouble; therefore the combination of these different planets would produce changes, although each of these vibrations by itself might be considered as good. For instance, if Saturn has influence in the head and Mercury's influence comes, that may quicken that vibration of Saturn. And the result would be dangerous. This science claims that one can trace the different causes of diseases and can diagnose these cases, by studying the planetary relations and their influences. And each centre from our head to feet is governed by different signs of the zodiac. These signs are nothing but the scales.⁸

Here, before I conclude, I must say that the solar magnetic science tells us that zodiac is a scale of measure which has been regarded as the foundation for the working out of different effects and changes produced by the polarity and position of the planets in relation to the sun. It is based however on the law of matter, positive and negative members of magnetic bodies. As the sun is the centre of the solar system, so the soul is the centre of our system. The sun has an influence on the soul. It is called the soul of the solar system. These magnetic currents are producing effects upon our system. We are not conscious of them, but we know the effects and cannot trace the cause. And some of these influences we escape through ignorance of various things pertaining to our earth. But if we knew the relations of the planets and their influences, we should be able to know the laws which govern not only our physical bodies but also our minds and nervous system. Through correct knowledge of these laws our souls become the master and governor of the planets, the solar system, and their influences upon our body and mind.

⁸ There is another planet, known as Pluto. The orbit of Pluto is remarkable in a number of ways. Although its mean distance is 3,666 million miles, Pluto can come within 2,776 million miles of the sun at its nearest and is 4,566 million miles away at its farthest. At perihelion, Pluto is a little nearer the sun than Neptune. Since its discovery in 1930 Pluto has been travelling towards perihelion, but it will not arrive there until 1989. Pluto will not return to the place where it was discovered until the year 2177, since it has a revolution period of 247 7 years. On account of its small size and mass, Pluto belongs to the group of terrestrial planets—Mercury, Venus, earth and Mars—rather than the gaseous giants.

CHAPTER IV

THE EARTH AND ITS RELATION TO THE SUN

We learned that before the time of Copernicus, astronomy was based upon the Ptolemaic system, which was started by Ptolemy, a Greek, who lived about 120 A.D. And we also heard that he wrote the *Almagest*, which was the text-book among the astronomers in Europe for fourteen centuries. This Ptolemaic system has given the foundation of astronomy and of all the astronomical calculations for all this time, until the time of Copernicus, who lived in the beginning of the sixteenth century. The advocates of this Ptolemaic theory believed that each planet revolves in a circle around the earth which is fixed. The earth is fixed, and the stars and everything that we see over our head, are revolving around the earth which is fixed and standing still. But they had a great difficulty when they found that Venus would sometimes appear to us as the evening star and sometimes as the morning star. As the evening star it appears in the west and as the morning star it appears in the east, and they also found that sometimes it is on this side of the sun, sometimes on the other side of the sun, and they did not know how to account for that. So they imagined a kind of bar, a bar that is connected on one end with the earth, and then on the other end with the sun, and other planets were all hanging on this bar. As for example, this 'A' is the earth, and the sun is in the centre and there is an imaginary bar that connects the earth with the sun.¹ A B E F, that is the bar or an imaginary bar that connects the sun and the earth and other planets. They imagined that there must be some mechanism by which Mercury and Venus would be hanging on this bar. So they thought

¹ The modern scientists say that the body of the sun (i.e. excluding its atmosphere) has a diameter of 865,000 miles—109 5 times that of the earth. Now, if we compare the respective volume of the earth and that of the sun, then we find that the sun's is 1,306,000 times greater than the earth's "To be precise, its (sun's) volume is equal to 337,000 million million cubic miles" Sun's temperature is about 6,000°, according to the best determinations made to date Readers are requested to consult the pages 259-289 of *Larousse Encyclopædia of Astronomy* by Lucien Rudaux and G De Vaucouleurs, published by Batchworth Press Ltd , London 1959.

there must be a third crank hanging from this bar, and here is Venus. B C is the third crank to which Venus is tied, and it revolves around here, and, on the other side D E is another bar for Mercury. And then when the scientists discovered that Mars was another planet, they did not know how to put Mars on that bar, so they had another extension, and there was a third crank here on which Mars was hanging. Now you can imagine that this whole bar is revolving around the earth, and this bar, taking the sun and the third crank on which the other planets are hanging, is revolving around the earth with some power, which they did not know what it was like. They imagined that this bar, whether real or imaginary, was connecting these planets with the sun, and all revolving around the earth, and the earth was fixed. The bar revolved, carrying the sun and the planets around the earth in large circles. The smaller circles were made by these other planets, which are hanging and flying around this bar, making these smaller circles. These large circles and the small ones were called cycles. The smaller circle was called the epi-cycle, and the larger circle, made by the sun, was called the cycle. You will remember that Milton refers to this when he speaks of heaven: "With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er, cycle and epicycle, orb in orb". He referred to those large cycles of the sun. And these smaller circles are the epicycles, made by the revolution of the planets around that bar and around the earth. So, that was the system. It will give you an idea what a complicated system it was when other planets were discovered outside of Mercury, Venus, and Mars. Uranus and Neptune were not conceived of at that time. They were not then discovered. They had to put extra bars and extra cranks to hang the other planets on, and it became so complicated that Alphonso, the King of Castile, was disgusted with that system. He said that if he had been at the time of creation, he could have given the Lord better advice than to have this complicated system.

This system has been the foundation of astronomy as well as of astrology. Even the modern geocentric system, which tells that the earth is the centre of the universe and everything revolves around the earth, is also based on this Ptolemaic system, although the scientists explain how the sun can be at the centre and at the same time the apparent motion of all

the planets and the stars and constellations can be explained scientifically.

Copernicus broke away from this system in the beginning of the sixteenth century, and he revived the theory of Pythagoras that the sun is the centre around which the earth and other planets were revolving. He did not believe in this system. He believed that the earth rotates around its own axis and thus produces the apparent motion of the sun and that of the stars. Copernicus himself, while he was riding in a boat, noticed how he transferred the motion of the boat to the surrounding scenery and how everything would appear to us while we are riding in the boat, as moving in the opposite direction, and he thought that must be the thing that is happening to us when we see the motions of the sun, the moon and other planets in the opposite direction.

But both he and Tycho Brahe, the Danish astronomer, believed in the circular motion of the planets i.e. all the planets were moving around the sun, but in circles. And they came with great difficulties in calculating the time. They could not make out why there would be so much discrepancy and miscalculation. It did not harmonize very correctly.

Then Tycho Brahe's disciple, Kepler, discovered the exact shape of the planetary orbit, after nearly ten years of minute observation and hard concentration and mathematical calculation. And, in 1609, he declared that the law was this. the planets revolved in ellipses with the sun at one focus. You can imagine an egg, shaped like that. The sun is at one of the foci. If it were a circle, the sun would be at the centre, but the sun is at one end. These are the two centres of the ellipse, and in one of the centres the sun is placed, and then the calculation states that if this be the earth's orbit going far off and coming back again here, there is the sun. That is called ellipse. Now, as the planets revolve in ellipses with the sun at one focus, so there is a difference between a circle and the centre of a circle along with the focus of this ellipse. He also discovered that the velocity of a planet varies at different parts of its orbit. The velocity of the earth, if the earth is going from here, will be different from the velocity going towards the sun. This will be faster and afterwards slower, because the sun's attraction will check the speed. Its motion is faster at perihelion which is the point

nearest the sun. Now the motion of the earth around the sun, if it is in the form of an ellipse, will go from perihelion towards aphelion, the farthest distance from the sun, at a different rate from what it will take coming back from perihelion, the farthest point towards the nearest point. He discovered these truths. These are the fundamental truths of modern astronomy.

Newton then came, and when he was about twenty-four years old, he was sitting in front of a garden and saw an apple fall from the tree and that started him to think. He thought. "Why does this apple fall from the tree? What was the cause?" Then he began to apply all the laws that were known at that time i.e. the laws of physics, and tried to find the cause of this falling of an apple from a tree, and the result was the discovery of the law of gravity. In 1666, after years of calculation, he discovered this law that every particle of matter in the universe attracts every other particle of matter with a force directly proportional to the product of their masses and decreasing as the square of the distance between them increases. So he explained why this earth was revolving around the sun and all the other planets were revolving in the same way, and why the moon is revolving around the earth by that one law of gravitation. And this law has cleared away all those theories which the followers of the Ptolemaic system believed, like bars and cranks, cycles and epicycles. This new Copernicus system which was afterwards improved by Kepler and Newton and by later astronomers, has been accepted today as the most scientific system.

Now the question arises as to how this earth is related to the sun and what is the birthright of the earth. Various scientist and thinkers of different parts of the world considered all kinds of hypothesis to explain the relation of the earth to the sun. And among other theories, the Kepler hypothesis has been considered as the most satisfactory one. It was first started by Kant, the great German philosopher, and afterwards it was reinforced by Laplace, the great French astronomer and mathematician, who lived in the eighteenth century, about 1799. By this hypothesis they tried to explain the formation of this solar system which we have, that is, the solar system to which this earth belongs and of which the sun is the centre. According to this nebular hypothesis, our solar system was at one time a

gyrating mass of nebulous matter. It was gaseous substance like gas, and this gas was all in a state of agitation. It was all moving in a spiral form, having one centre like a nucleus and then going around in a spiral form, all revolving in that direction and making a central nucleus, and gradually throwing off little pieces or masses of this gaseous substance away from the centre, and this was the nebulous mass that was the foundation of our solar system. Although this nebulous mass was very fine and was with a high temperature like hydrogen gas, yet it contained the potential energy of all the solar system that has been manifested ever since. That is an idea which we will have to remember in order to understand the evolution of the planets from the nebulous mass. The law is that whatever exists in the end, existed also in the beginning. Otherwise something will come out of nothing, which is an impossibility. All this heat that we are getting from the sun and all the powers or forces that are manifested by the different planets, by our earth and by the moon, remained in a potential form i.e. in the form of energy or in that mass of nebulous matter which was gyrating before the formation of the sun, the moon and our earth. Some people believe that the Creator must have sowed the germ of all these forces in that primordial causal state of matter. But others believe that those who were more in a scientific line of thought, believed that the Creator had nothing to do with it. This solar system in the form of the nebulous matter was the result of another solar system which existed in another cycle millions and millions of centuries before this cycle began. Now the cycle of evolution from this nebulous matter to the present state must have taken millions and millions of years. Then you can imagine that if this sun becomes exhausted in its powers and the heat is all radiated, the sun is dead, the planets are all dead and our earth is dead, then it will begin to disintegrate. It will go back to the nebulous matter again, and this nebulous matter of the solar system will remain in that exhausted state for millions of years. Then there will be another beginning of a new cycle when this nebulous matter of the solar system will begin to evolve and gyrate again to form another solar system. So all that we have seen now, will remain in a potential state, or will go to sleep, as it were, in

that state of nebulous matter. But everything will remain there. All the forces of the electrical magnetic powers which are manifested by the earth today, will remain there sleeping, as it were, in a seed form. Nothing will be lost. Then another solar system will come out of the same matter. This process is called the process of evolution and involution. In a cycle of evolution, there the nebulous matter leaves the nebulous state and comes to its present form and it will reach the climax, and then it will go back again to its primordial causal state. The cycle of evolution is followed by a cycle of involution. This is the eternal process of Nature. There is no need of a Creator who dwells outside of Nature and outside the universe. He has nothing to do with this work, because if he is not in Nature, if Nature is not His body, then He cannot create anything out of nothing. It would be an impossibility. So the scientific minds accept this theory of evolution and involution. So when we accept this nebular hypothesis which explains the formation of the planets, of the earth and also of the solar system, then we understand the theory of evolution and involution. Then, in course of time, perhaps after millions of years, the gases became condensed and then heat was generated and that heat was in a very high temperature, almost to incandescence. Then the heat radiated into the space and that mass of matter which was gyrating, cooled off by radiation. After centuries again, remaining in that state, the attractive forces drew the matter inward and condensed it around one or more centres. These were the result of different centres, here one, there another, and the different centres were formed. The principal centre formed the nucleus, and all these were moving around the principal centre. Different centres that were formed by the force of attraction and through condensation when it became more individualised, began to move around the central nucleus and the whole thing was enveloped by the gaseous substance.

Now from the centre of the sun to Neptune, all are covered with a kind of mist which is a very fine substance. Some of these gyrating nebulous masses can be seen through powerful telescopes today. Today new planets and new worlds are under formation, and are going through the same process which our solar system has already gone through millions and

millions of years ago. Thus the earth was thrown off from mass like other planets. Each of these centres afterwards became one of our planets, Mercury, Venus, Earth, Mars, and so on. In course of time, it cooled off further and vegetable life appeared on this earth. Gradually animals came into existence, and lastly human beings came. Today we are living on this earth and we are seeing it just as it is. Some of the scientists say that if one amoeba could be planted on this earth, or on any other planet, then there would be no end of living substance, and different species of animals and other kinds of beings that could exist on that plane under those circumstances or conditions. If one amoeba came on this earth from the mass, or from the infinite space, then the whole question is solved. Then we get all the beginning of all animal life. Of course, it must have taken millions of years.²

Now modern astronomy will take away all the superstitious ideas that you have learned from your childhood that the earth was created first six thousand years ago, and the sun, moon and stars were afterwards created, as you find the description in the Genesis. They are trying to explain how it can be that the earth was created first, and then the sun came into existence. There must be some mistake somewhere and they are trying to stretch the creation from six days into six cycles. Various other methods have been adopted, but nothing so far

² Modern investigations state that the earth is shown as a sphere in the astronomical works. The astronomers are of the opinion that the earth is a sphere flattened at the poles and with a bulge at the equator, and the mathematical analysis shows that this figure of the earth is called an ellipsoid of revolution, that is to say, the solid traced out by an ellipse turning about its minor axis. It is said that the earth was born out of the sun, something like two thousand millions of years ago. It was born in the form of intensely hot gas on which no life of any kind could either gain or retain a foothold. Gradually hot gas cooled down, becoming first liquid, then plastic. Finally its outer crust solidified forming 'a permanent record of the irregularities of its earlier plastic form'. Vapours condensed into liquids, and rivers and oceans came into being, while the so-called permanent gases—oxygen, nitrogen, helium, neon—formed an atmosphere. Gradually the earth assumed a condition for the advent of life. The first scientific attempt to fix the age of the earth was made by Halley, the astronomer, in 1715 A.D., and from the repeated attempts were made by different astronomers. Sir James Jeans has given the round-number estimate of the ages of the earth, its life which are:

Age of the Earth about	...	2,000,000,000 years,
Age of life on Earth more than	...	300,000,000 years,
Age of man on Earth more than	...	300,000 years.

has been satisfactory. Our earth is round like a ball, but flattened at both ends. Its polar diameter is $7899\frac{1}{2}$ miles. The difference of compression is only 27 miles. The circumference of the earth is 25,000 miles. Its density is $5\frac{1}{2}$ times you would put twenty-one zeros after six, that would be twenty-two figures, so it would be billions of billions of tons the weight of this earth. It is proved that the surface of the earth is round. The curvature has also been measured. You can tell when you see a ship at a distance, or you see the smoke stack first at a great distance. Then as it comes nearer, you see the hull and the whole of the ship. The reason for that is that the curvature of the earth had hidden the haul of the ship at first from our eyes. That curvature is measured and it is found that it is eight inches for one mile, thirty-two inches for two miles, seventy-two inches for three miles, and that would be the proportion in which the curvature of the earth goes. The earth is rotating upon its axis at over one thousand miles per hour. We are moving with the earth a thousand miles per hour, but we do not feel it. Think of the rate of the speed. We are going through the space with that speed all the time. How can you imagine that this earth is stationary when we are going with that speed? If this tremendous velocity stops, do you know what would happen? The shock would be so great as to destroy the entire human race instantly. If this velocity stopped suddenly, we could not live in this earth. We would be instantly dead, for the shock would be so terrific. If, on the contrary, the rate would increase, then what would happen for twenty-four hours and the weight of all bodies happen? The day will grow shorter. We would not have it and would be decreased by the centrifugal force thus generated. If our day be reduced to eighty-four minutes, then the force of gravity would be overcome entirely and there would be no weight at the equator. If the speed be further increased, then it would fly off into infinite space like a mote or we would revolve around the earth, and all the bodies would have no hold on this earth. So, you see, the Lord has taken the happy medium as far as our earth is concerned. If the rate were a little more or less, we would have been all dead. Think of the conditions, how accurate, and in this vast universe all these minute details must be considered and measured accu-

rately. It requires a perfect mind to understand this and to regulate all these laws.

The earth's orbit, or the path around the sun, is nearly 600,000,000 miles. The earth moves around the sun. First we study the motion as the earth rotates on its axis. Then the earth's orbit would be six hundred million miles. The earth is moving at the rate of over 28 miles per second over this orbit. First, the earth is rotating its orbit over a thousand miles an hour. Then it is moving around the sun over 18 miles per second. So where is your north and south and your speed for your automobile? How would you calculate? When the earth is at any part of the orbit, the sun appears to be in a point directly opposite. That is another thing. For convenience we will say that here is the sun in the centre and suppose the earth is here; then the sun would appear opposite to you here in the infinite space in the other direction. Then suppose the earth is in Libra and that is in autumnal equinox. If this be the autumnal equinox, then the vernal equinox would be here, and if Libra is here, then Aries would be here. It comes down to the zodiac. If the earth is in Libra, then the sun would appear in the opposite direction, and there would be Aries. When the sun enters Taurus, the earth is in Scorpio. If the earth goes from here to there, the sun will appear here; and on the other side, if the earth is here, the sun would appear on the opposite side of the zodiac. On June 21 the earth enters Capricorn and the sun enters Cancer. That is the calculation which the geocentric astrologers take. They do not consider the position of the earth so much; they consider the position of the sun. So when they say the sun is in Libra, they mean the earth is in Aries. When they say the sun is in Scorpio, the earth will be here in Taurus just the opposite, because they calculate the apparent motion, as the sun appears to us from the earth. But if you imagine how it would look from the person who is standing in the centre of the sun, the position of the earth would be just the opposite instead of being here i.e. the earth would appear as here.

The ecliptic crosses the celestial equator at two points, and those two points are called the equinox. The vernal equinox and the autumnal equinox are the two points where the celestial equator crosses. If you can imagine the equator of the

earth, just that plane is pushed overhead and making a line in the space, then that would be the celestial equator, just parallel to the equator of this earth. They calculate in that way, and the orbit of the earth which is like that, would cross that celestial equator twice i.e when the sun is overhead at the equator, there happen the vernal equinox and the autumnal equinox. It is customary to locate the sun's place at the vernal equinox which falls in March 22nd in Aries In fact, in March 22nd, the earth is here and the sun appears in Aries , and in the autumnal equinox, which falls in September 22nd, the earth will be here and the sun would appear there in Libra. The summer solstice falls in June 21st here, and the winter solstice falls in December 21st. In the summer solstice which falls in June 21st, the sun appears at Cancer, and the earth will be here.³ And at the winter solstice, the earth will be here and the sun be there That is only apparent and real You can understand the difference between the apparent motion overhead and the real motion when the earth is moving around the sun It is the most wonderful study to understand the relation of the earth to the sun We should remember that these signs of the zodiac belong to the ecliptic which is the projection of the earth's orbit upon the celestial sphere. When we are thinking that this is the orbit of the earth, the signs of the zodiac are not on the orbit of the earth, and if you can stretch the orbit of the earth into the infinite space, the signs will be there.

Then those constellations of the stars are farther away from the orbit of the earth So when you consider Scorpio, or Aries, or Taurus, or Libra as the signs of the zodiac, they are not on the orbit of the earth, but are in the celestial sphere. They are not on the ecliptic. If you remember that, it will be easier for you to understand how vast the distance is. They are not on the earth's path.

³ Here some of the dates differ from the dates given in the Accadian and Julian calendars Hon Emmelme M Plunket writes "Ours is a *Tropical* year, that is to say, according to the Julian calendar (afterwards amended by Pope Gregory) it is bound to the *seasons*, and its months maintain a constant relation to the four great divisions of the ecliptic, i.e. the solstices and the equinoxes The winter solstice always falls about the 22nd of December, the spring equinox about the 21st of March, the summer solstice about the 21st June, and the autumnal equinox about the 23rd of September" Cf. *Ancient Calendars and Constellations*, pp. 10-11.

The axis of the earth is inclined $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees from the perpendicular to its orbit. Now if this would be the earth, and if we draw a perpendicular, the earth's axis will go like that. The earth's axis is inclined to the orbit and this angle is $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees from the perpendicular line to the angle of inclination. That is $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees inclined from the perpendicular line. That has a great deal to do with our seasons and with the length of the day and night, and a great many changes are happening all the time, and this is the cause of it. This angle is called the obliquity of the ecliptic. In all parts of its orbit, the axis of the earth is parallel to itself. When the earth is revolving around the sun and if the earth is here, the axis of the earth will remain parallel to this, and if it comes here, it will be parallel to this. They all point towards the north, and that would be the north, the Pole Star. The axis is always parallel to those, and they are all pointing toward the north, and that is the North Star. The rays of the sun fall unevenly on different portions of the earth. In some places, the sun's rays fall direct and then fall horizontally. Instead of coming down perpendicularly it will come down as the oblique rays, and that makes the difference in heat. In the winter, we get oblique rays, although our earth is three million miles nearer the sun in the winter than in the summer, and because of the eccentricity of the earth's orbit, we get so much cold in the winter hemisphere. The rays of the sun fall unevenly on different portions of the earth. This causes variation in the length of the day and also in heat and light. The rays fall vertically at the equator and horizontally at the poles. Now, in the vernal equinox, when the earth is here and this be the equator, the rays of the sun fall vertically at the equator. But the pole is here, and it would get faint oblique rays, just like horizontal lines. At the vernal and the autumnal equinox, about the twenty-first of March in the spring and in September in the autumn, the day and night are equal. It is called equinox as the word 'equinox' is derived from *aequus*, i.e. equal, and *nox*, night i.e. equal night and equal day and that means twelve hours night and twelve hours day happen at the equator. Then summer solstice falls on the twenty-first of June, when the earth is farthest away from the sun on the twentyfirst of June. It is called solstice, because

'sol' means 'sun' and 'sto' means 'I stand'. That is the sun stands still in solstice. The sun rises in the east and sets in the west in the summer at a different line, from the line which it makes in the winter. In the winter, the sun is farther south. When it is winter with us in the northern hemisphere, the sun is farther south, i.e. about the twenty-first of December at the winter solstice the sun goes down, and in June it is overhead and goes up. This apparent motion of the sun from the northernmost point is the most important thing. It is caused by the revolution of the earth around the sun and the inclination of the earth's axis on its orbit. The sun goes to the farthest north on the twenty-first of June, and there the sun remains as if on the same spot for two or three days, and then the sun begins to move backward, going south towards the equator, and it still goes south, then comes to the equator in September, the autumnal equinox, and then in the winter solstice in the twenty-first of December, the sun comes at the Tropic of Capricorn, that is, at twenty-three and a half degrees below the equator, and the summer solstice is twenty-three and a half degrees above the equator on the northern hemisphere. If you study a map, you will notice the lines, Tropic of Cancer and Tropic of Capricorn, and these are the limits of the sun's apparent motion towards north and south of the equator. The days are longer in the northern hemisphere at the summer solstice. It has the longest day of the year. The twenty-first of June is the longest day. It is our summer, but it is winter in the southern hemisphere in the south temperate zone. When the sun is in the Tropic of Cancer, what happens in Australia and New Zealand? That is their winter, and now it is their autumn. It is just the opposite, but if we have summer here, it is winter in Australia, and when it is summer in Australia, it is winter here. So during Christmas time they have the hottest day. You do not imagine that. You may think this kind of winter season is all over the earth. It is only the half, the winter hemisphere and that is north of the equator. It is noon of the long six months of the North Polar day, and this 21st of June is the noon. At the poles what would happen? The rays of the sun would not touch the North Pole, only the sun would appear as moving in a circle around the horizon. It does not go far up. It goes up $23\frac{1}{2}$

degrees, and then it goes down again. That is the noon of six months of day where there is no night. For six months the sun can be seen just coming up and down in a spiral form, and there is no night at the North Pole. At the South Pole it would be night for six months. They do not have any sunrise at all. Then they see the moonlight. They may see the full moon, but no sunlight for six months. When we have six months day at the North Pole, there is six months night at the South Pole. The earth passes the aphelion point and that is the farthest point from the sun in early July, and in the 21st of June, it strikes the solstice, but passes that farthest point in early July. Then about September 21st, at the autumnal equinox, the earth comes here and then towards aphelion again. At the autumnal equinox, on the 21st of September, the earth is at the equator again. Then it goes farther down, and about the 21st of December the sun is at the Tropic of Capricorn, $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees south of the equator, the southernmost point, where the sun travels. In the south, it would be summer, while we have winter here. It is our shortest day, but it is the longest day in the south. When the earth is at the perihelion, nearest to the sun, it is three million miles nearer than when the earth is at the other end. The distance from the earth to the sun is 93,000,000 miles, but when the earth is at perihelion, it will be 90,000,000; when it is at aphelion, it will be 93,000,000 miles, i.e. 3,000,000 of miles different in distance. For that reason we do not get the benefit of our nearness to the sun in the winter time, but this benefit is received by the people in the southern hemisphere i.e. in Australia. In southern Australia, the heat would be terrific which means 280 degrees Fahrenheit in the shade. A captain was walking on the road in the sun, and it was so terrifically hot that when a match-stick fell from his pocket on the ground, it ignited and the heat was only 32 degrees below the boiling point of water. Water boils at 212°F at sea level. I have already said that the earth reaches its perihelion near the 21st of December, but the exact time would be the 31st and not the 21st. The 21st is the winter solstice. The 21st would be about here, and the 31st would be there. That is the nearest point. Then after going around again, the earth comes at the vernal equinox and the sun at the equator again. So when you are celebrating the Christmas, the sun comes to

the southernmost point, and when you are celebrating the Easter, the sun comes up from the southernmost point. It is the beginning of the spring, the vernal equinox. All green buds come like the Father or like the Lord, the Christ. It is the resurrection of the sun and that means the sun goes down into the south. The sun is at the equator, and the people who inhabit the northern hemisphere, say it the resurrection of the whole earth. So all the Christian festivals are symbolic to all these solar conditions. The ancient peoples celebrated these particular dates to remember that the sun was the life-giver. The sun goes down into the south to the Tropic of Capricorn, which would be like going into the Hades, or grave, and then it is resurrected again. All these solar myths have been considered as true and inspiring and have been commemorated all over the world under different names. From this point, to the aphelion, the sun's attraction checks the speed of the earth. When the earth is going in this direction and the sun is here, and then attracting, the earth cannot go very fast. This speed is checked, because the earth is drawn towards the sun. But when the earth is here and the sun is attracting and the earth is moving, the earth goes faster in this direction, because it is then pulled from the sun and its own speed is added to it. But here the earth is going away from the sun, and the attraction of the sun will check the speed of the earth.

I have explained to you that the axis is inclined $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees, but if the earth's axis, instead of having this inclination, were perpendicular to this orbit, what would happen? Then the sun would rise and set at the same point in the heaven all the day. We would not have this movement. If the sun rises in the east at a particular point, you will see it all the way around, because the earth would be moving straight, and each line would have the same relation to the sun as the equator of the earth. Terrible heat would be at the equator, and then in the temperate zone there would be spring, and in farther north and farther south towards the poles, there would be extreme cold. There would be no change of season but cold would remain all the time. In Alaska and northern Canada, nobody could live. It would be so cold all the time, if the earth's axis were perpendicular to the orbit.

Now comes another point which is to be considered, which

is the most important point in astronomy and that is the precession of equinox. Hipparchus lived in the second century before Christ. He discovered for the first time in Europe the precession of equinox. I have explained to you that the equinox is the plane of the equator which is extended to the celestial sphere, and the orbit of the earth strikes in two points of that celestial equinox, and that becomes the vernal equinox and the autumnal equinox, when the sun is overhead at the equator. Now if you are standing at the equator and if you extend that line, that line must go through the centre of the sun. Now after completing the revolution around the sun, the earth ought to come precisely at the same time in relation to the sun's equator or the equinox of the sun, but when the earth goes around and around, instead of coming to the same point at the same time, it comes a little earlier on account of the gravitation of the sun's tremendous attraction, and that makes a difference. Modern astronomers have fixed the rate of that as $50\frac{1}{2}$ seconds of space every year. This will make you realize when I come to speak of the zodiac that at one time when Aries was the beginning of the vernal equinox, it has gone back thirty degrees. So where Aries was at first, there is Piscas. So all our astrological calculation will have to compute so much on account of the precession of the equinox. We have lost thirty degrees already, that is, where Aries used to be, now there is Piscas, and so the influence of Aries will not affect the people if they are born now, because they will get the influence of Piscas.

For this reason the position of the North Pole in the heavens is slightly changed. If you extend the axis of the earth infinitely, it will come to the North Star, and that would be the North Pole in the heavens when the straight line from the axis of the earth is extended infinitely and touch the North Star. But this North Star is not always the northernmost point towards which the earth's axis is directed. Because everything is changing. Even the Pole Star is changing. The North Polar Star is now $1\frac{1}{4}$ degrees from the Pole. It will come nearer to Polaris and will go around and make a circle. It describes a small circle around the Polar Star and gets closer in that circle to the Pole Star, and when it gets nearest, it will be half a degree apart. In 12,000 years, this present Pole Star will be different,

and our polar star will be Vega in 12,000 years from now. And 4500 years ago, when the Egyptian Pyramids were built, Thuban, in the constellation Draco, was the Pole Star. New Thuban is gone, and we are around to Polaris. The earth's axis is pointing to Polaris now, but Thuban was 2500 years ago. There are openings, from which these ancient Egyptians used to observe the Pole Star, and they were built in such a way that anyone who would look through those holes towards the north, would see the Polar Star. Now the Pole has changed, and so one would see Thuban, but Thuban is not the Polar Star.

Then again I have described this perihelion and aphelion and these are also changing. It does not happen at the same time every year, as everything is moving. The earth's orbit around the sun this year will not be the same as the orbit that was last year, but the relation would remain the same. The sun is moving around another greater sun, and the sun is attracting all these planets, which are as children, or as a whole family, and the sun is going in a spiral motion around another bigger sun, around which the whole solar system is moving; and this can be proved by observing the fixed stars and the position of the stars every year. Then by calculation we find that under certain conditions, the position of the stars ought to be in such and such place if the sun and the solar system were stationary, that is, were occupying the same place and not moving towards something else.

So the astronomers have calculated, and they have discovered that in 3958 B.C. the earth was at perihelion, at the time of the autumnal equinox. The autumnal equinox comes on December 22nd, and then December 22nd was here where December 21st is now. So in 3958 B.C., the earth was nearest to the sun in September, at the time of the autumnal equinox. In 1267 A.D., the earth was at perihelion at the winter solstice on December 21st, instead of December 31st which happens now. Now we have perihelion on December 31st, but in 1267, it was on December 21st, ten days of difference, and at that rate the position is shifting. Calculting further in the future, the astronomers have discovered that in 6403 A.D., the earth's perihelion will be at the vernal equinox in March, that is, earth will be nearest to the sun in March; and then again in 11719 A.D. the cycle will be at the summer solstice in July. In June

21st will come back nearest to the sun at this end Again, in 16945 A.D., the cycle will be completed at the autumnal equinox

So everything is moving in a cycle It will take so many thousands of years to come back to the same point which we had in 3958 B.C. So nothing is stationary in this world Everything is moving and everything is shifting. The earth is moving around the sun, but it is moving in a straight line The earth is coming in a zig zag way, making a curve and nodding its head. Every time the sun pulls the earth, the earth bows to the sun and then goes on again, and then it bows again, and that is the nodding and going on Therefore nothing is in a straight line, and the position will be changing, because the precession of the equinox and all other calculations, which are too deep for us to go into, will explain to us all the changes that we are going through.

Now, in the midst of these changes, what do we find ? We find that this earth is just like a child of the sun The earth has taken everything from the sun. All the particles of matter, all the forces and all the magnetic currents which the earth possesses, have come from the sun So the relation of the earth is very close to the sun. In the magnetic pole, the compass always turns towards the north So the sun is a gigantic magnet. Our life is an expression of the magnetic current, and that life would cease on earth if the rays of the sun were taken away from the earth, because the earth owes its existence entirely to the sun. The other planets will come secondary like brothers and sisters, but the main source of all strength and power is the sun. The moon has a great deal to do towards causing the conditions of the earth, because the moon is so close to the earth.

The moon's diameter is 2160 miles, while the earth's diameter is nearly 8000 miles⁴ So the moon is much smaller than the earth. The mean distance of the moon from the earth is 239,000 miles ; but the moon is not at the same distance all the time, as the perihelion and the aphelion of the earth are. So there is a perigee and an apogee of the moon Now what do we mean by the terms 'perigee' and 'apogee' ? 'Peri' means

⁴ The recent discoveries of the moon and the space by the Russian and American scientists have thrown much new light in the domains of science and astronomy

near, and 'geo' means earth and, therefore, they mean 'nearest to the earth'. Again *apo* means further away and *geo* means the earth. So when the moon is nearest to the earth, it is 26,000 miles nearer than when the moon is farthest away from the earth. This means that the distance of the earth from the moon is 239,000 miles. An ordinary express train running at the rate of 30 miles an hour will take one year to reach the moon, but it will take 332 years to reach the sun. The moon makes a complete revolution around the earth in $27\frac{1}{3}$ days, but on account of the earth's motion, it takes $29\frac{1}{2}$ days to complete the revolution. The axis of the moon is inclined a little or 5 degrees on its orbit, but the earth's inclination is $23\frac{1}{2}$ degrees. Moonlight is not very strong. The ratio of the moonlight to the sunlight would be $1/600,000$ part of the sunlight. If the whole sky were covered with full moonlight, it will scarcely make a daylight, if you can imagine that. At the polar regions during six months of day, the moon is above the horizon only in her first and last quarters, and in the tedious night of darkness in the polar regions, she is above the horizon in her second and third quarters. So the full moon is never seen at the northern Pole in the day time, but can be seen at the time of six months of night.

The moon has great attraction towards the earth, or the earth attracts the moon perhaps in the same way, or stronger than that as the moon attracts the earth. The moon has influence on our tides and when the sun and the moon come in conjunction, caused by the shadow of the earth falling upon the moon, we have the highest tides. Then eclipses of the moon are the attraction of the moon and are caused by the shadow of the earth falling upon the moon, and the attraction of the moon has a great deal to do with our vegetation.

The moon has a great deal to do with our vegetation as well as with our life on earth. It influences our mental conditions which are our psychic powers. Some people have a belief that if you sleep in the moonlight, you will be moonstruck; but that is a superstition. I have slept many nights in India under the full moon. In summer, we go up on the roof. All our roofs are flat, and as the rooms are so warm as we sleep all the night in the open air on the roof, but we never know of anyone getting moonstruck. That is a superstition.

But it is true that some people who have a tendency to go into a kind of erratic state, might get a little unbalanced, because they have the tendency to become unbalanced. The moon has a great effect upon our system. At the time of the full and the new moon, you will find there to happen physical changes in your system. Those who have suffered from certain diseases like inflammation, dropsy and other diseases, which are caused by a great deal of water in the system, feel a great change. For that reason, in our country, it is considered to be one of the most important things for the Hindus, man and woman, to fast on the eleventh day of the moon and not to eat anything at night and also on the evening of the full moon and the new moon, because it is necessary to dry the moisture of the system by fasting, and so they all observe that. Other effects are produced by the attraction of the moon. The moon being so near to the earth, has a greater influence than the planets or stars or constellation. The moon again is a child of this earth. The moon is dead. It has no atmosphere, no vegetation and no inhabitants. The scientists say that at least it is dead. There is no heat except when the sun shines on its surface. When the sun shines very strongly, it has heat almost like the boiling point, but as soon as the sun sets, the moon is away from the sun. Then it cools off very quickly, and its temperature goes down 200 degrees below zero. So no one could live there. It is tremendously hot when the sun shines, and extremely cold when it is away from the sun. It has no atmosphere to retain the heat. There being no atmosphere and diffusion of light, what would have happened on this earth? In the daylight, when the sun is not shining, you would have to carry a lantern from one room to the other; only you could see where the sun is shining brightly and everything else would be dark. And this diffusion of light in the daytime in the rooms is caused by the atmosphere which envelops the earth. That atmosphere also has the power of refracting the light of the sun and of the moon. Even when the sun is below the horizon, we see it above the horizon. It is really a delusion.

Various other things are caused by the light currents that are coming constantly from the sun. These light waves contain magnetic powers, and these magnetic powers are developing light and activity on earth; and for that reason we must

always consider that the sun is the source of light and life, and not only of this earth, but also of all other planets. As the earth is bowing down to the sun, so the other planets are making the same salutation. We must try to see the spirit of the sun that is behind the disk, which is the omnipotent and omniscient Lord of the universe, the soul of the solar system, and the starter of the evolution. He is the Creator and our heavenly Father. To Him belongs all glory and all praise of each one of us.

CHAPTER V

HELIOCENTRIC SCIENCE

We have already learned the solar system with different planets, how the planets revolve around the sun, the sun being the centre of our solar system, and the earth and its relation to the sun and to other planets, etc. Now, we shall study the special phase of this solar magnetic science which is known as the heliocentric system.

We all know that the study of astronomy was kept up by ancients for the purpose of divinization, and the prevailing belief among the Chaldeans, Hindus, Egyptians and Chinese of prehistoric time, was that the stars rule the destiny of people. That idea existed among all the ancient nations, and so they studied the movements of the stars and planets, thinking that they would discover the law which controls human destiny. It became almost a part of their religion, and was known as astrology. The Chaldean, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Hindu priests were all astrologers.

In the Vedas, we read that one of the six limbs of the scriptures (*sadangas*) was astronomy, and every priest of every nation was obliged to study astronomy. The Magi priests of ancient Persia had their temples on the top of the hills for observing the movements of heavenly bodies. They foretold future events of the people and whether the stars would bring success to their enterprise or not. All these prognostications were made by the Magi priests. The order of the Magi still exists in the country of Persia, and the chief object of this order is to study science of the stars and their influence upon our earthly lives. Tiberius, the Emperor of Rome, studied astrology. Hippocrates, their father of medicine, who lived about four hundred years before Christ and who borrowed his *Materia Medica* from India, also learned the truths of astrology, as they were taught in ancient India at that time. In medicine, especially in India, the medical practitioners always consulted the horoscope and the position of the earth, and they believed that there was a great deal of diagnosis that could be made by studying these

astronomical positions of the planets in relation to the earth.

The Hindu astronomers brought the influence of the stars in minute details in all the affairs of life, especially in the marriage and other religious ceremonies. Even today astronomy and astrology are the strongest features in India. Their almanac contains all the prophecies and foretelling of events which are connected with our earthly life. I do not wish to comment whether these prophecies and foretellings are cent percent correct or not. But still there prevail prophecies and foretellings in India. For instance, if we want to build a home, we are supposed to lay the foundation of our home at an auspicious moment and that auspicious moment must be according to the position of the planets and the position of the earth and the signs of the zodiac, and so on. The marriage ceremony could not be held without consulting the horoscopes of the bride and the groom. Parents are very particular about the wedding. The date of the wedding should be fixed by the astronomers, and all these are very strictly observed. When one would move from one house to another, he would not move on any day that he thought of moving, without consulting the astronomers, or when any particular enterprise is made, that should be in perfect harmony with the conditions of the planets. This part of astronomy is called *Phalita-jyotisha*, which literally means 'influence of planets on practical life'.

The Arabs and Moorish astronomers popularised the study of this phase of astronomy in western Europe. In western Europe, it was not so very common until the influence of the Arabs came from Asia. The Arabs learned a great deal from India. For instance, algebra, trigonometry, and the decimal notation—all these came from India. If you are interested, then you may read my book, *India and Her People*, which I delivered in my lecture in the Brooklyn Institute of Arts and Science. First of all, algebra was unknown in Europe until the beginning of the thirteenth century, when Leonardo of Pisa introduced it in Europe, but it was known in India centuries before Christ. Very few people in this country (in America) are familiar with these facts. In astronomy, India has given a great deal to the world, especially to Europe. In trigonometry, the Hindus were the first teachers in spherical

trigonometry and also in geometry. So the Moorish astrologers introduced this study of astrology in Europe during the Middle Ages, when this superstition, as has been regarded in the few centuries, reached the climax of its influence on human minds. Before undertaking any important enterprise, everybody used to consult the astrologers. Even in Europe in the Middle Ages, they drew up a horoscope, placing the sun, the moon and the planets at different signs of the zodiac, as they happened to be at the time of some one's birth, or at the beginning of one's enterprise, in the same manner as the modern astrologers and fortune-tellers are doing today in this country.

The ancient nations believed that Venus foretold love affairs, Mars, of war, and Pleiades, of storms at sea; and so on. Not only the ignorant masses in Europe believed at that time in this way, but even learned men also, like Bacon and Kepler, were firm believers in astrology. The rise of the science of astronomy and materialistic science drove it away for many centuries, but it is coming back again with full force.

Now, we will study the signs of the zodiac. It was many centuries before the Christian era that the Hindu and the Egyptian astronomers gave the name 'zodiac' to the belt of the celestial sphere eight degrees across on each side of the ecliptic and divided into twelve parts of thirty degrees each, called the signs, and gave a fanciful name to each, such as Aries, the Ram, etc. The horns of the Ram became the sign of Aries. Let me divide the zodiac here for giving you an idea of the whole thing. The sun is in the centre. Now the heliocentric system, as I will explain presently, will begin at Aries. This is the sign of Aries, the horns of a Ram. Then it goes from right to the left, and the next would be Taurus. Then would come Gemini. These are fanciful signs. The Taurus sign is like a Bull's head with horns, the Gemini are the Twins. Then comes Cancer, the Crab. Thereafter comes Leo, the Lion. Then comes Virgo, the Libra, that is, the scale. Then comes after that Scorpio, then the Sagittarius, then the Capricornus, the Aquarius, and then Pisces, two fish tied with a string. Similarly the signs of the Chinese zodiac were mouse, ox or cow, tiger, hare, dragon, serpent, sheep, archer, cock, dog and bear. Now, this will give you the signs or names of the

zodiac.¹ Each of these names refers to a constellation of stars in the heavens. The Aries, the Ram, was in ancient times the first sign of the zodiac. It is always the first sign, but, of course, now the position of the earth has changed. The first sign of the zodiac is now Aries instead of Taurus², which is of equinox. One sign, thirty degrees, it has moved almost. And this has taken thousands of years, because every year, either $50\frac{1}{4}$ seconds the earth goes backward, or the sun goes backward, whatever you may call it. That is, if the equinoctial be on a certain date this year, next year it will be twenty minutes earlier, and in that way it goes backward. That is called the precession of equinox. So that which was Aries thousands of years ago, has now become Pisces, and where Aries is today, was originally the Taurus. So Pisces was the first sign. But the modern astrologers do not consider that. They keep on referring to the Aries constellation, although it may be in Pisces, and they try to prognosticate just the same as the ancients did, but they make great mistakes. They have to calculate so much to remove all these errors, and have to undergo great difficulty in studying astrology which is geocentric.

The Greek and Roman mythology described many stories in connection with different constellations or the signs of the zodiac. For instance, Roman mythology tells us that Taurus is the animal, whose form Jupiter assumed when he bore off Europa; and Gemini the Twins were originally twin brothers, Castor and Pollux, and Jupiter transferred them after their death to heaven and immortalised them as twin stars of Gemini. As for example, in the Babylonian and Assyrian sculpture and glyptic art, Merodach has been depicted as the representation (personification) of the sun of the spring equinox. The association of Eagle and Lion is to be noticed in the arms of the city of Lagoon, they were 'a double-headed Eagle standing on a passant Lion, or on two demi-Lions placed back to back' (Cf. Maspero: *Dawn of Civilization*, p. 604). Hon'ble Plunket says

¹ I would like to draw the attention of the readers to the pages 86 and 87 of the book, *An Introduction to Astronomy* (1935) by Dr Robert H. Baker. Dr Baker has given a detailed Table (No. 4 III), where we find the Latin names, possessing English equivalent names of the constellations. Vide the 'Sphere of the Stars'—Editor.

² Or it may be Pisces.

that mythological references to the Eagle alone are also to be met with which point to the Celestial Eagle (Aquila) marking the winter solstice in lieu of the constellation Aquarius, as for instance, the Babylonian legend of the ambitious storm-bird, Zu, who stole the tablets of destiny, and thus sought to vie in power with 'the great gods'. In the columns in Persepolis and Suta, we find the representations of the demi-Bull of the zodiac. In the Medo-Persian and the Ninebite arts, we also find many striking instances of the representation of the constellations. The symbolism regarding constellations evolved in Assyria probably in earlier than 1,700 B.C. Hon'ble Plunket writes that in the Assyrian standard (depicted in Layard's *Monuments of Ninevah*, p. 1. XXII) we notice the figure of an Archer above that of a galloping Bull. These two constellations mark the date 4,000 B.C. Again we notice the Archer dominates over a circle in which symmetrically duplicated Bulls appear, and Lions' heads emerge out of what appears to be a hallow vessel resembling a water jar. Below the jar again are to be seen halved and doubled heads, partly Lion and partly Bull. Again in the monogram of the composite animal is seen the Persepolitan bas-relief, "for in the Standard, the Archer is opposed to the Bull, in the bas-relief, the Scorpion takes the place of the Archer, and the Eagle takes the place of the Water-man. All these mythological stories or figures or signs you may find also in the mythological history of the Romans as well as of the Greeks. In India, mythological gods and figures of the animals evolved also for the purpose of astronomy and astrology.

The ancient astronomy was founded upon the geocentric system (known in India first and was called Ptolemaic) of Ptolemy that the earth was the centre round which the sun with all other planets, with their moons, revolved round the earth in twenty-four hours. The earth was placed here where the sun is, and the sun was put in one corner, and they were dealing with the Ptolemaic system. But the Copernican system explains that the sun is the centre, while all other planets are revolving around it. It is based upon the apparent movements of the heavenly bodies from east to west. We see the sun rises in the east and sets in the west. That apparent motion is the foundation of the geocentric system. Heliocentric science is based not upon the apparent motion of the sun and the

planets, but upon the real motion of the earth and other planets around the sun. The position of a planet, as seen from the centre of the sun, is called the heliocentric place, while the geocentric place of a planet, as it is seen, is from the centre of the earth. You see Venus from here. I will give you an illustration Suppose Venus is here and the earth is there. Now, when Venus is between the sun and the earth, you see Venus in this direction. Draw a straight line from the Venus towards the sun and you will see Venus in Sagittarius ; but if you stand here and look at Venus, you will see Venus in Gemini. So heliocentric science means that an observer stands at the centre of the sun and looks at the position of the planets as the actual position is. But geocentric science says that both these planets are moving in the same direction round the sun, and when you look at any of these planets from the earth and look towards the sun, the sun would appear to you as in this direction, but if you stand at the sun, the earth would appear to you as in Gemini That is, the heliocentric position is the real position, and the geocentric is the apparent one, just as the apparent motion of the sun from the east to the west, but, in reality, the sun is not rising in the east and setting in the west, but the earth is moving from the west towards the east and facing the sun That is the real motion, while the apparent motion is just the opposite

When the inferior planet Venus is between the earth and the sun, then an observer at the centre of the sun would see it at the opposite part of the zodiac from that which it appears to us from the earth, and that causes a great deal of the retrograde motion, and the calculation of the retrograde motion is to be considered We know the markings of the different signs. They will remain there. We ought to have charts here to show these different things. This will give us an idea how the different retrograde motions that are to be calculated in the geocentric system, happen. Now this is the sun, and this is Venus or the planet Mercury. Now Mercury is moving from left to right and the earth too is moving in the same direction. Now, when we see Mercury here from the earth, we draw a straight line through the centre of the earth and Mercury. We would see Mercury here perhaps at Libra from this position. But if Mercury is here and we are looking at it

from this position, then we draw a line from Mercury and see it in Scorpio. Then Mercury moves in this direction. When Mercury comes here and the earth goes in the same direction, the earth comes here after a few days. Then we see Mercury has gone back and has come to Virgo. Now, you must remember the motion in this direction. This is forward and that is backward from this straight line. So when Mercury was here, before it came round on this side, Mercury appeared from the earth as rising in Scorpio, but after a few days it ought to go further on that side. Instead of that it goes backward, because the earth moves here and Mercury, being faster, this distance is greater than this, and, consequently, when we look at Mercury from here or at Venus, it would look about two signs backward. Then in geocentric system you have to calculate and deduct that difference, and that would be a great deal of waste of time and energy.

Now let us take the question of the inferior planets like Venus and Mercury which exist between the earth and the sun and also of the superior planets like Mars and Jupiter which are outside the circle. Suppose the earth is next to the sun and here we see the planet. We see in this planet a straight line in this direction. Now the earth moves from here in this direction to the right, and when the earth comes here, the motion of this planet is not so fast as our earth's motion. So if we look at this planet from here, we will see it in Pisces, a straight line from Pisces to Aries. Our earth moves still further. When the earth was here, we saw this planet about here, but practically when the earth moved here, it came backward, to which it cannot go. This planet goes this way. But if this be Jupiter or Mars, we will see Mars just the opposite and going backward to Pisces; then if it goes still further, after a while it remains in the same spot; then as it moves again, we see it moving forward again; then when the earth would come here, we would see it in the same spot again, and in this way we find that the backward and forward motion (you have to calculate and deduct all these) is at the cause of all that difference, and all this computation is regarded as unnecessary that you have in the geocentric system. According to heliocentric system, no such difficulty will arise, and it is perfectly in harmony with modern astronomy. Now, if you see the

observer at the sun instead of the earth, then the planets would always appear where they really belong, and there would be no calculation, or there would be waste of time in trying to find the position. I would like to draw your attention to the fact that heliocentric science divides the zodiac into twelve parts, as I have already told you

Now, I will go back again to the signs of the zodiac. We know that this is the whole circle, which means 360 degrees, and it is divided into twelve. This is the whole ecliptic, and is divided into twelve parts, thirty degrees each. In geocentric system zodiac begins at Aries here, and they come down this way. Of course, they consider the vernal equinox as the sign of Aries. The sun is in the Aries then. But the earth is just in the opposite position. The earth would be here at the summer solstice; but in heliocentric system you will notice that Aries is put here, and you can imagine, this circle is not a complete circle, but is oval like this, and that is the position here. These are the four quarters of the zodiac. Now this position is here, and that is called Aries. Now why it is called Aries and how to begin with the first sign of the zodiac, that is the most important thing. The solar magnetic (heliocentric) science teaches us that the zodiac is based upon the law of matter and of the positive and negative principles of a magnet and the sun being the positive head of our solar system, is that gigantic magnet. It, therefore, tells us that the positive head or pole of the zodiac is that point where it culminates the greatest magnetic relation between the sun and the planets. Now how to find that point? We can only find that point by calculating the position of different planets and the time when the greatest power or magnetic relation is culminated. So that point is to be considered as the first sign of the zodiac. In our previous lecture we learned that Jupiter is the largest and most powerful of all the planets. Its magnetic currents are the strongest when it is nearest to the sun at its perihelion. When the planet Jupiter is nearest to the sun, it is called perihelion, and when it is farthest away, it is called aphelion. Jupiter is at its perihelion when it is at twelve degrees in the sign of Aries. So when Jupiter is in twelve degrees at the sign of Aries, that would be the first sign of the zodiac. That is the most positive, because Jupiter being the largest planet and being

nearest to the sun, has tremendous influence on the other planets. For that reason that position of twelve degrees of the sign of Aries is the first sign of the zodiac. When our earth comes to that point i.e. comes in a straight line with the sun and Jupiter and when the sun's rays fall directly and perpendicularly at the equator of the earth, that position must be when the sun's rays fall directly at the equator of the earth perpendicularly and Jupiter is also in conjunction, and that is the nearest point or the most positive point in the whole zodiac. There is the first sign of the head of the zodiac. So the head of the zodiac will be in Aries, because the head is positive and the right side of this zodiac is also positive. The line which goes to Libra, is also positive. The left side is the negative side, just like a magnet. The earth bears the same relation to the sun at the opposite point, at Libra, which marks the first sign of Libra. The summer and the winter solstice become the signs of the Cancer and the Capricornus. At the summer solstice the earth is nearest to the sun. Now we find that the zodiac is divided into four quarters. These four quarters of zodiac are named. The first quarter is called the 'quarter of love'; the second quarter from Aries to Cancer is called the 'quarter of wisdom'; the third quarter is the 'quarter of wealth', and the fourth quarter is the 'quarter of labour'. In this way, the solar magnetic science divides the quarters: first of love, second of wisdom, third of wealth and fourth of labour.

Another thing which this science does, is that it points out these different sections. Each sign of the zodiac is called by different names. This is called the mind or Aries. I will have to explain how that sign Aries has relation to our mind. This science shows that there is perfect harmony between the universal body of the zodiac and the individual body of the human being. There is a co-relation and co-ordination just as our head is the positive. Our feet are the negative poles of this magnet of the human body. So, in the zodiac, you will notice there is a positive point and the negative pole. Now Pisces is the negative pole. There belongs the feet of the universal man. Here is the head of the universal man. If you imagine a man standing on Pisces and going around, and his solar plexus is at Libra, his heart is at Leo, his lungs at Gemini and his neck at Taurus, then he goes on like that. The whole being of

man may be compared to a psychometer. It is psychometrically related to the solar system and is particularly sensitive to the planetary vibrations which affect our earth on account of their relative positions. Like attracts like. The positive pole of the human body is attracted to the positive pole of the zodiac. The head must be attracted to the sign of Aries, as it is the head of the zodiac. Of course, it is in a circular form. If this circle could be straightened out, leaving Pisces as the feet, then we can understand by this that it would correspond our human body to these two signs. The man is standing on Pisces and is bending his head towards his feet, making his head come down to Aries. This represents the celestial being, the man of the zodiac. The brain of man and Aries are intimately related in the scheme of the nature. The brain of man is more or less affected or influenced by the Aries. When the earth is in Aries, if a person is born, the influence of Aries will be on his head, and that has been recorded by observing hundreds of thousands of instances from prehistoric times. So we have no other way of proving its truth except by taking the tradition and also these records of the ancient people. A man born in Aries is positive, intellectual and active in mental pursuits. Inventive geniuses are born under the influence of Aries, because Aries influences the head. They prefer intellectual to physical pursuits. On account of this tremendous mental activity, it is called also a fire sign, and so Aries can be known as the fire sign.

The next to Aries, Taurus will be the earth sign. Taurus is the earth. Then Gemini is the air sign, and Cancer, the water-sign. Then again it begins, i.e. Leo as the fire sign, etc. and in this way they recur as fire, earth, air, water; then fire, earth, air, water etc. That is the way it is divided in heliocentric system of solar magnetic science.

Aries is also the sign of fevers of expression, speech, appetite, and so on. It is the ruler of the brain. Whatever planet is in aspect to this sign, no matter where the earth may be, but if the earth be at the quadrature, then the brain is of the individual. If the brain is at right-angles to this sign, then that is a very strong position, and, therefore, the influence of Aries will be upon the person who is born in Cancer. Further mental and spiritual conditions of a child will be influenced by such a relationship, because the Aries sign, being the head of the solar

system, will influence the head of the child, no matter where the earth is, in some form or another that influence will be. The vibrant forces of different planets, when planned harmoniously, give good results, and if they are inharmonious, they give troubles. As Aries is the positive pole of the zodiac, Pisces is the negative pole, corresponding to the feet. The earth bears the same relation as to polarity in Libra, as it does to Aries. Libra is the ruler of our solar system In the human body, the solar plexus is influenced by Libra. That is the little brain. Again the other brain, the larger one, is influenced by Aries So we can correspond our whole being to the chest The earth is in perihelion while at Cancer, nearest to the chest. The earth is in perihelion while at Cancer, nearest the sun. Therefore the physical constitutions of those, born in this sign, are strong and enduring It is an intellectual sign being in quadrature to Aries and Libra or being at right angles to Aries and right angles to Libra, and, therefore, it has strong intellectual force. Capricornus then would control the influence and the first sign of the quarter of labour, because it has influence just on the knees and also from the knees to the feet. The legs are for moving for work and for labour, i e for walking or doing anything and running around. That is physical labour, and, therefore, the knee begins from here, and then goes down here. Just below the knees the calf of the leg would be in the Aquarius. Now we come to Taurus, as Aries is the mental sign, so Taurus is the vital sign.

Taurus is just on the neck of the man who is stooping down towards his feet. The lower brain, the cerebellum, is in this sign, and all the nerve centres in the medulla oblongata are here, and Taurus takes care of that part Then Gemini takes care of the lungs, as the lungs are in Gemini But Taurus gives physical force and vital energy or enterprise. Taurus has control over all these physical forces or physical energies All diseases of the nervous system, sore-throat, catarrhal troubles, diphtheria, coughs and colds, and nervous prostration, bronchial consumption, and other troubles come when bad aspects are at Taurus I have already said that Gemini rules over the lungs It is also called the house of marriage, for those who are born under this sign, do not care to live a single life. They are not happy until they are married. Those who are

born in the Gemini, are domestic, upright and honourable. But if there be any influence of any planet which is inharmonious, that would affect the lungs. For instance, if saturn is in opposition to Gemini while the person is born, brings destruction and influences the lungs being in opposition. Saturn's forces are destructive. Therefore those persons who are consumptive, will find that Saturn is a bad aspect to the house. Invariably it is so, and for that reason we give so much stress on the science of astrology and correct readings of horoscope. As Gemini is the ruler of the lungs, so Cancer is the ruler of the chest and Leo is the ruler of the heart. What Aries is to the mental man, Leo is to the physical man. That is his physical body. The vital functions and heart troubles come when planets are in unfavourable aspect at this sign of Leo.

Now we have understood these principal parts of the human body that can be influenced at different signs of the zodiac, when the planets are in favourable or unfavourable position. If they are favourably accepted then the result is good, but if they are unfavourably accepted, the result is bad.

In this zodiac, there are three crosses: one cross with Aries and Libra on one side, and Cancer and Capricorn on the other. That cross is considered to be the male cross. And Taurus and Scorpio and Leo and Aquarius make another cross. That is vital or is a female aspect. These four different crosses will make a male i.e. masculine aspect. And this other cross, Taurus and Scorpio and Leo and Aquarius, will make it female or the vital cross. The other cross is Gemini and Sagittarius, just the opposite, and Virgo and Pisces make another cross which is the neutral cross. So there are male, female and vital, or male, vital and neutral. Now each quarter can also be divided into these three sections, and each sign has influence either over the mind, or over the physical body, as Taurus has the influence over the physical body, but Gemini is considered as neutral. Then begins again the mental one. It has corresponding relation at quadrature with the Aries sign, or at right angles. Capricornus is at right angles with Aries as well as with Libra, so it makes the cross complete. Therefore these four signs may be male or maculine, feminine or vital, or they may be the neutral signs. It has been said that the mental sign is the fire.

Now let us come back to our zodiacal signs. Virgo rules

over our stomach, liver and kidneys. Virgo has influence over these organs. They are here, and the solar plexus is here in Libra. Virgo makes one emotional, spiritual and religious. Virgo has a good influence over our physical and mental conditions. Scorpio includes the secrets, the negative pole of the masculine and nervous centres. Here is the positive pole, and the negative pole is in Scorpio. Sagittarius governs the part of the leg above the knee, which is called thigh. The hands and the fingers will come to Capricornus. So if there be any bad aspect in Sagittarius, rheumatism would be the result and rheumatic troubles will begin in the legs. Capricornus governs the nails above the knees. Aquarius controls the ends of the leg. And if Sagittarius has bad aspect, then the calves of our legs would have rheumatic trouble. So there is the influence. The hands would be on the side of the man that is stooping. There is a beautiful chart that will show the whole figure of the body with the arms, hands and different organs. Just as I have described you can make a mental picture of it. Of course, this course of lessons that I am giving, will give you an idea of what a scientific method it is. You cannot call it astrology, but call it the solar magnetic science. It is perfectly scientific and any one can accept it. It can be used also in the sense of astrology. Aquarius controls the calves of the legs, from the knees down, and this is the calf of the leg, and here is the feet. So if it is badly accepted, paralysis is the main physical disturbance that arises here in Aquarius, and all the troubles of the toes and the feet come in Pisces, i.e. when the planets are in bad aspect to Pisces.

Thus by studying solar anatomy we can tell the various causes of diseases and can diagnose them by studying the positions and various aspects of the planets and the earth. Now I will explain to you what planets would harmonize, and what planetary influences would harmonize with other influences. We know that we can learn by the position of different planets which we find at the time of the birth of an individual or at any other time. If Mercury comes in a certain aspect with the earth and also other planets which are in different places with different signs of the zodiac, then Mercury blends favourably with Venus, Jupiter and Uranus. But it is not harmonious with Mars, Saturn and Neptune. If Mercury would come in

In the Vedas, we read that before the beginning of evolution of this world, the First-born Lord of the universe was sacrificed by the gods. Of course, the gods came later, and they sacrificed the Lord and cut off His limbs and His parts, and from each limb or organ of the Lord's body were produced the limbs and organs of the human beings and the animals on this earth. That is a very beautiful idea and that has been described by the Vedas centuries before the art of writing and science of reading were known, and this idea is no other than that of the crucifixion of the First-born Lord of the universe. Some of the Christian missionaries think that the hymn which describes the sacrifice, was written after the time of Jesus the Christ and was taken from the life of Christ. It is perfectly absurd, because the vedic hymns were composed or collected some centuries before the birth of Christ.

Now, the study of this solar magnetic science will give you an idea of how each part of our body is related to the corresponding part of the celestial being who dwells in the signs of the zodiac. It is also based upon the process of evolution. It does not believe in the theory of special creation. I have explained to you how from one homogeneous nebulous mass all these different planets have gradually evolved or been formed, and it must have taken millions and millions of years. At first the whole solar system was covered with a gaseous substance, which is known as nebula, and gradually nuclei were formed, and then they were separated, and the sun became the central figure around which all the planets are revolving.

It also admits the reincarnation of the individual souls. That is a grand thing. I do not believe that ordinary astrologers think of that phase of reincarnation. Because when a soul gravitates to this earth and takes up a human form, that soul is guided by the laws of nature to take a body which will have certain influences, not only of the signs of the zodiac, but also of the different planets and the planetary system, and that particular point where these signs will all combine and help the physical and mental conditions of the new-born child, or reincarnating soul is attracted to that. Reincarnation does not take place all of a sudden. The soul is waiting for an opportunity, and, of course, those souls that are advanced spiritually, can be conscious of those conditions, but with ordinary mortals

that consciousness may not exist. They are unconsciously drawn towards such conditions ; or, in other words, they gravitate. That gravitation again is guided by the law of *karma*, of action and reaction, by thoughts and deeds of previous lives. So when we come to this plane, we are not only in perfect harmony with the planetary conditions with the influence of the signs of the zodiac, but also we are governed by thoughts and deeds of our previous lives. How this wonderful harmony is regulated is the object for study. It is the great mystery. Again, it is the intelligent supreme Spirit which is behind all these manifestations. All these laws are nothing but the expressions of the one Divine will which is working behind all phenomena. The more we study our earth and the planets and our relation to the solar system, the grander become our views. All narrowness and bigotry and selfishness will vanish away. It makes one more spiritual. It helps us in rising above the earthly conditions. We get a glimpse of this vast universe. How small we are! How infinitesimally insignificant we are! Yet we have so much pride. We have thought that we are going to own this earth and rule over nations. Little pride, little vanity, or little honour force us to arms. Compared to the universe these things seem very small, childish and unnecessary. One cannot help becoming spiritual, one cannot help realizing the oneness of the individual body with the universal body, one cannot help to know the oneness of the individual soul with the universal Spirit. So, that ideal of the oneness of the individual soul with the universal Spirit is emphasised very strongly in this solar magnetic science which is helpful not only in opening our eyes to the physical conditions which are related to our solar system and to the universe, but also to the mental conditions, intellectual conditions, and spiritual laws which govern our souls, and which when properly understood, will reveal to us the highest Truth, the grandest wisdom that was understood by Jesus the Christ, by Buddha, by Ramakrishna, and by other great Saviours of the world. Then we shall understand the true science of life and the true philosophy and true religion which mean the science of the soul, and not believing on blind faith with a set of dogmas and doctrines which have been handed down to us through generations but by realizing the truth. So the study of this science is beneficial to mankind,

and for that reason I thought that I would give you an idea and open your views and your minds to the universal laws and the highest spiritual truths which are hidden behind the surface of the phenomenal world. Vedanta accepts all these laws, and tells us, there is only one truth—“That which exists, is one. Men call it by various names”—‘*ekam sad vipra vadanti*’.

ADDENDA

Richmond's *Religion of the Universe* is a good book which teaches both science of the universe and science of the soul. Butler's system is different from what I have explained. Ormsby is another very good man in Chicago. He has been trying to teach this system and has written some books on this line, but that is very expensive. He charges too much for his books and for his lessons. There are other heliocentric writers, but I do not believe they go so deep as I have explained to you.

After studying this you may become more superstitious and you may feel you are like a slave to the physical conditions of this planetary influence, but Vedanta teaches that the will of the human beings is all-powerful, and if you hold the thought and bring out the soul's power, you will be able to overcome all these natural influences. The soul or the *Atman* is greater than that of the solar system. The soul is a part of the omnipotent and divine Being, and it has absolute power to change all the natural or phenomenal conditions, no matter how the planets are against you. If you can send out your vibrations i.e. soul vibrations, which is no other than the spiritual forces, then that will overcome all these planetary influences. That is also taught in our country (in India). If an astrologer would cast your horoscope, he would tell you: "These are the conditions, but there is the way out of it, and you can overcome these conditions by performing the spiritual practices or observing the spiritual laws". That is not done in this country (in the West), because the people of the West, who are generally materialists, do not take spiritual side into consideration. You should remember that the power of the soul is greater than the power of the solar system. Because one is material of the phenomenal world, including the earth and the heaven, whereas the other is concerned with the spirit, which animates but transcends the limit of the world and makes a man a God-man. We should remember that we are the immortal Soul inspite of our changing covering of the material body and we can create

our conditions and destiny. We can overcome these planetary influences by our good thoughts and can immortalize ourselves by realizing the soul of the planetary system, which is the immortal *Atman*.

RELIGION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

PREFACE

Religion of the Twentieth Century is a thesis on scientific approach towards religion and at the same time towards philosophy. Swami Abhedananda says that twentieth century is called the age of science and reason, and, therefore, all studies and investigations should be made with a new scientific outlook. Every-day science is forcing us to remodel our own old ideas, to change our old habits, to rebuild our dwelling houses and to reform our societies, so the twentieth century needs religion which will not support any doctrine or dogma which cannot be sustained by scientific reasoning and, therefore, there must be wedding of science with religion and philosophy, and science must accompany both religion and philosophy to get comprehensive knowledge or experience. Prof C E M Joad has pleaded for this wedding of modern science with philosophy and religion for getting wider knowledge of everything of the world as well as of the World-Essence. In the Introduction of his book, *Philosophical Aspect of Modern Science*, he has stated: "It is often said that current developments in physical science have no bearing upon philosophical problems, and that the metaphysician may ignore them as lying outside his province. ** For it is the business of philosophy to correlate the evidence collected by the special sciences, and to try to fit it into a coherent scheme of the universe as a whole. Nor is it only the special sciences which afford data for the philosopher, for the vision of the artist, the religious consciousness of the saint and the day-to-day experience of the plain man are equally facts of which philosophy must take cognizance".

Prof A. N Whitehead has also discussed this point of agreement between science and philosophy and also between science and religion in the chapters IX and XII of his book, *Science and the Modern World*. He has said that the history of philosophy runs curiously parallel to that of science "In the case of both, the seventeenth century set the stage for its two successors. But with the twentieth century a new act commences. It is an exaggeration to attribute a general change in the climate

of thought to any one piece of writing, to any one author. * * The scientific materialism and the cartesian Age were both challenged at the same moment, one by science and the other by philosophy, as represented by William James with his psychological antecedents, "Really there happened a conflict between the interpretation or presentation of the objective world of science and that of the subjective world of philosophy, but that conflict was merely a superficial one, as the terms, subject and object, or the subjective and the objective, being relational, are not constant and absolute real."

Similar verdict can be given in the case of seeming conflict between science and religion. In fact, change in outlook as well as modification in the expression or interpretation of the principles and truths of both science and religion are essential for avoiding the conflict between them. As for example, says Prof. Whitehead, "Religion will not regain its old power until it can face change in the same spirit as does science. Its principles may be eternal, but the expression of those principles require continual development. This evolution of religion is in the main a disengagement of its own proper ideas from the adventitious notions which have crept into it reason of the expression of its own ideas in terms of the imaginative picture of the world entertained in previous ages * * In so far, therefore, as any religion has any contact with physical facts, it is to be expected that the point of view of those facts must be continually modified as scientific knowledge advances. In this way, the exact relevance of these facts for religious thought will grow more and more clear. The progress of science must result in the increasing codification of religious thought, to the great advantage of religion" (cf *Science and the Modern World*, Penguin series, p. 219).

Swami Abhedananda has similarly said that the twentieth century needs a religion (and also a philosophy) which will harmonize with the ultimate conclusion of all great philosophers of all countries and will be based upon the moral and spiritual laws which govern our lives. The real contention of the Swami's statement is that modern science is rendering a great service to the domains of religion and philosophy, and it is quite evident from the modern tendencies of both science and philosophy that they are trying their best to co-operate with each other for

arriving at a wider knowledge of everything pertaining to the physical worlds and the world beyond our senses Prof Errol E Harris forwards also a similar statement while he discusses about science, philosophy and religion in the chapter X of his book, *Nature, Mind and Modern Science* He writes. "Modern science has progressed beyond the empirical attitude and tends to become philosophical. Meanwhile modern philosophy has more and more become allied to the sciences and our foremost philosophers are eminent scientific figures". He has further stated. "Similarly, the 19th century conflict between science and religion has passed away, except for vestigial concepts both in science and religion handed down from the era of matter-minded dichotomy. In the process of evolution which is nature, the crown of the completed series of forms is God ; and because, as such, He is the realization of a transcendent perfection, we tend in common parlance to speak of Him as apart from, beyond and above nature—and so, in certain moods to deny His existence altogether. But this * * is to break the undivided and indivisible chain of the series and to render nature as unintelligent * and meaningless as God which the atheist rejects The same tendency, owing to the divine character of the higher act of mind, leads to a denial by some of the objectivity (i.e. the reality) of values and even of the existence of thinking itself But though God transcends the process of development—as must be the case if He is its fulfilment—He is also necessarily immanent in and throughout the process—or else it could not be a process of development at all Consequently, the existence of God is the absolute and most indispensable presupposition of science, and so far from there being alienation of science from religion in the modern era, there is and can only be the closest *reapproachment* between them if both scientific and religious concepts are rightly interpreted"

Swami Abhedananda is of the same opinion though he forwards it in a different way He says. "The religion of the twentieth century needs a conception of God who is personal, impersonal, and beyond both, whose supreme aspect will harmonize with the absolute Reality of the universe called by different name, * *". But the Swami says that it is true that modern science presupposes the existence of God as the world-cause and also it is a fact that all the philosophers in this

scientific age admit the existence of God or a Divine Being, and give different names of God or the Supreme Being, but yet it should be remembered that when we give a name and personality to the Divine Being, we project our own ideas and make God or the Divine Being limited by our conception of His personality. Why should God be limited by our name and conception of His personality? (Here Swami Abhedananda calls God as the absolute Brahman which knows no limiting adjunct of categories and limitation of time-space-causation). We must realize Him as the Infinite Being beyond all limitations of our conceptions, of our ideas, and the Divine Being should be harmonized with the highest ideals of the greatest philosophers and scientists of the world. In that way we will find an absolute harmony between religion and science. Herbert Spencer had in his mind this grand idea of harmony, and so he (Herbert Spencer) has said that the most abstract truth contained in religion and the most abstract truth contained in science must be one in which two coalesce.

The physicists of this present age are trying to harmonize religion and philosophy with the ultimate conclusions of modern science. In the remote days in India, we also find scientific knowledge in the field of philosophy. The great and original thinkers like Kapila, Gautama, Kanada and others worked out their philosophical systems entirely based upon methodical knowledge and scientific analysis. As for example, modern science has discovered that various forces of nature like electricity, light, heat, motion, gravitation, etc. are so many expressions or manifestations of one eternal cosmic Energy and it is interesting to note that some thousands years ago Kapila, the father of the theory of evolution, discovered that everything in this universe evolved out of the Nature or *Prakriti*, coming in contact with the ever-intelligent *Purusha*, and effect is contained in cause, as when dissolution of the world happens, effect, the world-appearance, is contained in seed form in the womb of cause, the *Prakriti*, and so dissolution means effect returns to its original state of cause. Swami Abhedananda has also drawn our attention to this scientific fact or theory of the *Sankhya*, and has said that this system of the *Sankhya* philosophy has been adopted by modern science. The Swami further states: "Modern science is just the beginning to grasp the

truth that cause lies in effect, that cause and effect are like the unmanifested and manifested states of the same thing. But this truth was taught in India from very ancient time".

The atomic theory was first discovered in India by Kanada, the author of the *Vaisesika* philosophy and in Greece by Democritus, Leucippus and Lucretius. It is said that many Greek philosophers from Democritus onward had also imagined matter to consist, in the last resort, of hard indivisible pellets and those pellets were at first called 'atoms' which were incapable of being divided. Anaxagoras maintained that those pellets possessed in itself all the characteristic properties of the substance to which it belonged. After a long time John Dalton, Lavoisier, Maxwell and other scientists made experiments on atom and considered it to be an essential ingredient of physical science. The physicists of the 19th century found that all matter is possessed of interia and is capable of motion. They said that energy is matter, or is in atom, which can exist in a number of forms and can change about almost endlessly from one form to another, but it can never be utterly destroyed. From generalisation it has been found that the whole universe is built solely of the 90 or 92 types (90 already known and 2 or possibly even more still to be discovered) of atom found on earth.

Sir James Jeans is of the opinion that until quite recently, atoms were regarded as the permanent bricks of which the whole universe was built. It was towards the end of the last century that Prof Crookes, Lenard, and above all Sir J J Thompson first began to break up the atom. "The structures which had been deemed the unbreakable bricks of the universe for more than 2,000 years, were suddenly shown to be very susceptible to having fragments chipped off. A mile-stone was reached in 1897 when Thompson showed that these fragments were identical no matter what type of atom they came from, they were of equal weight and they carried equal charges of magnetic electricity. On account of this last property they were called 'electrons'" (vide *The Universe Around us*, 1933, p. 120). In 1911, experiments by Sir Ernest Rutherford and others revealed the architecture of atom, and specially Prof. Rutherford supposed the atom "to be constructed like the solar system, the heavy central nucleus playing the part of the sun

and the electrons acting the parts of the planets". Prof. Rutherford's experiments were afterwards extended by Bohr and other scientists.

Now it can be mentioned that while physical science was still engaged in breaking up the atoms into its component factors, it made the further discovery that the nuclei themselves were neither permanent nor indestructible. Prof. Jeans writes that in 1896, Becquerel "had found that various substances containing uranium possessed the remarkable property, as it then appeared, of spontaneously affecting photographic plates in their vicinity. This observation led to the discovery of a new property of matter, namely radio-activity". The physicists say that the act of breaking-up of a radio-active atom may be compared to the discharge of a gun, "the X-particle is the shot fired, the B-particles are the smoke, and the Y-rays are the flash". It is a fact that from that time onward the scientists were not at rest, but were engaged in experimenting the field of atoms and discovered many new things and theories which have been recorded in the pages of science. It will be interesting to mention here a news or a comment appeared in *The Statesman*, Wednesday, August 30, 1967. The news has been published with the heading, *New Theory on Core of Atom*. Let me quote the interesting news which has thrown some new lights on the recent discoveries on exploring of atom. The news says— "ROCHESTER, August 29—Two Japanese scientists, one a Nobel Prize winner, suggested yesterday that the particles in the nucleus or core of the atom are not pointlike objects, but billowing objects like silk handkerchiefs, reports AP. Dr Hideki Yukawa and Dr Kashuisa Katayana of Kyoto University in Tokyo presented their report to a gathering of some 350 of the world's leading theoretical physicists meeting at the University of Rochester.

"For years, it appeared that the nucleus, of the atom was made up only of familiar protons and neutrons, with electrons whirling around like planets orbiting the sun. But the advent of bigger and bigger atom smasher and accelerators, gave the physicists the power to crack open the nucleus and out spilled a mass of strange new particles. Dr Yukawa, the Nobel laureate and his group have been trying for years to develop a theory that would accurately describe the particles as being

extended in space and time, not as points, and still withstand challenge from other scientists.

"Most descriptions of the particles view them as pointlike objects, something like vanishingly small balls. But Dr. Yukawa's theory considers a particle as extended—instead of a ball moving through space in a 'five time' as something like a fluttering silk handkerchief falling to the ground. Unlike the ball, if you waved the silk handkerchief in the air and let go, you wouldn't be sure just when it started to fall or when it came to rest, and its exact shape while in motion would be vague".

Now Dr. Hideki Yukawa's discovery about the core of atom has explored a new mystery for not only of the physicists, but also of all who are inquisitive to know about atom which is considered as a matrix of the universe by all the scientists and philosophers of all nations

Now regarding the atomic theory which was discovered by Kanada in India, it can be said that atom which was regarded by Kanada as the matrix or norm of evolution of the world-appearance, was permanent (*nitya*) and, therefore, unchanging and indivisible (*avibhajya*). The followers of the *Vaisesika* philosophy hold “तत्र परमाणुरूपा नित्या, तदन्याऽवयवयोगिन्यनित्या * *। तत्र परमाणुरूपं नित्यं, द्वयनुकादिरूपं त्वनित्यम्” i.e. an atom (*paramanu*) is ie an atom (*paramanu*) is undying and permanent (*nitya*) and everything other than *paramanu* is impermanent and divisible ; undying and permanent (*nitya*) and everything other than *paramanu* is impermanent and divisible. An atom is permanent and a dyad, composed of two atoms, is impermanent. And “तत्र द्वाभ्यां परमाणुभ्यां द्वयनुकं त्रिभिर्द्वयनुकैस्त्रयसरेणुरित्यादिक्लेणावयविनामुडपत्तिः” ie *dvyanuka* is composed of two monads and i.e *dvyanuka* is composed of two atoms and *trasarenu* is composed of three dyads, and in this way all the material objects evolved or were created. Now it can be asked as to how the action originates in an atom. To this Kanada said that the Will of God is the cause for creating action (vibrations) in atom. Now it is found that God's Will is the remote cause and triad or *trasarenu* (combination of three dyads) is the immediate cause for creation of the cosmos. And from the contention of Kanada's plea for permanency and indestructibility of atom, it can be said that science has not yet been able to

explore the real mystery of atom as devised by Kanada. But modern science claims that it has been able to unveil the core of the mystery of atom which is recognised as the basic ingredient or energy-mass of evolution of the universe.

Further it can be said that some thousands years ago the seers of the *Upanishads* discovered the truth that everything phenomenal and mental is indestructible and nothing is lost in this universe, but remains after dissolution in its original causal state. As for example, the five gross elements like ether, air, water, fire and earth remain in their causal states after dissolution and they evolve again in gross forms in the time of evolution. Modern science has also discovered this truth, and has forwarded that everything in this universe is indestructible and nothing is lost. So we find that not only in these present days, but also in ancient times, the philosophers of India discovered the laws of nature and harmonized them with the coherent system of science, and this tendency of harmonization is also predominant among the philosophers and the scientists in this modern age.

Swami Abhedananda has tried in various ways to prove in this book, *Religion of the Twentieth Century* that modern science is trying to discover truth which is eternal and religion is also trying to discover and worship truth which is eternal, and, therefore, there is no disharmony or sense of discord between the attempts as well as the goals of both science and religion, and so every seeker after truth should consider science and religion as the best and common means to reach the ultimate goal of harmony and peace. The Swami therefore says: "The twentieth century needs a religion which will be in perfect harmony with all the truths discovered by modern science which are based upon the principle of unity in variety, and which regard the material and efficient cause of the universe as one and the same".

But there rises a problem when both monism of science and monism of Vedanta are placed before a man for solution. Swami Abhedananda writes: "Vedanta is more logical and more scientific than the materialistic monism of science". Here the Swami intends to say that idealistic or spiritualistic monism of Vedanta is more logical and scientific than materialistic monism of science. Now what do we mean by materialistic

monism as advanced by science? Swami Abhedananda has already discussed this question that science also believes that the same Reality is manifested as both the objective world and the subjective world—as both mind, intelligence understanding, emotion, willing, etc. on one side and as gravitation, electricity, heat, light, motion, etc. on the other side. Therefore, “the ultimate conclusion of monistic science is unity in variety”. Through the help of this materialistic viewpoint of monism, science also concludes like Herbert Spencer and Immanuel Kant that the Reality or Thing-in-Itself of this expanding universe is unknown and unknowable. But Swami Abhedananda has refuted this monistic view of science and also the objective idealistic views of Herbert Spencer and Immanuel Kant by stating like Sankara that the Reality or the absolute Essence is not altogether unknown and unknowable, as it is known or realized by immediate awareness. So, according to the Swami, one should know how to discriminate monism as advanced by Vedanta from monism as forwarded by science, because the former interprets the absolute Reality through the idealistic or spiritualistic viewpoint and says that when the absolute Reality is intimately known or realized, the world, composed of time, space and causation, is transcended, whereas when the Reality of science is apperceived as unknown and unknowable, the materialistic world remains as manifestation of the Reality which is the common source of all physical and psychical powers and also of both the subjectivity and the objectivity of the universe. In fact, materialistic scientific monism or monism of science naturally lands in dualism like ‘neutral monism’ as advanced by Prof. Bertrand Russel who fought against mind and matter and hopelessly attempted to get over dualism by postulating the neutral stuff.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA.

THE RELIGION OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

The twentieth century may be called the age of science and reason. In this age everything that is based upon scientific truth, or upon rational foundation, appeals to our mind and we accept it as truth. Science today rules over our thoughts and reason and our present tendency is to make all physical and mental activities harmonize with the laws explained by modern science. Our general tendency is to apply the truths of science to the acts of our daily life. In cooking, eating, drinking, dressing, walking and in all avocations of life we try to observe the laws of nature as discovered by the scientists of today. We are now ready to reject everything which is not approved by the scientific thinkers of the world. Every-day science is forcing us to remodel our old ideas, to change our old habits, to rebuild our dwelling houses, and to reform our societies.

Scientific investigations have opened before our eyes the doors of the unknown realms of the universe. With the help of the torch-light of modern science, we are now able to see the vastness and grandeur of the phenomenal universe and the most exquisite beauty and perfection in every minute detail of the objects of nature from the smallest to the largest. Science has revealed to us the profoundest depth of nature and has taken the seekers after truth, step by step, along the path of evolution into the realm of the finer forces that operate upon the invisible particles of matter known as atoms and molecules. Scientific researches have not only explained the constituent elements which produce the phenomenal objects, but have also revealed to us that those which were so long known as atoms, are not, in reality indivisible units. There are particles finer than atoms. Each atom can be subdivided into electrons and protons which make up its body and form. Each of these electrons may be called an ethereal centre of force similar to negative electricity. Governed by the law of attraction and repulsion these electrons produce atoms, molecules and elements of nature.

Today the light of new knowledge has dawned upon the horizon of our minds and with its help we can see things which were unknown to the thinkers of the past centuries. Science has also demonstrated that the various forces of nature like electricity, heat, light, motion, gravitation etc. are nothing but so many expressions or manifestations of one eternal cosmic energy.

Modern science has disproved, as we all know, the theory of special creation in a definite period of time, but, on the contrary, it has shown that this world has come to its present state through a gradual process of evolution which must have lasted for millions and millions of years. By this theory of evolution modern science has given a death-blow to the Biblical cosmogony which depends upon the theory of special creation.

The astronomical discoveries of the present century have shown the most wonderful things of the visible universe. Modern astronomy teaches us that the distance to the sun from this earth is only ninety-three millions of miles. Most of the planets are over one hundred millions of miles away from us and the diameter of the solar system is only six thousand millions of miles; and, to cross this space, light travelling at the rate of one hundred and eighty-six thousand miles per second would take only nine minutes to reach us. The nearest star beyond our solar system is so distant that the light emanating from that star takes three years and a half to reach our earth. Some of these stars are so remote that the light which we see from them today, probably left them long before Jesus was born, before the Egyptian pyramid was built, nay, long before the earth was created according to the theory of the Genesis. Perhaps when that light reaches our planet, the star from which it emanated centuries ago, has become extinct in the meantime. Think of the immensity of space and vastness of the universe and conceive of the time when these luminaries first appeared in the heavens, and compare your conception with the stories of creation which you have learnt from your childhood.

The geological researches of this century have shown that man did not appear on the earth for the first time six thousand years ago, as the Christian Bible teaches, but in the Tertiary

period which goes beyond fifty thousand or one million years from today.

Comparative anatomy and physiology have proved that human organism was not the result of a special creation as described in the Genesis, but that it was closely related to the organism of the lower animals. It was the result of the gradual process of evolution from a lower form to a higher one. Furthermore it has been scientifically demonstrated that the life-principle manifests itself not only through animal forms but also through vegetables and even through inorganic metals. We have learnt today that the plants have eyes and other senses, that they have something like a nervous system, pulsation, heart-beat and the power to feel pain, etc. Those who have read Sir J. C. Bose's famous book entitled. *Response in the Living and Non-living*, will remember that ordinary metal like iron or tin manifests life-force and responds to an electric shock in the same manner as a living tissue or a muscle of a living animal. This discovery has revolutionized our conception of life and non-life. Moreover, it has emphasized that old truth mentioned in the Vedas that life-force or *Prana* is one and universal, although its manifestations are multiform.

Biology has disproved the old theory that God breathed life into the nostrils of the first man before he became a living animal, as if the lower animals had no breath of life at all; on the contrary, it has proved that the minutest protoplasm or bioplasm or amoeba possesses life; nay, the whole universe is filled with the eternal life-principle or vital energy, that there is no such thing as dead matter, and that the life of a man is not the result of some supernatural intervention, but that it is as natural as the life of plants and lower animals.

Comparative psychology has taught us that the lower animals have also sensation, feeling, reasoning, memory, and many other mental faculties like those of ours, and that they are as valuable in the economy of nature as we are. We have learnt that mind is as much subject to evolution and growth as the gross physical body. The scientific investigations into the constitution of the mind have proved very recently that the mental functions are the results of the vibrations of the finest ethereal particles, and that thought-force is most intimately correlated to physical forces. As physical science has proved

that the life-principle is one and universal and has also explained by the theory of evolution, persistence of energy and correlation of forces that all the various forces of nature are but the expressions of one eternal energy, so mental science has proved the same unity in variety on the mental plane.

Again thought-transference and telepathy have proved that the individual minds are united to one another and they are like so many eddies in the eternal current of the cosmic mind. Every thought which touches and influences the minds of other persons, whether they are near to us or far away, has a relation with the physical plane as well as with our mental conditions. As on the physical plane the wireless telegraphy has brought us above space relations and has revealed to us that the atmospheric electric current is much more powerful than electricity produced by artificial means, so thought-transference and telepathy have brought us above space relations and have shown that the atmospheric thought current is infinitely more powerful than the thought current manifested through individual centres. We know that if we can harmonize our mental conditions or the vibrations of our own minds by tuning them in harmony with the vibrations of the cosmic mind, then we can make ourselves the store-house of infinite powers and infinite possibilities.

Further the result of the psychological studies with the help of experiments has broadened our life and mind to such an extent that now we are able to say positively that wherever there is the expression of life, there is also the manifestation of certain functions of what we call mind. All the discoveries of higher laws and finer forces of nature and all the inventions of scientific instruments of the present century have also testified to the fact that human intelligence and will-power are but the expressions of the all-knowing intelligence and will-power of the Divine Being. Again the scientific monism of this century has given an irreparable blow to the old dualistic theory that mind and matter were two separate entities, but now we know that matter and mind are but the objective and subjective manifestations of one substance or Reality which is called by modern science the unknown and unknowable. Herbert Spencer says: "Matter, motion and force are not the Reality, but the symbols of Reality". He further says: "The

same Reality is manifested objectively and subjectively". Really the same reality expresses itself in the objective world as matter and in the subjective world as mind, in the objective world as gravitation, electricity, heat and motion and in the subjective world as intellect, understanding, emotion, and will, etc. So it is proved that the Reality is one, but the manifestations are diversified. The ultimate conclusion of the monistic science is unity in variety. Through the help of this monistic science we can now say positively that material and efficient cause of the universe are one substance or Being which is the common source of all mental and physical powers.

The students of modern science can no longer believe in the Creator who dwells outside the nature, who commands from His heavenly abode, and creates the universe out of nothing. It is merely the Christian belief that God dwells outside the nature and creates what was not before. But modern science has discarded this idea that something could be created out of nothing. It has also given sufficient evidence by which it can be proved that like matter the germ of life is uncreatable and indestructible and that this germ of life is subject to the law of causation. It possesses infinite potentialities and unlimited possibilities. Parents neither create these germs of life, nor the individual souls as we call them, but they become the principal channels through which the germs of life manufacture gross physical bodies and manifest those powers that are already latent in them. This truth of science has destroyed the foundation of the old belief that the germs of life, or the individual souls, were created fresh at the time of birth of a child by an extra-cosmic Being. Moreover, by proving the indestructibility of the germs of life and that of the life-force, the problem of birth and death has been brought to the door of truth of pre-existence and that of continuity of existence after death.

Today we know that we can never die, or can never be destroyed, or absolutely annihilated, but that there will be other manifestations so long as the germs of life will continue to exist. This leads us to the theory of rebirth or reincarnation. The theory of reincarnation again makes the germs of life, or the individual souls, act as free agents and reap the results of their own thoughts and deeds, being subject to the law of cause and sequence. They mould their own future, and create their own

destiny, and being subject to evolution they rise from lower to higher stages, and progress onward towards the ultimate goal. They are indestructible and they continue to exist whether on this plane or on some other. This has helped us to realize the truth of the greatest philosophers of India that the souls are immortal and eternal by their birthright. They mean by soul the same thing which modern science means by the germ of life.

Thus by studying various branches of science we learn that unity in variety is the plan of nature, that there is one ultimate substance which is material and efficient cause of the universe, that the germs of life are uncreated and indestructible, and that they are free agents. Now these are the most salient points on which science has been at war with the dualistic religions of the world. In ancient times, religion performed the function of science in trying to explain the phenomena and their causes. But now the discoveries of modern science have shown the errors and mistakes which were committed by orthodox theologians and religious teachers of the various sects of the world. Consequently, they have been left far behind by the advanced scientific thinkers of the present age.

The result of this fight between science and religion which finally began in the last century, has not ended yet. All the existing great religions have been shaken to their very foundations. Various attempts have been made to harmonize religion with science, but all such attempts have ended in complete failure. Now science has become stronger in power than the existing religions. Sectarian religions are also struggling hard to keep up with the progress of science and are obliged to reject those theories and beliefs which were based upon mere tradition and not upon scientific truths. Not very long ago, the Dean of Westminster Abbey, London, said in course of an address: "That much which was accepted literally by our forefathers, could not be accepted literally by us today. The first chapter of the Genesis no longer means to us that the world was made in six days. The second chapter of the Genesis no longer means to us that God moulded clay into a human figure and breathed upon it, or that He took a rib from Adam and made Eve. These and many other stories like that of the talking serpent and the talking ass, we do not take now as historical facts, but as

imagery which clothed certain spiritual lessons." So most deplorable is the mental condition of those who still cling to the belief that the scriptural texts are the revealed words of God and that they are infallible. The eyes of the masses are now opened to scientific truths and the world now demands absolute harmony between religion and science.

Thus when the scientific minds of Europe and America took their stand against the supernatural revelation and showed its errors by impartial criticism, the ready-witted defenders of the traditional religion tried also their best to avoid the conflict between religion and science and supported the theological dogmas, either by taking shelter under history and calling their religion historical or by making it stand on faith alone, because faith, according to them, is above all criticisms. But the recent archaeological researches and the higher criticisms of the Old and New Testaments have enlightened the mind of the present generation by explaining the origin, authorship and dates of the composition of each of the canonized books of the Christian scriptures. If we study the various religious scriptures of the world, we shall find that one religion is just as good as any other, and that one set of scriptural writings which claims to be a direct revelation of God, has just as much argument for such a claim as the others have. If we accept one scripture as the revealed word of God, then we shall have to accept all the world as such. We cannot reject any. If, for instance, we accept the Christian Bible as the revealed word of God, then we shall have to accept the Vedas, the Koran, and the Zend Avesta, because the reason and arguments given in each case are exactly the same. Furthermore, the comparative study of various religions of the world has taught us a great lesson that no religion, whether great or small, ever had a supernatural origin, but that every religion, on the contrary, is the natural result of the attempts of the human mind to grasp the truths and explain the mysteries of the phenomenal universe. The comparative mythology has also shown that mythical elements exist in the Christian scriptures just as much as among the non-Christian Bibles of the world. Some myths were but personifications of natural forces or events, some were the developments of metaphors, some were the survivals of early superstitions; while others were the exaggerated accounts or descriptions of

some real events in the lives of some great spiritual leaders or holy personages who were deified by the people.

Prof. Bacon of the Yale University says: "The earliest narratives of the Genesis are already prophetic in character, because they turn to the mass of mere folk-tale and legend current in the eighth or ninth century before Christ". Regarding Abraham, for instance, the learned Professor says: "The figure of Abraham appears purely and simply as the type of prehistoric Israel brought from the far off East by Yahveh to inherit the land of Canaan". He further says. "The Abraham of the New Testament would not be the historic figure, if there were one; it would be but the ideal heir of Yahveh. The true Abraham is the ideal and this Abraham lived only in the minds of the Prophets and the Seers". The story of the Deluge and Noah's Ark has been proved to be absurd and meaningless by Huxley and other scientists. A parallel passage for the story of Noah is to be found in the mythological story of Deukalion among the ancient Greeks; such stories existed among the ancient Hindus, the Chinese and other nations.

The accounts of immaculate conception and virgin birth are to be found in connection with the lives of all the great Saviours of the world, most of whom lived long before Christ was born. The healing miracles of Æsculapius (Esclepius), the ancient Greek physician, suggested those of the New Testament. Thus we see that the scientific researches of the nineteenth century have removed the historical prop of the traditional religions.

Now those who believe that Christian religion, stands on faith alone, abuse the true meaning of the word 'faith' and mistake the sheerest credulity for it. According to most of them, 'faith' is another word for that which the old Father Tertullian meant by 'belief', when he said *credo quia impossibile est*, that is, 'I believe because it is impossible'. But scientific minds do not care to entertain this kind of belief or blind faith, and they are not ready to give such an uncertain foundation to the religion of the twentieth century.

The twentieth century needs, therefore, a religion which will be in perfect harmony with all the truths discovered by modern science, which must be based upon the principle of unity in variety, and which should regard the material and

efficient cause of the universe as one and the same. The twentieth century needs a religion which will advocate freedom of thought, freedom of speech and, at the same time, which will be in perfect harmony with the conclusions of modern scientific researches. The twentieth century needs a religion which will harmonize with the monistic philosophy, and every step of which shall be founded upon the solid rock of truth, unassailable by the critics whether of higher or of lower order. As the spirit and ideal of modern science have been absolute freedom of thought and independence of the authority of books or personalities and as the sole object of science has been the discovery of truth and the worship of nothing but truth, so shall be the spirit, ideal and object of that religion which will be fitted for the present century, and which shall stand on the adamantine rock of truths already discovered by modern science. That true religion will reign supreme over the minds of all the seekers after truth who live in the present century. In that scientific religion, there will be no scheme of salvation, no dogma of heaven or hell, and no fear of eternal punishment.

The spiritualistic movement and the researches of the Psychical Research Societies have already given a death-blow to the dogmas of hell-fire and eternal punishment. This is not a small gain achieved by the Western people of the present century. The system of religion, which is needed for the twentieth century, must not be limited by sacerdotal institution, must not acknowledge the divine right of the priesthood, and must not be governed by the authority of any scripture, any book, or any personality, nor should it insist upon practising the ceremonies and rituals which form merely the non-essential parts of religion and which are not absolutely necessary for the salvation of the souls from eternal damnation.

Now the twentieth century needs a religion which will not support any doctrine or dogma which cannot be sustained by the scientific reasoning. The twentieth century needs a religion which will be free from all superstitious ideas, doctrines and dogmas that give countenance to the creation of the human being out of nothing.

Besides, the religion of the twentieth century needs a conception of God who is personal, impersonal, and beyond both,

whose supreme aspect will harmonize with the absolute Reality of the universe called by different names, such as the *Substantia* of Spinoza, the *Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer, the *Good* of Plato, the *Over-Soul* of Emerson, the *Ding-an-Sich* or the transcendental Thing-in-itself of Kant, etc., who is transcendent as well as immanent and resident in nature, and who is the Soul of our soul, and the Life of our life. He should not be confined by any particular name

Now it should be remembered that when we give a name and personality to the Divine Being, we project our own ideas and make God limited by our conception of His personality. Why should God be limited by our name or conception of His personality? We must realize Him as the Infinite Being, beyond all limitations of our conceptions or ideas; and the Divine Being should also harmonize with the highest ideals of the greatest philosophers and scientists of the world. In that way we shall find an absolute harmony between religion and science. Therefore, the twentieth century needs a religion which will harmonize with the ultimate conclusions of all the great philosophers of all countries and will be based upon the moral and spiritual laws which govern our lives. That religion will not only accept all the truths discovered by the various branches of science, but will also have room for other discoveries which will be made in future. As the aim and ideal of modern science have always been towards the support of truth and rejection of blind faith and tradition, so the religion which will be fitted for the twentieth century, must have the same aim, the same ideal and the same object to perform like modern science. Now the question arises as to how is it possible to find a religion which will be in absolute harmony with science as well as with the great philosophies of the world? The answer is in the affirmative. True religion and science are always in perfect harmony. There never has been any quarrel or fight between true religion and science, as both of which are universal in their scope and are one in their ideal. Prof. Huxley said: "True science will continue to fulfil one of her most beneficent functions, that of relieving men from the burden of false science which is imposed upon them in the name of religion." Herbert Spencer had in his mind this grand idea of harmony when he said: "The most abstract truth contained in religion and the

most abstract truth contained in science must be one in which two coalesce. To reach that point of view from which the seeming discordance of religion and science disappears and the two merge into one, must cause a revolution of thought fruitful and beneficial in consequences and must surely be worth an effort".

Now time has come when we must make an effort to see the harmony that exists between true science and true religion. We must examine minutely and impartially all the existing religions of the world and see which of them is based upon the principle of unity in variety and which of them accepts the grand scientific truth of one Substance as the material and efficient cause of the universe. If we examine carefully Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, and all other special religions, we find that they are not based upon that principle of unity in variety, because they teach two Creators, the Creator of good and the Creator of evil, and, therefore, they are dualistic. The Creator of good is fighting against the Creator of evil, and the Creator of evil is fighting against the Creator of good. So they do not teach the doctrine of unity in variety, but they teach duality of existence.

Buddhism also does not teach unity in variety if it admits that Nirvana means the utter extinction of the existence of the soul. But really the word Nirvana does not convey the idea of nothingness or void, it rather means suchness or thatness (*tathata*). But does Nirvana or thatness establishes a harmony among diversities? Does it say that various phenomena are one and the same manifestation of the one Substance which is the source of everything? I think that it does not say so, and so it cannot teach the universal gospel of unity in variety. There is only one religion and it is the universal religion of Vedanta which has been teaching the same truth of unity in variety from prehistoric times for nearly five thousand years. This religion is now given to the world. In the *Upanishads* we find. "As one fire coming into this world manifests itself through various forms, so the one eternal absolute Being manifests itself in the various phenomena of the world" "As one air passing through different holes of a flute produces various notes of music, so the one eternal Substance manifests itself in the various phenomena of the universe". "From that one Substance has emanat-

ed *prana* or the life-force of the plant, life-principle in all mind and all the sense-powers and also that which is space and is gaseous, heat, liquid, and that which is solid". This idea cannot be found in any other scripture of the world. The *Upanishad* really teaches the universal religion.

This universal religion is nameless and formless. It is in absolute harmony with science. The *Upanishad* or Vedanta teaches that one Substance or Reality is both the material and efficient cause of the universe. It also describes the evolution of the phenomenal world and rejects the theory of a special creation. The process of cosmic evolution, as described in Vedanta, is this: "From that one Substance came ether, from ether that which is gaseous, from the gaseous state, heat, from that state, liquid, then that which is solid; and later came gradually the vegetables, the lower animals, and from the lower animals up to the highest man." Thus it explains that the phenomenal universe with all the varieties of names, forms and forces has evolved out of one eternal cosmic Energy called in Sanskrit *Prakriti* which is the mother of all manifestations. It is one and universal. It teaches that God is personal, impersonal and beyond both. Individual souls, according to this universal religion, are not created out of nothing, but are eternal. They are eternal germs of life and are subject to the law of cause and sequence. They are indestructible and immortal. These germs of life are free agents manifesting powers which are latent in them. It teaches that mind and matter are the subjective and objective manifestations of that one Being.

Is it not a remarkable fact that the ancient seekers of Truth discovered that which is the spirit of this age, is unity in variety and the one Substance is the material and the efficient cause of the universe? These are the grandest truths. But when modern science has proved these truths and confirmed the old truths, the scientific truth is established as doubly true, because we find that different thinkers, starting from different standpoints, arrived at the same conclusion. The great seers of ancient India arrived at that conclusion from their subjective conception, and from vision of the absolute Truth, they reached that highest goal, while modern science starting from the objective world has reached the same goal. These two when

combined, will produce the most wonderful harmony between true science and true religion.

Modern science is just the beginning to grasp the truth that the cause lies in the effect, and that cause and effect are like the unmanifested and manifested states of the same Being. But this truth has been taught in India from very ancient times. Science is trying to discover the external truth of the universe, and religion is trying to worship the eternal Truth. But that worship of the eternal Truth must depend upon its discovery. If we do not know the eternal Truth, how can we worship it? We must put everything aside which is not in harmony with the highest conclusions of modern science. So this religion which is such a universal religion and which, as I have already said, is nameless, is the one which embraces all the religions of the world. No other religion can be so universal, because other religions are more or less built around the personality of their founders. Thus Christianity is built around the personality of Christ, Buddhism around Buddha, Mohammedanism around Mohammed, Christian Science around Mrs. Eddy. So any religion that is built around the personality of its founder cannot be universal, because that personality may not be accepted by all. This religion, however, we find, is not built upon the personality of one being, but upon the spiritual laws which govern our soul life. It has existed for five thousand years and will continue to be the religion of the world in future, and this is the religion of Vedanta. It deals with principles and leaves all details to be worked out by science. It admits a personal God who is to be worshipped through devotion and love. It teaches that God is one substance, and we are but parts. Then again as Christ said. 'I and my Father are one', so the absolute monistic Vedanta teaches 'I am He', that we are all absolutely one with the supreme Spirit, that our individual souls are nothing but so many expressions of the one universal cosmic Being, who is the Lord of the universe. The Creator is nothing but the first manifestation of the absolute Being. Therefore, He is called the First-born Lord.

Modern science has one idea which was given by Vedanta centuries before Christ. In modern science, we study that evolution is followed by involution and that evolution lasts for a certain period of time, which is called a cycle (*yuga*). The

cycle of evolution is followed by the cycle of involution, and this chain of the cycles of evolution and involution is eternal. So there is the beginning of the cycle of evolution, but there is no beginning of matter, no beginning of force, and no beginning of the Substance of the universe. Thus there may be a beginning of the physical form, but there is no beginning of the essence that lives and animates the physical form of the individual soul. Each individual soul is subject to the law of cause and sequence, which is called in Vedanta the law of *karma*. Therefore, by studying this law of cause and sequence, or that of action and reaction, we find that we get to the scientific explanation of the cause regarding sin, misery, sickness, and suffering of the world. Vedanta does not teach that the Creator of evil is one personality and the Creator of good is another, but Vedanta teaches that so long as there is good, there will be evil; one cannot exist without the other. So if we take the one, we will have to take the other. Reject both and see that the soul is neither good, nor evil. Evil is an ignorance, and whatever we do without proper knowledge, is a mistake and each mistake is a great teacher in the long run. Therefore each sinful act has its value, and it teaches the soul the law that governs that act. In that way, all sinful acts are the great mistakes which we are bound to commit, because we have come to this world and are making experiments all the time to find out exactly what we want. Being born in ignorance we are bound to make mistakes. So why should we blame the Creator for our mistakes? Vedanta teaches that there is neither a Creator of good, nor a Creator of evil, but that the law of *karma*, or cause, and sequence, will explain all the inequalities and diversities that exist in the world. God is not regarded as the Giver of rewards or the Bestower of punishments. God neither punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous, but that which we call punishment, is the reaction of our own mistakes which must come back to the soul from which the action started. That which we call reward, is also the reaction of our own good acts. So why should we blame God? God is the ocean of love, the ocean of intelligence and justice.

Modern science says as in the language of Herbert Spencer that the source of the universe is unknown and unknowable. Vedanta also teaches that it is unknown and unknowable by the

mind, but can be known or realized by the Spirit, because it is nearer than our mind and nearer than our heart; because it is the Soul of our souls and the Essence of our beings, and this Essence is that Substance. It can be realized by entering into a higher state of superconsciousness (*samadhi*) Thus it harmonizes with the monistic science of modern times. But according to Vedanta, that one Substance (the Brahman) is not insentient, but it is the source of intelligence and all knowledge; otherwise if we did not admit this, then the question would arise as to where did our knowledge come from? Can intelligence come from something which does not possess intelligence? It would be as absurd as something coming out of nothing Therefore Vedanta is more logical and more scientific than the materialistic monism of science. Vedanta gives a scientific basis to religion, because it explains religion through science. In other words, through the accepted rules of inductive and deductive logic it accepts within its limits the supremacy of reason. Any system which admits these two points, is absolutely scientific. But if we apply the rules of logic to the existing religions of the world, then at every step we will find that they cannot stand to reasoning; consequently they fall to pieces None but the universal religion of Vedanta can stand the test of logic and science Moreover, the conflict between science and religion ends in the universal religion of Vedanta. Herbert Spencer wrote just before his death with reference to Vedanta that he was gratified to find a philosophy akin to his own thought in India.

Again, Vedanta gives the fundamental principles of, and the rational foundation to ethics, for true ethics must be based upon scientific principles, otherwise it has no value. The greatest ethical law which teaches 'Love thy neighbour as thyself', does not give any reason why we should love our neighbour as ourselves Christ preached the same, but he did not give the reason. The reason we find in Vedanta which teaches the same truth declaring '*tat tvam asi*'—'you are already that'. We shall love our neighbours not because they have done some good to us, but because we are one with our neighbour in spirit and are the children of the same infinite Being. Love means the expression of oneness That spiritual oneness should be the foundation of ethics, and then we shall

never do anything which will hurt anybody, nor do anything which will enrich ourselves at the expense of others

The truth of Vedanta which is absolutely scientific, should be preached before the world and then we shall find not only peace and harmony among the different sectarian religions of the world but also we shall find harmony between true religion and true science, and that harmony is needed in the twentieth century. Max Müller said: "Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions It has room for every religion ; nay, it embraces them all"

UNIVERSAL RELIGION AND VEDANTA.

PREFACE

This book, UNIVERSAL RELIGION AND VEDANTA is a collection of lectures those were delivered in New York and in India from 1903 to 1922. As the lectures are of the same category or nature, so they have been bunched together to form a book which are pregnant with religious and philosophical thoughts, having an out and out universal outlook. The first book with Chapters I to IV contains four lectures on (1) the Sanatana Dharma, (2) The Universal Religion, (3) The Progressive Religion, and (4) The Message of Vedanta, which were delivered in different places at Jamshedpur in Bihar, in 1922, consecutively on the 10th, 12th, 13th and 15th January Swami Abhedananda was invited by the students and citizens of Jamshedpur and also by the members of the local Vivekananda Society A public meeting of the residents of Jamshedpur was convened on the 10th January, 1922 at 6 P M to accord His Holiness Swami Abhedananda a cordial welcome to the town. The gathering of over two thousand souls, including many European and American gentlemen, were charmed by the lucid and elegant style of English lecture.

The first lecture on the "Sanatana Dharma" was delivered on the 10th January, 1922 at the Milanee Pandal in reply to the welcome address. He said that he spent 25 years in England and America in preaching the culture, religion and philosophy of India, along with the universal gospel of his beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. His revered predecessor Swami Vivekananda represented the Sanatana Dharma of India before the Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago in 1893. He created the field in the Western lands and invited Swami Abhedananda and Swami Saradananda to assist him in his work of preaching the message of Vedanta. The people of the Western countries were attracted with the non-sectarian universal religion and philosophy of India and they cordially welcomed Swami Vivekananda and the others and were eager to learn Indian religion and philosophy. Swami Vivekananda gave an outline of the Sanatana Dharma and its lofty ideas and universal ideal which afterwards owned the hearts of the Western people.

Swami Abhedananda with his majestic look and personality said in his lecture with sweet and charming voice "But what do you mean by Sanatana Dharma?" The Swami said that Sanatana Dharma is an eternal religion which knows no particular set of doctrines and dogmas, but exists from the beginningless past and leads mankind to the path of everlasting peace, love and freedom. This eternal religion brings solution to man's problems of life as well as of the world, full of tears, anxieties and cares. This eternal religion is free from all kinds of sectarianism, bigotry and narrowness.

In course of his lecture, the Swami praised the people of America for their openmindedness, thirst for learning and act of appreciation. He said: "They (the Americans) love education and know also the real ideal of education. They are more advanced in their material life, and now they have come to know that material prosperity is not the be-all and end-all of life, and they are eager to know the lofty Indian ideals and universal Vedantic principles from us. Our teachings in America have made a tremendous change in the religious field of that country. * * The Churches were talking against us and calling us names. I was the only Hindu then in the United States, and I had to fight tooth and nail against all false reports against the Hindus which were mostly made by the Missionaries".

Swami Abhedananda has differentiated the highest ideal of Vedanta from that of modern spiritualism which is predominant in the Western countries and specially in America. He stated that modern spiritualism teaches that soul exists after death and can communicate with our those friends who have gone to the next world. The scientist Sir Oliver Lodge is one of the believers of spiritualism, and the Swami said that he had an opportunity to hear his lecture in San Francisco, California, and he (the Swami) was astonished to see the blind faith of that celebrated scientist. He then mentioned the doctrine of the Christian Scientists, who, on the contrary, deny the existence of matter and call it a delusion or *maya*, as has been said in Advaita Vedanta. They naturally maintain that the material bodies of the living beings are delusions and, therefore, disease of the body is also delusion or false. This

dharma. "This Aryan religion has no particular God, but is based upon the fundamental and spiritual laws which govern our soul-life". It is not sectarian, but is universal and it embraces the ideals of all religions of the world. The teachings of the Vedas are broad and unlimited in their scope, and all the religions of the world are based upon the universal ideal of the Vedic religion. Most of the doctrines of Buddhism can be traced back to the teachings of the *Upanishads*, and the ideals of Christianity can also be traced back to that of Buddhism. Jesus the Christ came to India through Central Asia accompanied by the traders, and learned the ideals of Buddhism and practised the Hindu *Yoga-sadhana*, which I have already related in my book, *How to be a Yogi*. In the *Unknown Life of Jesus*, the Russian traveller Nicholas Notovitch has given an account of a manuscript preserved in the Hemis monastery of Ladak, in which there was an authentic account of the unknown life of Jesus the Christ. I have also seen that manuscript and made it to be translated by a Lama of the Hemis monastery. There might be a difference of opinion on the subject, but as I have already said that there is a good deal of truth in this statement (also the Swami's Bengali book, *Kashmere O Tibbate*).

The Swami further said that fanaticism is not religion, as fanaticism proceeds from ignorance, and ignorance is the cause of bondage and suffering. So we should remove ignorance by the realization of the true ideal of religion. Religion is divided into two parts, essential and non-essential. The non-essential parts are the doctrines, dogmas, blind belief etc., and the essential parts are self-control, self-mastery and above all the realization of the *Atman*. We should realize our *Atman* and shall remove all limitations. And when the essential parts of religion are realized, then there arises a real sense of unity among all the followers of all religions.

Swami Abhedananda said that modern science teaches unity and harmony, because knowledge of truth is also the goal of science. Science has also proved that the world-process is the manifestation of one primordial Energy, and electricity, light, heat, sound etc., are the manifestations of the same Divine Energy. The Mental Science has proved that the cosmic mind is the sum total of the individual minds and the cosmic mind is the mind of God who really starts the work of evolution.

The Swami stated that all doctrines like dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism are included in the domain of the universal religion, because the ultimate goal which is God-realization is the same; the names or faiths or *sadhanas* only differ, but the ultimate aim is one and the same. Now what do we mean by the word 'eternal'? It connotes the idea of beginninglessness and endlessness. But that does not mean the Christian hell which has no beginning and end, but beginninglessness or eternity implies that we all have come to this human world after passing hundreds and thousands of cycles of birth and death, and shall end our journey as soon as we shall realize our immortal *Atman*, the prime source and background of the world-process.

Now on what we mean by the word 'dualism', the Swami continued: "The believer of the doctrine of dualism admits the existence of a Creator who is different from the individuals and the world. The doctrine of qualified non-dualism is different from this belief, as it holds that God is the stupendous whole, whereas the individual souls are the parts. The non-dualism is again different from qualified non-dualism, as it believes that every soul or everything is non-different from God the Absolute. It has been said before that the universal religion embraces them all. Jusus the Christ also realized this truth and so he loved all beings and all creatures of the world."

The Swami then asked: "What do you mean by 'love'? Love means the expression of oneness. What you call love, is nothing but the expression of that oneness. It is the feeling of oneness.* * So, my friends, if your heart overflow with the ideals of Divine love, you will see that Divine love is manifested in humanity and all human beings are but parts and parcels of your true Self".

Swami Abhedananda then concluded: "The days of commercialism and naive materialism are passing by. The world is wide awake to find the universal religion which shakes off forever and ever all selfishness, greed and ambition. Let me recite a line of the *Mahimna-strotra* by Pushpadanta: 'vaichidradriju-kutila nana-patha-jusham'; etc i.e. as the rivers rising from different mountains, run crooked or straight towards the ocean, so all sectarian religions rising from different points of view, run crooked or straight towards the

universal Being which is the embodiment of existence, knowledge and bliss".

The chapter III contains : 'The Progressive Hinduism' which was delivered in the Jamshedpur Association. Swami Abhedananda said that the word 'Hindu' is used for us, because we believe in Hinduism or *Arya-dharma* i.e the religion which knows no sectarianism and fanaticism. We are descendants of the *Arya Rishis*, the seers of Truth, who lived, it is said, in Kashmir and Punjab in the Vedic period. The word 'Panjab' represents the land of the five rivers, Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Beas. These five rivers fall into one river which is called Indus, the Sanskrit name of which is Sindhu. There are two other rivers, Sarasvati and Drishadvati. It is said that the name 'Hindu' was derived from 'Indus'. The Swami said. "In Parsian language the sound of 'S' is pronounced as the sound of 'H'. * * In place of the river Sindu they (Parsians) call Hindu And afterwards those people who lived on the banks of the river Sindhu, were known as the Hindus". The religion of the Hindus is known as Hinduism. Hinduism is equally known as Sanatana Dharma or eternal and universal religion. The progressive religion believes that the same infinite Spirit is worshipped by the followers of different religions Father, Brahman, Vishnu, Siva, Kali are the names of the same Reality and this Reality is conceived as both Father and Mother. He or She is again conceived as the bestower of good or evil, but, in truth, He or She gives neither good, nor bad, as He or She being the absolute Reality in essence, is the witnesslike absolute consciousness. The absolute Reality is not the bestower of goodness or badness. Men enjoy bliss or suffer from cares and anxieties for their own *karmas* i.e. for good or bad *karmas*, as the works bring good or bad results (*phalas*) and men reap the results according to their works So for these good or bad results, God or the Reality is not responsible. Men themselves are responsible for their own *karmas*.

The Swami continued "The more you understand your own true religion, the more you will realize that there is no difference in the ideals of religion" The manners and customs of the people—the environments and the climatic conditions of the countries—only differ, but the abiding essence, the absolute Reality of all men and all objects neither differs,

nor changes. It is constant and immutable, and transcends all changes, and also transcends all names and forms "Politics is not the field of our freedom, but our religion embraces the higher ideals of freedom which we call *mukti* or salvation". *Mukti* is freedom from the bondage of ignorance or nescience. We are enchain'd with the slavery of our selfish desires and as soon as we shall be free from the bondage of selfishness, we shall attain freedom, which is no other than the attainment of God-consciousness. But at present we are like the slaves "but the moment you raise yourselves and assert your independence that 'I am not a slave, I am a child of God and God is working through me', who can stop you ?"

"Spirit of modern progressive Hinduism", said Swami Abhedananda, "was shown by the great Master Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who was the master of Swami Vivekananda. It was he who showed that the need of the present day is the brotherly feeling and toleration of all religions. * * He is regarded as the *Yugavatara*, the Incarnation of Divinity, in this age. He came to show the way of harmony and progress".

The chapter IV contains: 'The Message of Vedanta' which was delivered in 'L' Town on the 15th January, 1922. Swami Abhedananda said that the word 'Vedanta' conveys the idea of the 'end of wisdom'. The knowledge portion (*jnanakanda*) of the Vedas is called the *Upanishad* and this *Upanishad* is known as Vedanta. The Vedas are four: Rig, Sama, Yajus and Atharva. The Rig Veda contains over 1,000 hymns in praise of the gods like Indra, Varuna, Agni, Mithra and so on. The mantras of the Yajur-Veda are meant for rituals and ceremonies. The hymns of the Sama Veda are sung with different notes in three registers (*sthanas*). Generally five Vedic notes like *prathama*, *dvitiya*, etc. are used in the Vedic *gana*, the *samanas*. The Greeks used in their songs five notes like the Hindus. The Chinese also use five notes in their songs. The Atharva Veda contains invocations of the various deities and the methods of curing different kinds of diseases. The Vedas are divided into two, *karmakanda* and *jnanakanda*. The *jnanakanda* is known as Vedanta. The *jnanakanda* consists of the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, while the *karmakanda* consists of the *Samhitas* and the *Brahmanas*. The Vedas were popularised afterwards in the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata* and the *Tantras*.

Besides, there are other philosophies like the *Sankhya* of Kapila, the *Patanjala* of Patanjali, the *Nyaya* of Gautama, the *Vaisesika* of Kanada, the *Mimamsa* of Jaimini and the *Brahmasutras* or Vedanta of Vadarayana. The *Mimamsa* and the *Brahmasutras* are also known as the *Purva-Mimamsa* and the *Uttara-Mimamsa*. The teachings of the *Upanishads* and the *Vendantasastras* are the living philosophies of India. Though the fundamental principle and the truth are the same, yet these philosophies differ particularly in their arguments and ways or methods. The spirit is the predominant and basic principles of those philosophies. The *prana* or *jivanisakti* in each individual is different, but those philosophies state that *prana* or the life-force is, in essence, the eternal life which can be said to be the *Atman* or the immortal Brahman. The message of Vedanta lies in the fact that God the Absolute or the absolute Brahman is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our lives and the Mind of our minds, nay, it is the be-all and end-all of evolution and of all the living beings. This Brahman cannot be known by ordinary mind, but when the mind is entirely purified and is transformed into shining consciousness or *chaitanya*, then it is fully appreciated, and for that reason Sri Ramakrishna has said that the Brahman is "*shuddha-maner gochara*", but "*mano-buddhir agochara*" i.e. the Brahman is apprehended by the purified mind and is not appreciated by ordinary mind and intellect.

The Swami said: "We have come from perfection and shall return to perfection. There is no such thing as eternal perdition for all. No soul will be lost, but all will find that this infinite perfection which is the base of our existence, is latent in each one of us". We are not separated from the Brahman, but we live and have our beings all the time in the Brahman. The message of Vedanta is that the Brahman is the only happiness, and all other happinesses are impermanent. "Therefore the message of Vedanta is to attain the true happiness, because that is the goal of our earthly existence".

The Swami continued. "You think that God is dwelling above the clouds somewhere in the heaven, but there is no physical heaven, it is a mental state. Really hell and heaven are merely the creation of our individual mind, and if there be any heaven, that is God the Absolute which shines in

you, in me and in all individual beings, nay, in everything in the universe. The message of Vedanta is the highest message that any scripture can give to the world. Every time you move, you remember that the power that helps you to move from one place to another, is not your power, but God's power. You must worship God in spirit, and not merely in the temples or in holy places. He is the Spirit, and *moksha* is achieved when we shall know Him in spirit".

There are different systems of Yoga, the Swami stated, and the Karma Yoga is one of the ways for realizing God. Every *karma* should be made in the spirit of worship and then that *karma* or work will not bind you, but will release you from the chain of delusion or *maya*. Besides, there are Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga and Bhakti Yoga. The Raja Yoga is the method of concentration and meditation; the Bhakti Yoga is the method of love and devotion towards God and Jnana Yoga is the method of *vichara* or discrimination between the real and the unreal. However, all the Yogas are the methods or paths to reach the same ultimate goal, the absolute Brahman. So practise Yoga and think that by practising Yoga you are marching towards the Divine union of the *jivatman* and the *Paramatman*, which is the prime goal of the *Yoga-sadhana*.

Chapter V deals with "The Ideal of a Religious Institution". This lecture was delivered in 1922. After listening to the report of the Vivekananda Society at Jamshedpur, Swami Abhedananda said that the aims and objects of every religious and philanthropic institution should be to help the needy, to educate the mass, and to propagate the spiritual ideals of our holy scriptures, especially of the Vedanta philosophy, the attitude of which is non-sectarian and universal. Selfishness or ego-centric idea is a curse to a man and to a nation. A selfish man is really dead in the world, because the deeds and efforts of his entire life are devoted to satisfy his own petty self and thus he entangles himself in the chain of ignorance or *maya* and, consequently, he lives in this world of desires and passions as a slave. So we shall shake off the chain of selfishness and shall dedicate our life for the cause of others. "In this age of materialism, commercialism, and unbelief, we are drifting away from the path of righteousness, and we have forgotten the real spiritual ideas of our life * * We do not realise that God dwells

within us and that we are part and parcel of the *Virat Purusha*, the all-pervading Divine Being, who dwells in all living creatures. We are really indebted to our near and dear ones, to our neighbours and to our nation. So we should pay off those debts by offering our good will and unselfish works and love. We shall be pure, because purity of heart brings God-vision."

In fact, the Swami said, the world is a great school, and we are learning different lessons of life. But to bring those lessons into action, we should pay off the debts which we owe to the world. The greatest debt is the realization of the *Atman*. We have forgotten the highest truth for self-delusion or *maya*, so we shall have to go beyond self-delusion and shall know the Divinity that shines always in the heart. Love yourself in the truest sense and love all the beings of the universe, because love is God and God is love. Follow the disinterested love for the humanity that Buddha taught 2,500 years ago. Follow the ideals of art, culture, education and religion of the Buddhist age, because "during the Buddhist age India enjoyed the highest glory and that glory reached its zenith in every line: in religion, in sculpture, in painting and in education. The golden Buddhist age was glorified in educational systems, in the line of the universities, in the line of preachers, in the line of hospitals, and in the lines of philosophy, logic, science and medicine". The Swami further mentioned other the Chinese traveller, Hiuen Tsang and also other noted teachers of different Buddhist universities and students, and said to follow the ideals of those past days with a new and scientific outlook to make the present-day societies noble and enlightened. He further stated to acquire all kinds of knowledge i.e. knowledge of '*juta-selai theke chandipath* (i.e. knowledge beginning from the repairing of the shoes to the recitation of the sacred *Chandi*) to make our life rich and practical.

Chapter VI contains: "The Universal and Synthetic Religion", delivered at the Jubilee Hall, Rangoon, on October, 25, 1892, Tuesday, just after the Swami's return from America. Dr. N N Parekh, M L C presided. Swami Abhedananda said that like Hinduism, Judaism and Christianity, Buddhism was one of the religions which before the birth of Christ spread from Siberia to Ceylon and from China to Egypt without any blood-

shed. The Prophets of all religious systems were the central figures in their religions and each of them gave to the world his experiences in the spiritual progress towards the realization of the ultimate goal, or ideal of their religions. As two faces were not alike, the Prophets or Messengers of different religions could not hold one set of ideas and could not enforce those different ideas upon the minds of all. Now, a personality is essential for giving a driving force to a religion and to show a Divine ideal of it and the religious organisations also grow around that personality. But if the followers of a religion out of their narrow and sectarian views, centre only around that personality leaving the lofty ideal of it, then that religion and the religious organisation which grow around that personality, will be turned into a vacant devil's house. So personality is not great in comparison to its ideal and contribution. Swami Abhedananda has given a hint of this idea in the Introduction to his book *Great Saviours of the World*. There he said that one should not be addicted to any blind faith and narrow view that his God, or his Prophet, or his spiritual Master, is only superior and true and the only guide to the path of spiritual *sadhana* and experience and others are inferior and false "Shall we be so narrow, intolerant and prejudiced as to accept only the Saviour, simply because our forefathers worshiped him, and on that very ground alone, reject and disregard the other Prophets and Saviours of the world. Nay, the time has come when we must put aside all sectarianism and bigotry and become broad and liberal so as to follow them all and place them upon the altar of that universal religion which is all-embracing and infinite in its scope". Similarly in his Rangoon lecture the Swami said that no religion which is founded upon the personality of its founder, can be called the universal religion "So in trying to find out the fundamental principles of universal religion, they would have to remember that it must not be based upon the limitation of any personality, but upon the eternal spiritual laws which govern their life".

The Swami continued that God is both personal (*sakara*) and impersonal (*nirakara*), determinate (*saguna*) and indeterminate (*nirguna*), and He is again beyond the limitations or adjuncts (*upadhis*) of these positive and negative categories. Sri Ramakrishna has said: "God may be *sakara* and *nirakara*,

saguna and *nirguna* and also be more than those (*aro kata ki*)". The Swami comparatively discussed the religions of Christ, Mohammed, Buddha and other Saviours, and said that Truth preached by them, may vary in their interpretations and words of teachings, but, in essence, they are one and universal. "They must not separate the truth discovered by science, from the Truth discovered by Buddha or Christ Truth was one without the second and that must be the fundamental principle of a universal religion" Now that fundamental Truth must be searched for, must be regarded as indispensable for our life and must be realized for cutting asunder the knots of nescience or *maya*.

The chapter VII contains: "Philosophy of the Vedanta Society", delivered in St Louis, America, in the month of May, 1904, when Swami Abhedananda visited the place on the invitation by one of the members for necessary arrangements for an exhibition of the publication of the Vedanta Society of New York to be held at the World's Fair

Swami Abhedananda said that Truth is one, it cannot be many, or it can be said that Truth is one, but its manifestations are manifold, and these manifestations are not true, being under the sway of nescience. We are one with the Truth, but we have made ourselves separate from the Truth for false-knowledge. The false-knowledge or *bhranti* makes us think that we are different from the Truth, the absolute Brahman. The Swami said that we identify our Soul or Spirit with the gross body and this identification "prevails from ignorance and ignorance about our true Self deludes us. The moment we understand that we are the Soul, we become free from the bondage of flesh and blood of the body", and this freedom from the bondage of flesh and blood is the attainment of the *Atmajnana*.

The chapter VIII contains "The Universal Ideal of the Vedantic Religion" This lecture was delivered by Swami Abhedananda on the 21st February, 1922, at Raja Maidan, Dacca (now in Pakistan), and was reported by S. R. Dasgupta, M.A. In this lecture, the Swami said about the universal outlook and ideal of Sanatana Dharma The Swami advised his beloved audience to revive the sacred and lofty ideas and ideal of the past, the Vedic and Hindu period, with a new and progressive outlook in this present rational scientific age. He

instructed the people of India to follow the living and loving ideal of the great patriot-saint Swami Vivekananda as well as of his Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the Prophet of this new age. He told that there should not be any idea of difference in colour and creed, i.e. in colour and creed prejudice that prevail among the people of India, as all human beings are children of the Bliss and Immortality. He, therefore, instructed all to follow the universal teachings of Buddha, Chaitanya and Ramakrishna. Gautama Buddha, Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna, who were the embodiments of infinite love, compassion and fellow-feeling, not only for the human beings, but also for all the living beings and non-living objects of the universe. The Swami said that whenever these supreme qualities manifest in a man, he is at once transformed into a God-man and his false-knowledge is instantly replaced by the right-knowledge of the absolute Brahman.

The Appendix contains "Vedanta as Interpreted by the Western Scholars". Swami Abhedananda represented in it some philosophical thoughts as contributed by Prof Max Muller, John Davis and Prof. F. W. Hopkins. He said that Prof Max Muller maintained for practical purposes that the Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, should be accepted as real. But Advaita Vedanta admits the subjective world as only real, and other philosophical systems admit that both the aspects are real.

The Swami said that John Davis was of the opinion that the *Sankhya* system of thought, as advanced by Kapila, is the earliest attempt on record. Schopenhauer and Hartmann were influenced by the *Sankhya* philosophy to some extent. Regarding the views of Prof. E. W. Hopkins, the Swami said that Prof. Hopkins was of the opinion that both the early Greek philosophers, Thales and Parmenides, imbibed the ideas and thoughts of Indian philosophy. Now a band of European, German and French scholars have become interested in the Vedanta philosophy.

ADDRESS OF WELCOME AT JAMSHEDPUR

A public meeting of the residents of Jamshedpur was convened on the 10th January at 6 P.M to accord His Holiness Swami Abhedenandaji a cordial welcome to this Town. The gathering numbered over two thousand souls and included several European and American gentlemen On behalf of the residents of the Jamshedpur public Mr. K. S. Pandalal read the following Address of Welcome.

To

His Holiness Sreemat Swami Abhedenandaji
of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission.

Mahatman!

We beg to offer you a cordial and respectful welcome to this new town of Iron and Steel Workers Your gracious presence here, so soon after your return from a long sojourn in America, has filled us with feelings of joy and gratitude.

Your ceaseless toil in the New World as a representative of one of the noblest and holiest of modern religious mission, which seeks not to proselytize, but to purify and unify nations, has been productive of immense good to the world

The banner of eternal Truth, as expounded in the Vedanta philosophy which was carried triumphantly over Western countries by the Great Swami Sreemat Vivekanandaji, has now been firmly planted in distant lands by your zeal and self-sacrificing labour.

You were one of the earliest few to be chosen by the great religious teacher Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to form a holy band of earnest and selfless workers, whose mission has been to deliver a message of peace and good-will to mankind, and to preach those ennobling doctrines about oneness of life, the universality of Truth, which have paved the way to mutual understanding of the East and the West.

In our country, the cause which you represent, has done and is doing immeasurable good to the poor, ignorant, helpless, and suffering humanity.

Living as we do, amidst the continuous din and bustle of work, we have few opportunities for high and noble thoughts, but we hope that the short visit which you have condescended to pay to our town, will tend to uplift and ennable our spirit to sanctify our karma and to promote the growth of harmony and concord among the wide range of races and communities which we represent

We beg to remain,
 Your Holiness's most humble Admirers
 Members of the Reception Committee
 on behalf of
 The Residents of Jamshedpur

JAMSHEDPUR,
The 10th January, 1922

BIRENDRA NATH DAS,
Chairman.

The Swamiji then rose amidst loud and prolonged cheers and gave the reply.

CHAPTER I

THE SANATANA DHARMA

(*The Milanee Pandal, Jamshedpur, the 10th January, 1922*)

MEMBERS OF THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE, FRIENDS AND RESIDENTS
OF TATA TOWN,

My work had been in America for the last 25 years. This work was started, as you know, by my illustrious brother and predecessor Swami Vivekananda. He was the first Swami to cross over the ocean and land at the New World and to represent *Sanatana Dharma* (the Vedic religion and the Vedanta philosophy) before the Parliament of Religions which was held in Chicago in 1893. In that vast assembly were the representatives of all religions from all parts of the world. There were also professors, doctors of divinity, and illustrious men of talent who took the opportunity of expressing their ideas and giving to the world the principles of their religions. Among those great men Swami Vivekananda appeared as a young lecturer. Never before had he lectured in public, but he stood up at the request of the president before that audience and expressed his ideas in a simple language. But those few words which dropped from his lips, created a stir in the audience. There aroused in the minds of the people a feeling of enthusiasm and a feeling of love and sympathy which in turn touched the heart of this great representative of the Vedic religion.

Swami Vivekananda gave an outline of *Sanatana Dharma*. The word *Sanatana Dharma*, as you all know, means eternal religion. The eternal religion has no founder. Why is it called the eternal religion? By 'religion' we do not mean a particular set of doctrines and dogmas which you have to accept and believe in, but by religion we mean a science of the soul which explains our true nature and answers such questions: Why we have come to this world? What is the object of life? Where shall we go after death? All these questions which disturb our minds must be solved by religion. By religion it

is not meant that we should accept some of the words, written in a book (which may or may not be revealed) as infallible truth, whether the questions of minds are answered or not, but by religion is meant a solution of all the problems of life and death. Such a solution we do not find anywhere except in the Vedas. Such a solution has been given to the world for the first time by the great *Rishis* or seers of truth from whom we trace our descent. Those seers of truth lived centuries before the Christian era, when other nations of the world were living in the darkness of ignorance, when the forefathers of the masters of modern civilization were tattooing their bodies and living in caves and jungles. In that remote antiquity, our forefathers, the great *Rishis* of Vedic India, realized the eternal Truth, and discovered for the first time the solution of those problems, which trouble the minds of all people in all ages. It came like an inspiration from the divine centre, producing universal love in their hearts, and showing those laws which govern our soul life. The religion which I have described as the science of the soul was not founded by any personality. All sectarian religions have their founders. Christianity is based upon the life and teachings of its founder, Jesus the Christ. Buddhism is based upon the life, character, and teachings of Prince Siddhartha or Gautama Buddha, the founder of that religion, which has now the largest number of followers in the civilized world. The other religions outside of Christianity and Buddhism also had their founders. Mohammedanism was founded by Mohammed, Zoroastrianism was founded by Zoroaster. All sectarian religions, you will notice, have their founders, but *Sanatana Dharma* has no founder. It is based upon the eternal spiritual laws which govern the souls of all humanity. These spiritual laws are not man-made. All other laws that govern our physical conditions, might have been made by human beings, but the spiritual laws which govern our soul-life, are eternal. These laws are the fundamental principles of *Sanatana Dharma*. Therefore we call our religion eternal (*sanatana*), and it was explained in the light of modern science by my predecessor Swami Vivekananda at the World's Fair in Chicago, America.

Swami Vivekananda, after delivering his message in Chicago, travelled in different parts of that country, and met some of the great talents of that time in America. Afterwards he came

to London in 1896, and invited me to come over and help him by taking charge of his work there I responded to his call in that year and went over to London He gave me the charge of his work, and left England for his motherland.

It was 25 years ago, when I first landed at the great city of London Twentyfive years is not a short period. It is a quarter of a century Very few people realize the length of this period. I have given the best part of my life to continue the work that was started by my predecessor and to help humanity by broadening their views in their life. I stayed in London over a year, giving addresses in different places and becoming the Head of the Vedanta Society in London In 1897, I went over to New York, America, at the request of some of the students of Swami Vivekananda, who were eager to continue the study of this great philosophy. And from that time I lived in New York, and travelled in different parts of the United States, teaching Vedanta and delivering lectures in the Universities of Columbia, Harvard, Cornell, Toronto and California, and before various organizations.

I was received with great enthusiasm by the people who were broad-minded and who were eager to know something about the great truths of the Hindu religion and specially of the Vedanta philosophy.

My friends, America is a great country. I love America, because the people of that country are open-minded. They are not conservatives. They are open to receive any truth from any source, no matter where it came from, and are able to appreciate the truth when presented before them. Not only do they appreciate, but they also know how to respect and honour a great man, whether he is a scientist or a philosopher, a psychologist or a spiritual giant The Americans now lead the world in various lines of culture and new thought. My friends, you see good many Americans in this town who are willing to teach others and mix with others freely, no matter whether they are of a dark race, or of a white race They are not so self-centred. They are the pioneers of education. They love education. If you go to their country, you will see how they are advanced in material lines and how they develop the resources of their country. Their great men and women in different lines of thought have devoted their time and energy for the good of

their people as well as for the good of the world. In America, there is no such thing as our caste system. Today a man may be a sweeper in America but he has the possibility of becoming a great man, or he might fill the chair of the President of the State.

So my friends, there is a great possibility in America, where all men are equal. And for that very reason Vedanta should be taught in that country, because the people are quite ready to receive such truths. You may have some idea that some of the Americans ill-treat the Negroes, but the Americans are the ones who gave them the franchise and made them equal to the white people as far as their political status is concerned. If you find some special reports like the lynching of the Negroes by white men, you must know that they are exceptional cases which are not to be seen everywhere. I, for instance, lived in America for twentyfive years, but never saw one such lynching. There are a few places in America, where the white mobs do such atrocious acts upon the Negroes, and there are occasions, when they lynch a white man too. So my friends, by reading these special reports you must not judge the character of the American nation.

They have given freedom not only to men, but to women. I have seen the greatest activities among the women of America. You may be surprised to hear that the Deputy Commissioner of Police in New York city is a woman. There are women judges, there are women lawyers, there are women philosophers, and, in all schools, women are the teachers of boys and girls. I have known one such lady who is the principal of a High School, and who has filled that position for the last 25 years. The Board of Education regards her opinion as the final. My friends, she is a student of Vedanta, and she has become a Brahmaparinirvanini, and I have given her the name of Satyapriya. I have met quite a few American young men who have been proud to be called as Hindus. They have taken initiation from us, and we have given them such names as Ramadas, Haridas, Gurudas, Sivadas. They are glad to be called by such names, because they regard the Hindu spiritual teachers as the greatest spiritual teachers of the world. Our teachings in America have made a tremendous change in the religious field of that country. Twentyfive years ago, when I went to America, all the mis-

naries were against us. The Churches were talking against us, and calling us names. I was the only Hindu then in the United States, and I had to fight tooth and nail against all false reports which were in that country. Those false reports against the Hindus were mostly made by the missionaries.

One instance I will mention here which will give you some idea of the false reports that were current in that country 25 years ago. In the Sunday school books, there was a picture of a Hindu mother throwing her babe into the Ganges, and there in the water was a crocodile with its mouth wide open and it was described that the Hindu mother was feeding the crocodile with her own babe, and this was her religion. It was taught in the Sunday schools, where the young boys and girls used to see that picture and committed to memory the contents of that story. Some of my students showed me that picture, and asked whether there was any truth in it. I said that I had never seen such a case in my life. I have travelled from the source to the mouth of the Ganges and never saw a crocodile in the Ganges. There may be some alligators but no crocodiles. If the Hindu mother threw their babes into the Ganges and fed the crocodiles with their babes then how could I come to America ? I was one of the babes. Such misrepresentations were made by the missionaries.

When I delivered a lecture on *Woman's Place in Hindu Religion* and showed the real position of a woman according to the vedic religion, the Missionaries were up against me and strongly attacked me. But there was a Bishop of New York, the late Bishop Potter, who was one of the greatest and most respected men in the United States. He took my side and supported me, because he had some knowledge of the truth. The missionaries challenged him, but Bishop Potter who took my side said : "Swami Abhedananda is a scholar and a gentleman, and what he has said, is correct, and he will not listen to their talk". You know that in the Vedas there are names of women who were the revelators and who wrote hymns like Gargi, Maitreyi and Visvavara. They were the greatest of the women of the vedic age.

So our teachings have driven out some of the wrong impressions which were created by these angels who go from one part of the world to another to preach the gospel of truth, as

they understand it Another thing I will try to explain this evening and that is the effect of our teachings in the Christendom Our teachings have broadened the views of the clergy whose sermons, as far as their fundamental principles are concerned, have taken a new shape. Orthodox Christianity, doctrines and dogmas have lost their hold upon the minds of the thoughtful people. You will find in America such movements as the Christian Science Movement, the New Thought Movement, the Spiritualist Movement, etc. All these movements are either direct or indirect effects of the teachings of Vedanta, during the last 25 years. The founder of the Christian Science Movement, Mrs Mary Baker G. Eddy, after studying the *Bhagavat Gita*, took some of its principles, and incorporated them in her text-book called *Science and Health*. Again the New Thought teachers were at one time the students of Swami Vivekananda, and also they used to come to my lectures and classes Their idea is that God is all-pervading, and that God is all in all, and that there is only one God without a second. They do not believe in a personal Christ, but they believe in the Christ principle. And this Christ principle is all-pervading. It dwells within us In fact, they say that each individual soul is a potential Christ. This great truth has given a death blow to orthodox Christianity which believes in a personal Christ as the Saviour who saved the sinners by his blood. Such ideas are becoming obsolete Advanced thinkers in America do not believe in the salvation by the blood of Jesus. People in general who are educated and are students of science and philosophy, do not believe in the doctrine of Eternal Hell. They do not believe that the world was created six thousand years ago They do not believe that the blood of Christ saves mankind from eternal perdition, but they believe in the spiritual Christ, 'Christoo' which means the same as Krishna, The spirit of Christ will be born in each soul as Christ himself has said.

So my friends, Christianity, as it was 25 years ago, is not the Christianity of the day. Today it is based upon the fundamental principles of the one eternal Truth which is taught in the vedic philosophy. As you find in the Vedas. *ekamevadvitiam*—'There is one God without a second', '*ekam sad vipra vadudha vadanti*'—"That which exists is one, men call it by various names", etc So these ideals have been taken up by the

Christian Scientists, by the New Thoughtists, and by the Spiritualists of the United States. Their minds are greatly influenced by the new ideals of Vedanta which we have introduced among them, and the European is getting the same ideals gradually. Today you will find in England great many Christian Science churches, and great many New Thought temples. The Spiritualists like Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Sir Oliver Lodge, and others have taken up the principles taught by our Vedanta.

Modern spiritualism teaches that the soul is eternal and after death we do not go to eternal perdition. Take the case of Sir Oliver Lodge. He is a scientific man. If you read his book, entitled *Raymond*, there you will find that he openly declares that we can communicate with our departed friends who have gone into the next world, and he is proud of such statements I had the pleasure of hearing his address which he gave last year in San Francisco, California. And this grand old man who was escorted by a Bishop, openly said that after death, we do not go to hell, but we continue to enjoy pleasures, and we have the power to communicate with our departed friends and relatives. My friends, that is a step beyond orthodox Christianity. The orthodox Christians will never allow you to think that you can communicate with your departed friends, but they say that they are all sleeping now, and will wake up on the Last Day of Judgement, when an angel will blow a trumpet and with their physical bodies they will resurrect and go up to heaven. Such ideas have been taught for centuries, but a change has taken place, and a great deal of credit may be given to the scientific education received in the universities of the West. But those universities are giving scientific education, based upon materialistic theory and this materialistic theory does not admit the existence of a human soul. It cannot trace the origin of matter and denies anything beyond matter.

But the Christian Scientists, on the contrary, deny the existence of matter and call it a delusion. Just as the Vedanta says that matter or the material world is *maya* or delusion, so the Christian scientists call it a delusion. According to them, your physical body is a delusion, and your disease of the body does not exist in reality, for you are eternally free from disease, sickness, sorrow, and misery. This idea, here let me tell you, is the vedic truth, taught in the Vedas and emphasized in the

Vedanta philosophy, which says: "The *Atman* is free from sorrow, from misery, from disease and from death".

The *Atman* is our true self. It is a part and parcel of the eternal Truth, which is called the Brahman by some and by others the Paramatma. It is Sakti or the Divine Mother of the Saktas. It is Siva for the Saivas and Vishnu for the Vaishnavas. The Christians call the same truth, the Heavenly Father, the followers of Nanaka call it the Sanatana Satya, the Buddhists call it Buddha and the Mohammedans regard the same Truth as Allah, the governor of the universe. So, my friends, there is no difference in the fundamental truth, as Truth is one. Whether you are a Christian, or a Mohammedan or a Hindu, you are worshipping the same one Truth which is without a second. But when you forget that the truth is one, then you begin to quarrel and fight, and then you call the Heathen God, the Christian God, the Mohammedan God and Vaishnava God and the Saiva God. All these are Gods, but who are they? Does your religion teach that there are so many Gods? An orthodox Christian might say why should you worship a Heathen God, when you should worship a Christian God! And a Christian God is white and a Heathen God is black. But, my friends, there is no such thing as the Christian God, the Hindu God, or the Mohammedan God, for God is one, who is worshipped by all nations. He is nameless, and he who is worshipped by the Mohammedans as Allah, is the same Being who is worshipped by the Parsees as Ahura Mazda. He is the same Truth that is worshipped as Vishnu by the Vaishnavas, as Siva by the Saivas and Sakti by the Saktas, or as the Father in Heaven by the Christians. Upon this fundamental principle of the unity of God, depends the way to harmonize all difference of opinions. Upon this fundamental principle, our *Sanatana Dharma* is based and that *Sanatana Dharma* should be preached all over the world.

Materialism will never satisfy the soul. Commercialism will bring sorrow, suffering and misery to the world, as we have seen during the late European War¹, which was the result of commercialism and materialism. A new era has begun after this war, and commercialism is going to die out. We have

¹ World War I

shown to the world that we do not live for material prosperity, but we live for another thing. The aim of our life is the realization of that eternal Truth which is one and all-pervading. It may be asked as to how can we realize the eternal Truth. In the first place, we should learn that there is one life. You see that there are so many human beings, so many living creatures, and so many plants and vegetables, but do you think that life is distinct in each individual manifestation? No, there is one current of life-force which is all-pervading, just as you see there are so many electric lamps. Can you say that this is one kind of electric lamp, and that lamp is of another kind, and the third lamp is of still another kind? The same electricity is burning as light in so many lamps, and the same electricity not only produces light, but also produces heat and motion. Again you see the street car is running by electricity, and there is the electric heater by which you can cook your meals, and can read books in the light given by electricity. The same electric current produces all these various manifestations. So, my friends, there is one life-current that is appearing through all human bodies, as also through the animal and vegetable bodies. Again that life-force which is one, is neither yours, nor mine. It is the eternal *Prana*. There is no such thing as dead matter. Everything is alive, and the *Prana* or life-force is all-pervading. It is the cause of the molecular activity; it is the cause of the movement of electrons. It produces electrons, ions, atoms, and molecules, and the same life-force has its manifestations through the socalled material world, as also in the living world which are known as mind and sense powers as thought, the power of thinking, and the power of understanding. The idea of unity in variety we find in Vedanta. "Everything has come from that one infinite source. The life-force has come into existence from that source, and from the same source comes what we call mind, intellect, power of speaking, power of tasting and of touching, etc and that which is etherial, gaseous, liquid and solid".

Matter and mind have come from that one common source which is known as God, or the Brahman. So, my friends, how can there be many Gods: a Hindu God, as distinct from a Mohammedan, Christian, or a Parsee God? Why do you quarrel, and why do you hate each other? Followers of different reli-

gions should love one another realizing the oneness of God under a variety of names and forms Whether you are a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian, you are a child of God and the eternal Truth, and you must embrace each other, and consider a Christian or a Mohammedan or a Parsee as your real brother. This is the preaching which has been handed down to us through generations even centuries before the advent of Jesus the Christ This idea was given out for the first time in India, and it is going to rule in future the European nations who are eagerly waiting to receive this truth today And today, the Christianity, I mean the orthodox Christianity, is bound to take its place in the background. Wherever there is a triumph of science, there is the triumph of Vedanta and the triumph of *Sanatana Dharma*.

Therefore, my friends, carry the banner of *Sanatana Dharma* to the whole world, and go and teach its truth, because no other nation has received it as its birth-right except the Hindus, and they are the pioneers of all the spiritual teachers in the whole world Swami Vivekananda opened the way, and I followed his path, and you are here to follow our path Come along, and show to the people that you have inherited this truth from ancient times through the inspiration of the *Rishis* and sages, and you can live that life even in this age In the Western countries, people have very little idea about God. They have no time to worship They go to the church once a week and attend religious meetings for different purposes. But, my friends, we are the only people who eat religion, drink religion, and sleep religion, and who love religion This ideal is going to conquer the whole world The European nations might be your lord on the material plane, but you are their lord on the spiritual plane You are going to prove before humanity that the power of the spirit is greater than the power of the sword Today you may ignore it fully, but tomorrow if you can bring out the spiritual powers, if you can realize that you are the children of eternal Truth and that God's love is manifesting in you, then you will be the rulers of the world Here is our strength, and nobody can take it away from us The power of the spirit is greater than the power of sword You may conquer other nations, you may take possession of their country, you may draw a sword to kill your neighbours and

rob them of all they possess, but, my friends, that will not give you peace and happiness. But if you can conquer your own mind and your ambition, then you will be greater than the greatest emperor of this world.

Alexander the Great was a conqueror. He met a poor *Sannyasin* who was sitting under a tree without any clothes, and he wanted to make his acquaintance. He sent his attendants to ask him to come to him, but the *Sannyasi* Yogi did not move. The attendants came and told Alexander that he did not want to come, and Alexander gave them the order, "If he does not come, kill him." And so the message was carried to the Yogi, and the Yogi said, "He is a liar, he is a slave ; he is not the conqueror of the world, but is a slave of ambition and greed and as he is a liar, he cannot kill me. He might kill this body which is not myself, but not my soul which is deathless and immortal. Swords cannot pierce me, fire cannot burn me, air cannot dry me, water cannot moisten me. I am immortal, eternal, birthless and deathless. So whoever says that he can kill me is a liar". Alexander the Great after hearing these words of wisdom, bowed to this great man and exclaimed. "This sage is the real master and the Lord of the universe."

Each one of you can become like the sage, the real master, if you realize that God is dwelling within you and you are the living image of the Almighty. At present you think that God is dwelling above the clouds somewhere in the distant heaven and not in you? What sort of religion is that? God the universal spirit exists everywhere. He dwells in your hearts, and you must realize Him as the soul and manifest divinity through every action of your daily life. He is the eternal Truth which exists everywhere in the world, in the solar system and in the stars, and at the same time He is dwelling within the heart of all living creatures. Whosoever realizes that eternal Truth in the heart, he attains to infinite peace and everlasting happiness. Such is the teaching of Vedanta. We must give it to the world. Furthermore, we shall realize that all human beings are like so many manifestations of the divine Being. Humanity is the Divinity, and if you ill-treat any of your brothers whether he is a sweeper or a scavenger or a Pariah, you are ill-treating God.

You have no right to consider yourself greater than any of

these God is dwelling among all and our *Shastras*, Vedas, and philosophies and Vedanta teach that he is the wisest of men who sees the same Divinity in all. The *Bhagavat Gita* says: "He is wise who sees the same Brahman in a well-cultured Brahmin, in an elephant, in a cow, in a dog and in a Pariah" So, my friends, follow the teachings of your religion, and remember that all these Pariahs and low-caste people are as great as the Brahmins, because God is dwelling in them If we do not recognize God in all who is to be blamed ?

A Brahmin who does not understand this eternal Truth, is not a Brahmin, but, on the other hand, a man who realizes this truth, may be of low caste by birth, and is greater than a Brahmin, who does not follow the ideals of *Sanatana Dharma*. Therefore, my friends, our religion is broad and noble, and has no room for all these caste distinctions and differentiations of creed and colour. The fundamental principle is oneness. All nations will receive this truth and admire the practice of this noble doctrine There are people in the United States today who will receive any teacher of Truth and will welcome him as one of the noblest spiritual leaders of the world. The Vedanta philosophy has done its work. But it is not finished and we have just begun We have other Swamis in America now who are carrying on the works of the Ramakrishna Mission which was established after the name of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, whose name you have mentioned in the address of welcome, was my Master I had the honour and good fortune of meeting him, receiving his instructions and serving him for two years. I sat at his feet along with my brothers and co-disciples like Swami Vivekananda, Swami Brahmananda and other Swamis of our Order. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was the personification of the harmony of religions. In him, we found the same ideals which I have been describing to you. When the Christians came to him and found him in that state of Godconsciousness, they began to bow down to him, as they would before their own Master Jesus the Christ, and prayed to him as they would pray to their Lord. The Mohammedans came and regarded him as their greatest saint and the inspired teacher of Islam The Buddhists found in him their ideal of Buddha, and the Vaishnavas and Saktas also found in him their highest ideals Ramakrishna

saw the Divinity in all, and his teachings were so broad that they could be followed by any one whether he was a Christian or a Mohammedan or a Hindu or a Buddhist.

Therefore, my friends, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa was the *Yugavatara*. He came to this world, when we needed such a teacher who would establish the harmony of religions and knowledge by his life. He lived that life and, in fact, he was the personification of the harmony of religions. When we first came to him, we did not believe in any of the teachers like Christ or Buddha. We were agnostics and students of science, but when we saw him and watched his life by day and by night, we found in him the manifestations of Krishna, Rama, Buddha, Christ and other *Avatars*. He lived in Godconsciousness (*samadhi*) almost all the time. He had no other ideal in life than the realization of God as the foundation of the universe. He did not follow the materialistic or commercial ideals of a man of the world, but he followed the ideal that God is the only reality. Whether you are the owner of a large property, or of enormous wealth, or the father of a large family, my friends, if you have not realized God, if you have not realized your own relation to the universal Spirit, then your life is wasted and this ideal Sri Ramakrishna established by his own personal experience. Then, at the same time, he was most practical, and was not a dreamer. The followers of such a master must necessarily be practical and not dreamers. They are great workers. They work for their ideal. Their ideal is Karma Yoga. Karma Yoga means the path of unselfish work. They devote their lives for the good of the world, and show the way to salvation through unselfish works.

Karma Yoga teaches the method by which can be acquired the purification of the heart which is called in Sanskrit *chittashuddhi* and *chitta-shuddhi* is the first stage before Godconsciousness can come. Did not Jesus the Christ emphasise it by saying: "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God". Purity of heart is the condition for Godconsciousness as well as for God-vision. Therefore, my friends, you can purify your heart by doing unselfish works for the good of all, and realize that all the works which you do during your life-time, are the acts of worship of the Supreme.

The *Bhagavata Gita* says: "Whatever work thou performest,

whatever sacrifice thou makest, make them as a free offering to the Lord". You will find that by this method your heart will be purified and when the purification of heart comes, then you will attain to Godconsciousness and God-vision. Then the ideal of *Sanatana Dharma* will be reached. Therefore all works, whether manual labour or mental, are for the good of humanity, if performed without seeking result for ourselves, will purify our hearts. Another thing you will notice that our *Sanatana Dharma* teaches that all human beings are the bodies through which God is working.

The Rig Veda says: "God has infinite eyes, infinite ears, infinite mouths, infinite heads". When you meet a friend, you must revere the Lord within him, and send your salutation not to the mortal being, but to the immortal one who is the real man. Our custom is to bow to our friends, when we meet them. It means that we salute God that is dwelling in our friends. Furthermore, you must realize that any work that you do for your brother, for your neighbour, and for your country, is an act of worship, and holding this ideal in your minds, you should go on with your works, and live in this world. If you work through love for God and humanity, you are entitled to attain Godconsciousness in this life, and also after-death, you will enjoy that perfection which is described in all the scriptures of the world. Then the highest object of your life will be gained. And then you will realize that you are one with the infinite Spirit, that your birth-right is freedom, that so long you have abused your powers by enslaving your mind to the conditions of the world and considering yourselves as slaves to other mortals. We are all born for freedom. Freedom is the goal for all, and *moksha* is the highest ideal of our religion. *Moksha* means freedom, and that freedom does not mean freedom in material action alone, but it means freedom from all bondages and all imperfections of the body and mind and also the attainment of perfection. This ideal was given by the great *Rishis* in ancient times, and the same ideal has also been emphasised by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna and his disciples, who are working under the organisation of the Ramakrishna Mission. Therefore, my friends, if you establish a centre of the Ramakrishna Mission here, you will do enormous good to the masses, you will do a great justice to your-

selves, and justice to your own country, to your friends, and to your brothers, and will educate them how to gain freedom or *moksha* which is the ultimate goal of all religions.

CHAPTER II

THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

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MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The history of religions of the world shows that all the great religions, such as Judaism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism and Brahmanism, have risen in the Continent of Asia. It is this Continent that has produced these great religions which have followers in different parts of the world. At the same time we notice that each one of these religions has claimed to be universal.

The doctrines of Judaism were preached among the Jewish people. The doctrines of Zoroastrianism were preached among the Parsees. The doctrines of Hinduism or Brahminism were taught in India, but its off-spring Buddhism went outside of India and was accepted by the people of China, Tibet, Siam, Burma, Ceylon, and other countries. There are two springs of Judaism: viz., Christianity and Mohammedanism. Christianity has travelled far in the West, and has made great many followers. In fact, Christianity has become the religion of the Western countries in Europe and America, while Mohammedanism which prevails in Asia today, had its time, and went as far as Spain and had large followers in Europe. Each one of these great religions has tried to convince the world that the doctrines and teachings of their Prophets were the only ways of attaining to salvation.

Some of the followers were so earnest and enthusiastic that they tried to convert people by force. Some held swords in one hand and scriptures in the other. Others had gone to demolish the temples of the socalled Heathens. All these efforts have more or less failed to convince the world that each one of these religions could be universal. Naturally the question arises in

our mind which of these great religions should be called universal religion

If you go to a Christian Missionary, he will tell you that his religion is universal, there is no other way of attaining salvation, there is no other way of reaching God. If you go to a Mohammedan, he will say almost the same thing. If you go to a Buddhist, his opinion would be that Buddha is the Saviour of mankind, and whosoever follows the teachings of Buddha will reach Nirvana. But Hinduism was never a proselytising religion. The word Hindu is a misnomer. There is no such religion as Hinduism, neither there is any such religion as Brahminism. Foreigners have called our religion by such names as Hinduism or Brahminism. We do not call it Hinduism or Brahminism, but we call it Aryan religion or *Arya-dharma*. This Aryan religion has no particular God, but is based upon the fundamental spiritual laws which govern our soul-life. It has no founder. All other sectarian religions had their founders. Judaism is based upon the personality of its great Prophet Moses. Christianity is built upon the personality of Jesus the Christ. Mohammedanism is also built upon the personality of Mohammed. Zoroastrianism is based upon the teachings of Zoroaster. So is Buddhism based on the teachings of Buddha. But Aryan religion has no such founder, although it may be called the oldest religion in the world. Because its scriptures, the Vedas, are the oldest ones, and the Rig Veda is the oldest scripture that has been handed down through memory to us. It had existed long before the art of writing was known to the world.

The teachings of the Vedas are broad and unlimited in their scope. We can show that the teachings of the Vedas were the first to give the highest ideals of a spiritual life in the struggle of the human soul to commune with the infinite Spirit. All other religions are more or less related to the religion of the Vedas. Most of the doctrines of Buddhism can be traced back to the teachings of the *Upanishads*. In fact, Buddha did not teach anything new. All that existed before his time in the *jnana-kanda* of the Vedas, was popularised and brought by Buddha before the masses to help humanity. Great many ideals of Christianity can be traced back to Buddhism, and also to the teachings of Vedanta. Some people are of the opinion

that Jesus the Christ came to India and lived for six years and studied under Buddhist teachers, and after finishing his studies, he went to his own land, and there he preached his doctrines and that was afterwards known as the religion of Christ. Some of our Western friends might not consider this as authentic, but there is a great deal of truth in it. In fact, nobody knows what Jesus the Christ did from his twelfth year, until he appeared before the public in his thirtieth year. The unknown life of Jesus is yet to be explained by the followers of this great religion. There might be a difference of opinion on the subject, but as I have already said¹, there is a good deal of truth in this statement.

Each of these religions, however, claims to be the universal religion, but at the same time we can find through reason that it cannot be universal religion. None of these religions, that is limited by the personality of its founders, can be called universal, because the founders of these religions had different ideals which they gave to their own people at a time when they flourished. Those ideals might have been necessary in those days, but today we cannot consider them necessary. In the light of modern science and in this age of reason, we cannot accept anything that is illogical, unscientific, irrational or unphilosophical. Those who follow the ideals blindly and accept the doctrines and dogmas of some special religion, may find comfort and consolation in their soul. But when you ask them why should we not accept their doctrines and dogmas and accept that of ours, they cannot answer. They might say, 'our religion is true and yours is false' and 'our religion is based upon revelation whilst yours is not'. A Christian might say that to a Mohammedan, but a Mohammedan will reply that his religion is based upon revelation, just as much as the religion of Christ and that his scripture is a revealed word of God. Again the followers of Judaism would not accept Christianity. They are satisfied with their teachings which they received from Moses and other Prophets.

In this way, the followers of different religions are diversified in their opinions, and are quarrelling and fighting against each other for all these centuries. Is there no way of finding

¹ This fact has been revealed in the Bengali book, *Kashmere O Tibbate*

harmony amongst these existing religions of the world ? This problem is to be solved in this age, because we cannot accept anything blindly. Whatever we accept we must have sound reasonings behind it, otherwise we are bound to reject it I have already said that no religion which is based on or limited by the personality of its founder, can be called universal, and it is a fact. Why ? Because the personality of Christ might appeal to a certain class of people , while there are classes of people to whom the personality of Mohammed will be more appealing, or the personality of Buddha will be regarded as better than that of Jesus the Christ Therefore, there will be a division, and we cannot change the whole world by enforcing the doctrines and dogmas of one religion amongst others. The doctrines of Jesus the Christ might help a certain class of people, but the same doctrines will not be accepted by others. How are you going to enforce this ? How are you going to convert people by force? There had been attempts to convert by force and that is done in this age. You have read in the papers that the Moplas tried to convert the Hindus by force. There are fanatics in every age But we cannot be fanatics Fanaticism is not religion Fanaticism proceeds from ignorance, and wherever ignorance is strong, the zeal of fanaticism is strong. For this reason we will have to find some other method by which we can see harmony among the existing religions. So long as we consider the doctrines and dogmas of different religions, we will find no harmony. But when we go down to the fundamental principles and the spiritual ideals, there we shall find harmony. Therefore each religion can be divided into two parts. The one is non-essential part and the other is essential part. The non-essential parts are the doctrines, dogmas, beliefs, sentiments and other ethical requirements, but the essential parts in all religions are the same. The essential parts are self-control, self-mastery, self-renunciation and the knowledge of truth As Jesus the Christ said: "And Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free". So you will find in all religions the same ideal that the knowledge of truth brings freedom to the soul. And this knowledge of truth, being the ideal common to all religions, is one, because truth is one. That which is regarded as truth by the Buddhists, is the same truth of the Mohammedans, the same

of the Christians, of the Hindus and of the Jews. Truth cannot be many, but is one Our aim is to realize that truth and to attain to freedom. We want freedom from home, all limitations, bondage of the body and environments which have enslaved us and have made us what we are today. The earnest desire of our soul is to become free and to outgrow all limitations. To gratify that desire all these religions have prescribed various methods by which that goal can be realized. The methods may vary according to the needs of the people. That which is needed by the people who live in the desert of Arabia, may not be needed by the people who live in Europe, or in America, or in India, or in China. The needs of the people must go hand in hand with their manners, customs and environments. Thus when the essential part of religions is one and when the methods are diversified, we may say that unity through the variety of methods is the ideal of the universal religion. That religion would be called universal which would embrace these various methods as the paths leading to the same goal. The doctrines, dogmas and beliefs are described in Judaism form the path which leads to God. The God of the Jews again is the God of the Christians, and also of the Mohammedans, of the Hindus, and of the Buddhists. There may be minor differences in the names and forms of the Divinity, but the essential part, the truth, which is the reality of the universe, is the same. If we study the Vedas, there we find this ideal. "From Truth we have come into existence, in Truth we live, and unto the Truth we return at the end, and that Truth is one". Making this as the foundation if we proceed and examine the fundamental and essential part of all religions, we find harmony, but at the same time we must consider all methods as good We must not think that the method of a Christian is better than that of a Mohammedan or of a Buddhist, because that which is good for a Christian, may be so for him, but may not be good for another, and we must not persecute others on account of their beliefs. The history of Christianity is described in the words written in the blood of its martyrs who were massacred during the inquisition of the Middle Ages On account of their faith, the innocent persons were burnt alive, and simply because they did not believe, according to the notions of the churches

Those days have gone by, and we do not want to have

those terrible tortures repeated again in this age. Today we are becoming more civilized and following the path of toleration, our knowledge of the highest ideal is becoming grander every day, for truth is the goal of all religions.

The same truth is the ideal of all science. The knowledge of truth is also the goal of modern science. That which is unscientific cannot be called religion, because by religion we should not understand a set of doctrines and dogmas which should be followed blindly, but it must be regarded as science of the soul and its relation to the universal truth.

Scientific method should be applied to trace the origin of the soul or the spirit within us. The war that was raged between science and religion in the last century, is still continuing, and has not stopped as yet. It may not stop for a long time, but the tendency is towards the triumph of science over blind faith. Today we are not willing to accept such ideas that this world was created six thousand years ago out of nothing, that the sun was created after the earth came into existence, as is described in the Old Testament. Today we believe in the process of evolution which explains that all these various manifestations of the universe have come from one eternal Energy, and that matter is only a stage in the process of manifestation of that energy. Matter is no longer understood as a reality, but is something that is evanescent and passing away. Under certain conditions we can see it, touch it, taste it, hear it or smell it. But if the conditions change, all these objects of sight, touch, taste, or smell will vanish. The ultimate reality will be the one uncreatable and indestructible energy. If this be the fundamental principle of modern science, we will have to harmonize this principle with the principle of the universal religion, otherwise there is no use of a religion which teaches something different, and the tendency of the modern world of the West is to find that harmony.

Today we know that there is only one life. Mental Science has proved that there is only one mind and that our individual minds are but the individual manifestations of the cosmic mind. The cosmic mind is one which you may call the mind of God, which is the Creator of the universe. By the word Creator we should not understand as our forefathers understood it. The Creator cannot create something out of nothing, because it is

an impossibility. The word 'Creator' means that spiritual Being or Entity which gives a start in the progress of evolution from the sleeping energy of the universe, or in other words He is the starter of evolution. And that ideal will be accepted by the scientific minds of today. The spiritual influx into the cosmic energy was the beginning of the evolution of matter and the material world.

Universal religion must have a perfect harmony with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, but when we examine the doctrines and dogmas of different sectarian religions, we do not find this harmony. If however we study the Vedanta philosophy and the *Upanishads*, we find that these ideals and ultimate conclusions of modern science were anticipated by the seers of truth, who described their realization in a most beautiful language which is called the language of the gods. It is the Sanskrit language. In the Rig Veda, we read a description of the process of evolution of the universe from one eternal Being that existed before the evolution began. The hymn of creation states "Before the beginning of evolution there was neither entity, nor non-entity, neither this space, nor the sun, the moon, and the stars. There was neither air, nor day, nor night. In that absolute darkness, darkness was rolling over darkness, and there was the eternal Being, who breathed, but was breathless. From Him emanated the energy and all the forces of nature". "From that one Substance emanated the *prana* or life-force, the mind or the sense power i.e. the powers of healing, seeing, smelling, tasting and touching, and that which is ether or which is gaseous, liquid and solid" What a beautiful description it is! No scientific mind can more fully describe that ideal. There is no other scripture in the world which gives such a perfect description of the evolution of the world. Again the ideal of unity in variety is given in the same Vedas: "As one fire entering into the world is manifesting itself into various forms, so the one universal Being has entered into the universe and has manifested in the forms of minerals, vegetables, animals, birds and human beings" "As one air entering into a musical instrument passes through different holes and produces different notes of music, so the one eternal Being entering into this universe has appeared in so many different forms". As you see in so many electric lamps, the

electricity is one, but manifestation is in multi-form, similarly, the one life-force which is all-pervading is manifesting through all. Where there is life there is the manifestation of the eternal Being. Beginning with a protoplasm the expression of life-force is to be found everywhere. In a human being, it has reached its climax. There is no such thing as dead matter. The word 'dead matter' should be taken out of the dictionary. You may call this table as dead matter, but there is life in it. When that latent life-force leaves the table, it will disintegrate into electrons and vanish into the ocean of eternal energy.

So, my friends, this eternal energy is the abode of God who is called Allah, or Father in Heaven, or Siva, or Vishnu, or Buddha, or by any other name. All these names refer to the same Being which is one without a second. As the same substance 'water' is called by different names. in German it is called 'wasser', a Frenchman will call it 'eau', in latin 'aqua', in English 'water' and in the Indian languages "*jalam, pani, bari*" but you may call it by any name that will quench your thirst. So, my friends, God is one, but his names are many, and if you are longing for God, you may worship him by any name. If you are earnest and sincere, and if your longing is real, your thirst will be quenched, and you will reach the goal, and will be one with the supreme Being.

Universal religion must embrace all the sectarian religions whether monotheistic or dualistic, whether qualified non-dualistic, or non-dualistic. There should be three different phases in the universal religion , in the first phase of dualism or monotheism it will embrace Judaism and Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Mohammedanism and other dualistic religions of the world. There will be no difference whether you worship God by turning your face towards the east or the west. To the omnipresent God there is neither east, nor west. That which you call east, goes to the west, and that which you call west, comes to the east, for the earth is revolving upon its own axis. You may see the sun rising in the east, but if you go to the west, you will see the sun rising there also. Similarly, there is neither north, nor south, and neither upward, nor downward in this infinite space, and God is infinite. So, why do you make such difference that you prefer east to west or west to east? The real divinity is dwelling within us. You will have

to look inside instead of outside. You may think that God is sitting overhead above the clouds. But, my friends, if He is sitting there, He is also sitting near you, which you imagine. He is the Soul of your souls, the Life of your lives, and in Him you live, through Him you exist, and without Him there could be nothing. Every breath that you inhale, is not by your own power, but that power belongs to God. When you raise your hand, the power which you exercise, is not yours. You may foolishly claim that as your own, but in reality it is God's power. A fool might think that the air which is in his lungs, belongs to him, but that air belongs to no one but God. Again the brain's power of thinking which you call your own, is not yours. You are nothing but an instrument, and through you the divine force is working. You may make good use of that force or abuse it.

If you abuse it, you make a mistake, and you are a sinner. But if you make good use of it, you are virtuous and you gain some good results. Thus the whole world is bound by the law of cause and effect, or the law of causation. No one can escape this law as it is stated in the Christian Bible "Whatsoever thou sowest, that thou shalt reap."

So the result will be according to the nature of the cause. If you sow oats, you cannot reap wheat, and if you sow corn, you cannot reap rice. Such is the law and we are bound hand and foot by this universal law of causation which is also the same thing as the law of *karma*. Within this law no one is free. We have to outgrow this law, and reach the goal of perfect freedom. The ideals of a sectarian religion might be going to heaven and enjoying celestial pleasures. Each religion describes a separate heaven. There is a Christian heaven, there is a Mohammedan heaven, there is a Buddhist heaven, there is a Hindu heaven. All these heavens are different ; because the founders of these religions described their heavens according to the needs of the people. They are all good. One kind of heaven might appeal to one person, another might appeal to another person, according to the desire of the individual. A man who lives in a desert and who cannot get any food or fruit to eat, will like to go to a heaven where there is shade of trees and where there are rivers of good water and rivers of milk and honey. Another person would not care to go to such a heaven, because he has plenty

value. But going to heaven is not the highest aim of life, on the other hand the highest aim of life is to realize God and to become one with Him.¹ This is the ideal of all religions whether dualistic, qualified-non-dualistic, or monistic, and they all aim at the same goal, which is the realization of the Truth, or the attainment of Godconsciousness, or perfection, although they start from different viewpoints² As two faces are not alike, so two minds are not alike. If we try to make all faces look alike, we will have to smash every face, and there will be no face left on the earth. So, my friends, we are all standing upon the different rungs of the ladder of life. What is normal to you, may not be normal to me. I want to go forward from where I am standing, and where you are standing, you must go forward from that point. Therefore if you try to enforce one set of ideals upon all, you will make the same mistake, as I would make when standing at the street corner, I offer my coat to all passers-by, and ask them to try it on their bodies and curse those whom it would not fit. All sectarian religionists make similar mistake, when they say that those who do not believe in their doctrines and dogmas will not receive salvation, but will suffer in eternal hell. Here let me tell you that there is no such thing as 'eternal hell' Try to forget it. Because if you analyse the meaning of the word 'eternal', you will find that it means a hell which has neither end, nor beginning. It is an impossibility Again how can your soul go into eternal hell, when it is in the process of evolution This is not the first and the last time that you have come to this world. You have been here many times. Your soul has come through vegetables and animals,² and now you have become human beings, but you are still progressing higher and higher and will continue to rise until you become perfect as the Father in Heaven is perfect.

That is the process of nature, and how can you stop that process by setting a block, by telling everybody that this man has done some sin or mistake and, therefore, he will go to eternal perdition? Therefore there is no such thing as eternal perdition We must consider sin as a mistake, or as an error. We can learn the laws of nature by making mistakes, or by

¹ It is purely the non-dualistic Vedantic view.

² See description in the *Upanishads*

committing errors A child who does not know that fire burns and tries to play with fire, gets burnt But once it gets burnt he never touches fire again, because it has taught a lesson to him. Similarly we are trying to find out what is the best thing for us to do and which are the laws that govern the conditions of our environments, and we are testing and experimenting, and going on making mistakes and learning at the same time. So every sin is a greater teacher in the end and the socalled sins will lead us through the path of suffering to become saints in the future.

Universal religion does not believe in the inheritance of sin, committed by one man, Adam, at the beginning of creation, as described in Genesis Whether Adam ever lived or not—has not yet been proved, and nobody knows where the Garden of Eden was Some say it was in Persia, and others say it was in Ceylon and others again say that it was at the North Pole Thus we do not know exactly where it was. What is the need of discussing all these? We have now out-grown such myths. Universal religion tells us that all these things are non-essential, and that the most essential thing for you to know is that you are all children of God, that you have come from God, and you are going back to God, and in the meantime, you are gaining experience, and learning to manifest the divine powers that are latent in you. It is the manifestation of potential divinity that we call the spiritual life, and that potential divinity is not limited to a certain class of people. It is in every soul However sinful it may appear to be, each soul is potentially divine. The divine power is manifesting through each one of us, whether low or high in social life Divine powers are the only powers that exist in the universe, but you do not possess anything. Whatever you claim as your own, in reality, belongs to God If you do not realize it, it is your own fault. Therefore do not blame your scriptures, but blame your own mind, and blame your ignorance and selfishness

You may cut the throats of your brothers, and try to enrich yourself by accumulating wealth which does not belong to you, but by doing this, you will do the greatest harm to yourself first, before you could do wrong to another. When you cheat others, you cheat yourself first, and when you injure another by thought, word or deed, you injure yourself first, and

you will have to suffer for your wrong act. Such is the eternal law of action and reaction, and upon this eternal law is based all the ethics and morality of the world

Christ was a dualist, when he prayed to his Heavenly Father: "Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name, etc". The idea of a dualist is that the Father is separate from us as well as from this world. A dualist believes in a Creator who is separate from his creatures and creation. When we rise from that ideal a little higher, we begin to see divinity everywhere, and ultimately we realize that God is the one stupendous whole, of which we are only parts. This is the conception of a qualified non-dualist, who sees unity in variety of manifestation. Christ was a qualified non-dualist when he said "My Father is the vine and I am a branch thereof". Then again, there is another conception higher still. When a man realizes his oneness with the Infinite or the Infinite Spirit, he declares 'I and my Father are one'. It was not Jesus the Christ alone who said this. A Mohammedan Sufi also says '*Anal Haq*' which means 'I am He'. Similarly the Hindu sages say: '*aham brahmasmi*',—I am He; I am one with the Infinite Spirit. Therefore Christ's statement 'I and my Father are one' is not an exception, but it is a statement of the universal truth. The same truth and the same spiritual statement of realization were meant for all seekers. So long as you do not understand the real spiritual meaning of these expressions, you may quarrel and fight and create dissension and discord. Therefore, my friends, we must open our eyes and realize the principle which underlies all such statements, and then we shall find that he who is worshipped in ignorance as sitting in a heaven, is not different from the Spirit (*Atman*) within us. Christ said that the Kingdom of Heaven is within you, and Vedanta describes the same thing. The other scriptures too, the Koran and the Zend Avesta, the scriptures of the Mohammedans and Parsees also describe the same truth which is dwelling everywhere. We are directly related to God, the infinite Spirit. We will have to understand this essential point, and realize the oneness of the ideals. Then there will be no difference in our actions and behaviours, amongst our relatives, friends, and neighbours.

Universal religion must have love as its foundation, and that love is love for humanity, nay, love for all. All

religions have regarded love as the highest ideal, because Love is Heaven, and God is Love. Jesus the Christ came and taught the truth: "Love thy neighbour as thyself". But, in the Christian Bible, we do not find the answer to the question: "Why we should love our neighbours as ourselves? Why should we not cut the throats of others?" The answer is not given in the Christian Bible, but we find it in the Vedas, which was given out centuries before Christ was born. The answer is this. "Thou shalt love thy neighbour not because thy neighbour has done thee some good, not because thy neighbour has given to thee some rich gifts or a social position or a good girl or some amusement, but because thou art thy neighbour in spirit: '*tat-tvam-asī*' as it is said in the Vedas. It means: The spirit in you is the spirit of the neighbour", because there is only one spirit according to the Vedas. This is realization of love. What you call love, is nothing but the expression of that oneness. It is the feeling of oneness. When you fall in love with another, you become one with your lover in spirit. Whatever is interesting to your lover, you are also interested in that, and your heart flows towards the ideals of your love. So, my friends, if your heart overflows with the ideals of Divine love, you will see that that Divine love is manifested in humanity and all human beings are parts and parcels of your true Self. Therefore that is the highest standard of real love.

Christ came and preached love for enemies. But, my friends, it is a sad thing to consider that the European nations do not practise his grand truth 'love your enemies'. In the late European War*, the Christians instead of preaching love were preaching hatred. They were singing that hymns of hatred. This was directly against the teachings of Christ. I remember that in the United States if anybody did not believe in war, he was put into jail, simply because of his opinion that the war was not good. So it was in England and also in France. They did not practise 'peace and good-will', and yet they called themselves Christians and followers of Christ.

The days of commercialism and selfish materialism are passing by. The late war has taught a great lesson that reli-

* The World War I.

gion and bloodshed or hatred are not the same thing Christ's religion was not religion of the churches which urged men to slaughter others and to pray for victory for themselves Each nation was calling the opponent's wrong and finding fault with them.

Today the world is wide awake to find universal religion which does not believe in bloodshed and commercialism for selfish ends. The greed and ambition of modern commercialism is stupendous. The socalled civilized nations want to possess and hoard everything. They come out in the world like beggars, exploit the weaker nations, usurp everything that they can get hold of, and by force of wickedness become the lord of the world The one lord wants to keep another lord in prison. Then comes another lord who wants to take his place Before the war the German people thought whatever possessions they had, they had won by the sword, and they were proud of it. They carefully spread that idea that their prosperity depended upon the power of their sword. But today what they gained by the sword have lost by the sword, and such is the inevitable result. Napoleon the Emperor won everything by the power of the sword, and lost everything by the power of the sword, and died as a prisoner in the island of St. Hellena. Such is the end of militarism It will always end in trouble and death.

Therefore, my friends, try to understand the fundamental principles of universal religion. Try to spread good-will and love all, and kill away your selfishness, greed, ambition, and desire for possession. These are the greatest enemies. If you are slaves of ambition, greed and selfishness, your religion teaches that these you should abandon But just now the minds of the European people are not inclined towards the spiritual ideals In the West, majority of the people want material comforts and luxuries. After the war, if you go to Europe, you will see nothing but amusements, drinking, and dancing girls These are the ideals of the West But that does not mean that all the Westerners are addicted to such amusements. Those are exceptions. The vast majority of people think that material prosperity is the highest pleasure, and this is the way to live and to enjoy It is the most degrading state of affairs that you can imagine. But, my friends, what can

you do? But, on the other hand, there are those who are spiritually minded in the West. They are looking for a better religion, for a truer understanding of the ideals of love, and are looking towards the East, because the West has received all their spiritual ideals from the East; and it is India that is going to give to the West the highest spiritual ideals which are needed for the good of those people. Now we have greater responsibility. We have to educate our masses and supporters in the spiritual line, and we are going to show them that the harmony amongst the existing religions is the ideal, that a Mohammedan and a Hindu are brothers, that a Christian and a Hindu are brothers, that a Buddhist, a Parsee and a Hindu are all brothers, that they are worshiping the same God, and that they are going towards the same goal.

The ideal of universal religion is to realize that all these various religions of the world are like so many paths which lead to the same goal. Before I conclude I will chant one prayer which gives the same idea: "O! Lord, as rivers rising from different mountains run crooked or straight towards one ocean, so all sectarian religions rising from different points of view, run crooked or straight towards Thee—the Infinite Ocean of existence, intelligence and everlasting love".⁴

* Cf. The *Mahimna-stotra*.

CHAPTER III

PROGRESSIVE HINDUISM

MR. CHAIRMAN, FRIENDS AND MEMBERS OF THE JAMSHEDPUR ASSOCIATION,

Our worthy Chairman has already said that he is not a Hindu, but is a Parsee. He is a Zoroastrian, a follower of Zoroaster, the Great Incarnation of Divinity in ancient Persia. We must understand what the word 'Hindu' stands for, before we can say whether we are Hindus or not. If he is not a Hindu, are we Hindus? That is the question. In answering this question, I draw your attention to the fact that the word 'Hindu' does not mean anything to us. Although we are popularly known as Hindus and our religion is known as Hinduism, still, in reality, the word 'Hindu' and the term 'Hinduism' were given to us and to our religion by foreigners. You know that our religion is known as *Arya-dharma* i.e. the Aryan religion, and we are all Aryans, the descendants of the Aryan *Rishis*, the seers of truth who lived, it is said, in Kashmir and the Punjab in the vedic period. This place of their birth was known as *Sapta Sindhu*. The word 'Sindhu' in Sanskrit means a river. *Sapta Sindhu* means seven rivers. You are familiar with the five rivers from which the name 'Punjab' (*pancha-ap*) was derived viz., Sutlej, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi and Beas, and these five rivers fall into one river which is known as Indus. In Sanskrit it is called 'Sindhu'. The other two rivers are the Sarasvati and Drishadvati. These two are now extinct, as they are dried up, but the five rivers are still flowing. That was the land of the Aryan race. From that land, branches of the Aryans went to different parts of the world. One branch went to Persia, and they were known as Irano-Aryans. The other branch went to Europe and formed different European nations and races, such as the Latin race, the Anglo-Saxon race, the Slavonic race, the Celtic race, and so on. Originally all these races had only one language. That was afterwards corrected and purified and was called the Sanskrit language. The

language of the Rig Veda and the language of the Parsee scriptures, Zend Avesta are very similar. In fact, the words occur there is Zend Avesta, for instance, Ahura. Ahura is the same as Asura in the Vedas. In Parsee letters, the sound of 'S' pronounced as the sound of 'H'. In place of Asura, they call Ahura. In place of *Sapta Sindhu*, they call *Hapta Hindhu*.¹ In place of the river Sindhu, they call Hindu. And afterwards those people who lived on the banks of the river Sindhu, were known as Hindus, and their land was called Hindusthan and naturally their religion was called Hinduism; but it does not mean anything to us except that by that term we must understand the Aryan religion or *Arya-dharma* of the Vedas, which was akin to the ancient religion and which the prophet Zoroaster preached in Persia.

These two religions lived together for a long time as friends. The Iranians and the Vedic Indians or Indo-Aryans lived together at first as brothers, but afterwards there was a difference of opinion which made them separate nations. The one inhabited in Persia and the other inhabited in India. If you trace the origin of the English words which are used today, you will find that they can be traced back to the Sanskrit words which we use in this country. The most popular words in the English language, such as father, mother, brother, sister, serpent, bond, path etc, can be traced back to Sanskrit root words. The word 'father' in Latin is *pater*, in Greek *pitar*, and *pita* in Sanskrit. The word 'mother' in Latin is *mater*, in Sanskrit also is *matar*. The word 'brother' in Sanskrit is *bhratar*. The word 'sister' in Sanskrit is *sasha*. The word 'bond' in Sanskrit is *bandha*. The word 'path' in Sanskrit *patha*. The word 'name' in Sanskrit is 'naman.' I can quote hundreds of such English words which were originally Sanskrit. Naturally they had one spoken language among all the branches of the Aryan family. The forefathers of the ancient Parsees and of the ancient Hindus of the Indo-Aryans as well as the forefathers of the ancient Europeans lived together as brothers, and had one common religion. The same religion was handed down to us through generations as 'Hinduism', and it was always progressive. If you study the Vedas, you will find Hinduism

¹ In place of 'sa' they call 'ha'.

had no limitation. The *Rishis* or the seers of Truth in those ancient days realized the relation that exists between human souls and infinite Spirit which pervades this universe, and after realizing that relation they discovered the spiritual laws which govern the universe, not only the external, but also the internal word, which is our mind, heart, moral character and the true nature of our spiritual self. When they discovered these laws, they established a religion which was nameless and formless, yet it was called the *Sanatana Dharma*, which was based upon these eternal laws. These eternal laws had neither beginning, nor end. These eternal laws govern our lives, and so we must understand them. These laws cannot be limited by time and space. The very word 'eternity', I have said before, means beyond all limitations of time. It also includes the unlimited nature of space. Therefore, my friends, this religion which you commonly call Hinduism, is the same as the Aryan religion or the eternal religion. It is the mother of all the other religions of the world, and has close relation to other sectarian religions such as Zoroastrianism, Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism and other *isms* of the world, because this *Sanatana Dharma* had been discovered long before other nations realized the spiritual relations between the individual man and the eternal Being. That eternal Being is described in the Rig Veda as *ekam sat*, the one Truth without a second. It was nameless; it was not called by any particular name. You find in the most ancient part of the Rig Veda '*ekam sad vipra vahudha vadanti*', which means that which exists, is one, and men call it by various names.

Ekham sat is the one truth or the eternal existence and it is the foundation of all the relative existence. It is the one reality beyond all limitations. All other diversities are only phenomenal, as they exist only in time and space for a short time. That eternal Being which was called *ekam sat*, has also been described in the Vedas as the common source of all forces of Nature, both material and mental. The question was asked: what is the nature of *ekam sat* which is also called the Brahman? What is the nature of the Brahman? The answer is given in this verse: "That from which all animate and inanimate objects have come out into existence, in which they live and into which they return at the time of disso-

lution, know that to be the Brahman". That is the real Truth. That same eternal Brahman is Ahura Mazada, which in the Rig Veda is the Asura Maghava and which is also the same as Asura Varuna. Asura Vardha (Greek—Ouranos) is the same name, given in the two scriptures, Veda and Zend Avesta. The same infinite Spirit which is without a second is worshipped by our brothers, the Mohammedans, who call him the Allah, the eternal infinite Being, the Creator, the Ruler and Preserver of this universe. It is the same infinite Being which is worshipped by our Christian brothers as the Father in Heaven. The same infinite Being is worshipped by different sects among the so-called Hinduism by various names. The Vaishnavas call Him Vishnu. The word 'Vishnu' means the all-pervading Spirit.² Then the Saivaites worship him as Siva. Siva means the eternal Being, Creator of all virtues, the Bestower of all good and the Giver of eternal peace and happiness. The same infinite Being is regarded as the Father and the Mother of the universe. The Saktas who worship the Divine Mother as Kali and Durga, are worshipping the same infinite Being only in its material aspect, because the infinite Being includes both the masculine and feminine elements of nature.

The Christian religion has taken the masculine aspect only, and the other religions have taken the other aspects. The Saktas have taken the maternal aspect, because God is the Mother of all. God is just as much Mother as He is the Father of all. We have prayers in the Vedas both addressing to the Father, such as "O Lord! Thou art the Father of all animate and inanimate objects. There is nothing in this whole universe equal to Thee: how can there be anything greater?" And there is another Hymn to the Mother of the universe in the *Devisukta* of the Rig Veda. The Divine Mother says "I am the Mother of the universe, the Governess and the Ruler: I am the Producer and the Creator". Here you will find both the aspects in one. There is no personality. It is impersonally personal, yet some people regard him as a personal Being sitting somewhere in the heaven with a rod in the right hand and with a book in the left hand. All these per-

² *Vyāpaktvāt Vishnu*

sonal aspects of the Divinity are the conceptions of the human mind.

Human minds try to explain this universe, its cause and its dissolution, and in trying to explain its nature, they imagine the real cause of the universe. In fact, a man cannot think of anything else beyond a human form, because he thinks God with the help of his limited mind. Whenever he tries to think of God, he thinks of Him with a human form. It is not his fault, it is natural, because our ideal is the human ideal and so interpretation of our God will be a human God. We cannot think of anything else. Have you any idea of what kind of being exists in other planets, for instance, in Mars? You cannot imagine that. But when you think of an intelligent being in the space of Mars, or of any other planet, you will have to give human form to that being with a head and two eyes just like yourselves. Similarly when you think of God, naturally the first ideal and conception would be of a God with the human form, sitting somewhere, just as the Christian people describe their God as sitting on a throne and Christ sitting at his right hand. Such a God has right hand and eyes, and can see and command, and so on. In short, He is in the form of a big man. He is imagined by the human mind. If a lower animal like a cow had the intelligence and could understand the cause of the world, the cow would have expressed her ideas of God in a cow-form. Similiarly, if a tiger had the intelligence and could understand and interpret the universe, he would imagine God in a tiger form. This is quite natural. When a dog thinks of his master, do you know what he thinks of him? He thinks that his master is a big dog. It is natural. So when you think of God, you think of Him as a big human being. In this manner, you can understand why there are different ideals of a personal God. Then there is another way of looking at this point. You may describe God with our hands, just like statues of Mother Kali. She has four hands. In one hand, she is receiving the prayers, and with another hand, she is blessing her devotees. Again with one hand Mother Kali is holding the head of a demon, and with another hand she is holding a sword. Do you understand what does it mean? It has two aspects. One is good and the other is evil. The two forms are combined together, because

if she were described only with two hands, it would have been one sided and imperfect, because good and evil come from the same source.

Now let me tell you that in great many sectarian religions it is said that evil is separated from good. This you will find in the Old Testament where there is a devil or a Satan. You will find the same idea also in the Koran as well as in the Zend Avesta where two creators are described. Ahura Mazda, the creator of good and Ahriman, the creator of evil, are the two creators, just as Satan is described in the Koran as the creator of evil, and the Allah, the creator of good. These are the two aspects of the Creator. One is the creator of good and the other is the creator of evil, and these two are fighting and their fight will never end. The creator of evil must be destroyed and the creator of good will have a triumph. In this way, our dual ideas were formed, but, in the *Sanatana Dharma*, you will find no mention of these two creators, the one of good and the other of evil. The seers of Truth combined them both and realized that these two have come from one common source, which is above good and evil. The same force which is good for one, may be evil to another. There are two sides of the same thing, the one is light and the other is darkness. You may imagine and personify the creator of light and call him God, and the creator of darkness as the devil. But one cannot exist without the other. They are both eternal. We cannot have darkness without light and *vice versa*. That is the law of opposites. You cannot change it. Whenever there is any manifestation, there must be dual aspects. If there is virtue, there must be vice somewhere, just as in the sea, where the water rises, there must be a hollow beside it. If there is hot summer in one place, there will be cold winter in another place. So these two opposites balance each other. In ancient time, people did not understand the law of opposites, and so they personified the one of light as God and the other of darkness as devil, and in that way they created the creators of good and evil. The creator of good lives in the paradise where there are all the pleasure and happiness, and the creator of evil is in darkness and has been afterwards called the hell. So, my friends, these are expressions of the human mind, as they existed in those days, but now we are in an

age where we have better understanding of the laws of nature than that our forefathers had. We are progressing towards something which they did not realize. This is the age of progress. This is the age of science and development. So shall we remain limited in that ideal, or shall we go beyond it and find out the Lord of the Universe who is above good and evil? Good and evil cannot touch God. Good and evil cannot exist in His presence. Before the all-pervading Spirit how can there be any good or evil? Therefore the highest philosophy, Vedanta, teaches the truth that was given by the *Rishis* and sages. Good and evil do not exist beyond human mind. So, in our mind we have conceptions of these two relative things. If we analyse our conceptions of good and evil, we will find that that is called good which serves our interest and brings unto us happiness, and again that is called evil which brings misery, sorrow, sufferings, disease and death. There is no such thing as absolute good and absolute evil. For instance, you see that there is darkness at night time the sun is set, and there is day-light in the day time when the sun shines. Standing at this balancing middle plane, you see that there is day for twelve hours and night for twelve hours. But imagine yourself transported to the centre of the sun and from there look at the earth. What will you see? You will never see a day or light, but you will see an everlasting day. There will be no summer and no winter, but there will be always same. Therefore, my friends, you will have to transport yourselves, rise above your relative or human conceptions and look at the whole universe. From the standpoint of the Divine Being, there is neither good nor evil. The sun shines equally over the head of a sage and a sinner. The sun never stops shining on the head of a sinner, however sinful he may be. When he goes to a sinful man, he would not say I would not shine and I would not give my light and heat to a sinner. Similarly, my friends, God never ceases to take care of his children, however sinful they may be. He is merciful to all. From that divine standpoint, you can look on all sectarian religions and realize how limited are their ideas and conceptions of God. The minds of their followers have grasped the idea in a half way, but today in the light of science and reason, you can go beyond that and reach the goal and realize that there is one God.

amongst all things. Therefore there should be no fight between a Hindu and a Parsi, between a Hindu and a Mohammedan, between a Hindu and a Buddhist. There should be no difference between a Hindu and a Christian. In fact, we are all brothers. Where there is any kind of recognition of the supreme Being, we must realize him as our brother, whether he is a Parsi or a Hindu or a Mohammedan or a Christian or a Chinese or a Japanese. They are all our brothers, and standing on this universal platform we must embrace all nations and followers of all religions as our brothers and friends, and must work in harmony with all for the good of humanity.

Humanity is a word which we generally use, but we never understand its real meaning. Humanity does not mean any particular class of people or any particular nationality, but it means all the nationalities and the peoples of the world. So you have to take collectively and consider equally all those have gathered here. They all have minds, and each of them has one individual mind. But all these individual minds are parts and parcels of one big mind which is the mind of all. This big mind is known as the cosmic mind. Similarly there is only one Spirit, which is the source of intelligence, consciousness and knowledge. It is not yours. It is not mine. It is the divine intelligence that pervades the whole universe. There is intelligence in a dog, in a cat, in a goat, and in the plant. The plant feels, but you have no power to know it. Your mind neither understands, nor feels another man's feelings. You must enlarge your feeling and make it embrace human passions, and not only human passions, but also that of the lower animals and the vegetable kingdom. There you will find peace and harmony, and you will become a Mahatman. You will become God-conscious. Therefore it is said in Vedanta, "*sarbam brahma-mayam jagat*", the whole world is pervaded by the spirit of God. The *Upanishad* says: '*isha vasyam idam sarvam*' i.e. all is pervaded by God. If you realize that omnipresent Spirit or God in all humanity and in all living creatures as well as in all objects, you will live in peace with all and manifest love for all. This is the true religion and this religion is Hinduism. We must understand it. The more you understand your own true religion, the more you will realize that there is no difference in the ideals of all religions. There may be a difference

in method; there may be a difference in doctrines and dogmas, theories and beliefs, and manners and customs, but there is no difference in the Reality. The manners and customs are the non-essentials of religion. For instance, we live in a tropical country, so we have to wear a certain kind of clothes. If we live like an Esquimo who lives in Greenland, we shall not be able to live there in these clothes. These Esquimo people wear animal skins and furs, use fur-coats, and eat the flesh of polar bears or sea animals like walrus, seal, etc. If we live like them here, we shall die in a day. If these people live like us, eat a little *dal* and curry or a little vegetable curry and a handful of rice, they will be dead. So, my friends, the world is very large. There are different parts of the world where prevail various climates, and naturally the mode of living will be different.

I come from America, where I went twenty-five years ago. There in the winter the temperature goes down to 15° degrees below Zero (Fahrenheit) in some places, and in other places 40° degrees to 50° degrees below zero. One cannot touch cold water, and cannot breathe freely, and so the people there have to wear heavy clothes, shivering all the time. Most people live there on animal food. If they live like us, they will die. They will have to eat animal food, otherwise they will have no energy to work and will not be able to work and will not be able to fight against the environments and the climatic conditions. Similarly those who live in a desert, require a different kind of diet. You can see the Arabs. They live on dates and the dates are their principal food. The Irish people live on potatoes, and potato is their principal food. The Italians live on macaroni, spaghetti and vegetables. The Japs live on rice and dried or raw fish. As these changes are natural, so the changes in our modes of worship will be different. Shall we go on fighting each other telling everybody that your mode of living or method of worship is wrong and my mode of living and method of worship are right? No, your mode of living is just as good as of mine. Your method of worship is as correct as mine. You may call your God by a certain name and shall we say that name is wrong and the name which I have given to my God is correct and fight over mere words? We have been doing that in this country. A Mohammedan is fighting with

a Hindu simply, because the Hindu does not call his God Allah. Although he worships the same God, still because he does not use the word 'Allah', he is not going to heaven. That is not correct. The Hindu will say the same thing to a Mohammedan. You do not call my God Vishnu and, therefore, you are not going to heaven. This is the old fashioned wrong idea which we call religion. But, my friends, real religion is to see the harmony in God and to realize that there is one God without a second. And if we do not realise this grand truth, how long shall we live? We are already on the verge of death. Everything is gone. We have nothing to boast of. We are no longer a nation. We are disintegrating and dying out. If we live in this way for fifty years longer, we will be dead. Now, it is time for us to wake up and unite our efforts, and stand up for the truth and for the good of our own people. Whether we are Parsees or Hindus or Mohammedans, we should stand on the same level and join our hands and stand up for the common cause. We should have brotherly feelings and love for all. We do not talk of politics. Politics is not the field of our freedom, but our religion embraces the higher ideal of freedom which we call *mukti* or salvation. The word 'salvation' means freedom from bondage. Do you not realize that you are a slave today and that you are living in a prison, your body is a prison, and your country is a jail? You do not realize that when will you wake up from the sleep of ignorance, you will see the conditions under which you are living? You are now a slave. Now your mentality is that of a slave, and so you cannot think freely. You have lost the power of original thought, and if you go on in this way, you will never raise your head, but will go down. Now it is the high time for you to realize the situation. It is a very serious one. You must know that you have to get out of these conditions of lethargy, hatred and jealousy, and you must know that there is no other way for *mukti*. There is no other way of salvation except by realizing that God is dwelling in all and that whether he is a Mohammedan, a Hindu, a Parsee or a Christian, he is a child of God and, therefore, he is my brother. So we must live hand in hand and work hand in hand. There is nothing in the ways of eating and drinking. These are the non-essential parts. We do not live to eat, but we eat to live. A

man does not live by bread alone, but there is the spiritual strength in each one of you. If you let out that spiritual power that is lying dormant in your soul, you will move the whole world. There is no power in the universe which can check you.

You have allowed yourself to become a slave and, therefore, you are a slave. But the moment you raise yourselves and assert your independence that "I am not a slave", "I am a child of God" "God is working through me", you will be free. The power of the spirit is greater than the power of the sword. The greatest enemy that you have to fight, is your fear. Be fearless, otherwise you are doomed. You are afraid of death and that your body will be burnt to ashes. My friends, you are not the body. You can not own property. Realize that your body, property and all these things belong to God. Make a free offering of these to God. At the time of death, when you are about to die, you call death as your brother and make an offering of your body to him. I know that this is the work of a saint, but still that should be our ideal, and we should also realize that there is a divine power that is guiding us and working through each one of us. We must recognize that divine power under all conditions, and be fearless.

See unity of God in the variety of manifestations. We are all manifestations, but behind all these there is one God. You have not seen anything but God. When you see the face of a brother or any person walking in the street, your religion tells you to recognize God in this person. We the Hindus, say *namaskara*, and we fold our hand and salute. Do you know the meaning of that? The meaning is that I recognize the Divinity in you, and so we the Hindus do not shake hands. We have always regarded shaking hands as barbarous. Do you know the origin of shaking hands? In Europe, the Germans who were fighting against each other, the Robber Barons, as they were called, were always ready to draw their sword. And when they met a stranger, they used to draw their sword which was hanging on their left side, but when they found that he was friendly, they kept the sword hanging and said: "If you are friendly, I give you my right hand and you give me your right hand and I won't cut your head off and you won't cut mine". That was the origin of shaking hands. Therefore, we consider

that custom as barbarous. This custom did not originate from culture and civilization. Our custom of folding hands before a stranger is most civilized and spiritual. It means that I recognize God in you. So, my friends, you have a better custom than that of the Europeans. You do not appreciate or realize what you possess. No other nation can give you any spiritual truth. But you have to learn great many things from the Western people. They have courage, fearlessness, manliness, heroism and honesty. They are honest in business. You have to learn that. It is good to stand for *swadeshi*, but when I asked the meaning of this word, somebody told me that *swadeshi* means deceiving some brothers and making money under false pretence. No, my friends, that is not the meaning of the word *swadeshi*. *Swadeshi* must stand on the platform of honesty. If you are a merchant, you must not try to sell a bad thing and charge the price of a good thing. An Englishman would not do such a thing. When he sells such a thing, he will say: "It is a bad thing, I do not sell it to you". But go to an Indian merchant in a Bazar, he will sell you a bad thing saying that it is the best of its kind, and there he deceives you. You must not do that. Honesty in business is the first thing to learn. Then we have to learn another thing from the Western nations and that is the power of organization. You know the power of organization is greater than your individual effort. We must have united efforts. You see there is a rope and that rope can tie an ocean steamer and hold it at the deck, but if that rope is taken apart into shreds, each shred will not be able to hold a fly. It will break and go to pieces and that is the meaning of disintegration. When you work as a body, your strength is greater like the united strength of the threads of a rope. But if you are disunited and work individually, you are like a shred and you will go to pieces. Therefore, my friends, it is our time to understand this principle. The Japanese became great. Do you know why? They have an ideal of unity and patriotism and that is their religion. They have nothing else. Unity is true religion and progressive Hinduism must realize that unity, because we have inherited that unity from our ancient *Rishis*. As I have already said that there is no other God but that *ekam sat* or one Truth without a second and that is the foundation of real unity.

Realizing that oneness if we become united, we shall have tremendous strength.

Another thing is, my friends, we must have self-confidence. Rely upon yourself only You must have self-confidence and faith in yourself. Self-confidence depends upon self-effort or *purushakara* and not upon *daiva* or *adrasta*. *Daiva* means *prarabdha* i.e. the accumulated results of the works of your past life and *prarabdha* creates your body and the *samskaras*. But *prarabdha* has a limit, whereas *purushakara* is limitless When an animal like cow is tied in a rope, his freedom is limited within the circumference created by the length of the rope, and this is *prarabdha*. But he (the cow) can unfasten the binding of the rope and can move in the limitless space beyond the circumference created by the rope, and this is *purushakara*. By dint of *purushakara* everyone can change his habit or condition *Adrasta* makes a man a machine, nay, *adrasta* or *daiva* turns a man into a slave So, do not depend, entirely upon *adrasta* or *daiva* or *prarabdha*, but bring confidence upon own-self. Say that you are the *Atman*, the source of infinite power and strength and then you can do and undo everything at your will Providence will help you if you have faith and confidence in you. *Purushakara* is the only means by which you will be able to go beyond all limitations and all bindings *Purushakara* is *sadhana* and this *purushakara* will make you free forever and ever from the chain of nescience or *maya*. Sri Ramakrishna has admitted both *daiva* and *purushakara*, but he has not laid stress upon *daiva* or *adrasta* or the unseen force. He has said that the wind of compassion (*kripa-vatasa*) naturally blows in the sky, you shall have to raise the mast to make the boat (of your life) move speedily to its destination This effort, or work of raising the mast, is *purushakara* If you let your will and effort play freely, it will be redoubled by the will of the Lord So it is said that if you have no faith in yourself, you are an atheist. The old religion used to say that 'he who does not believe in a personal God, is an atheist', but progressive Hinduism says that 'he who does not believe in himself, is an atheist'. Because our self is a part of God. Through self-confidence you will accomplish everything When you walk in the street, do not move as if a slave is going, or as if somebody has raised a whip over your head Do not be frightened, but walk like a man.

Stand up, raise your head, and walk like a gentleman. Do not be afraid of anything. That is your duty. And you train your children to become like that. That is your religion and if you do not teach that religion, you will make them worse than you are. Progressive Hinduism will show you the way towards freedom as well as the way towards the development of your own country. You have all the resources in your country. You do not know how to utilize them. Go to Germany and there you will find that they make good use of what you consider as waste matter. They do not waste anything. Now we are beginning to learn that the smoke which comes up in the air from a furnace, contains various useful elements which can be extracted. Dyes and different things are bye-products of the coal smoke. The Europeans and the Americans are using these bye-products. I am glad to see here in the Tata Town that kind of work is being done in a small scale. I am very pleased to see it. Because there is value in everything that you call the waste matter. That has its place. Then you must encourage the industry of your own country. I have a great desire to have an ideal Institute of national industry established in India. Fifteen years ago, in 1906, I came to India only for a short visit. I did not stay long and at that time, there was the project of building of this Tata Town. The work was not started then, but today I see that it is growing and is a wonderful place and wonderful work has been done in this part of the country. But this is not enough. It must grow and grow. There would be other shops and factories in other parts of this country. One is not enough to fill the demands of 320 millions of people.¹ You do not have to depend upon foreigners for the goods that you use. Use your country-made *swadeshi* goods. Manufacture them in your own country. Look at Japan and think how Japan became great. Now you are buying cloths from them, but at one time you were the best producers of all kinds of cloths. You have forgotten all your industries. You could produce wonderful things. You have left them and have become lazy. A lazy man ought not to live, but he must die. If he cannot work, he must die. In this age, every body should work day and night. When you get tired, you sleep on a bench and then stand up and work again. That will do

¹ This statement of the number of population was given in January 1922.

you good If you say that will kill you, it is better for you to die. Just remember that if you cannot contribute your labour, you will be a burden to other people and to your society So do not try to be a burden to anybody.

Progressive Hinduism seeks good for other nations and practise their virtues and do not imitate their bad qualities You should learn to make them your own You have nothing to leave except that which is weakening, which is bad, which is fear and which is helplessness, and you sacrifice and embrace all those that are good. Instead of learning the good qualities from a European, you are learning their vices. You think that you cannot be a European unless you begin to drink , you cannot be a civilized man unless you gamble. And so you go to the Race-Course and throw away your money, which they take away from you. The Horse-Race gambling is not the standard of civilization It is condemned in America. Again drinking habit is a disgrace to humanity. In America, the Government has made its prohibition as the law of the country. There you cannot buy any liquor, or use any intoxicating substance, or take any drug like opium. The Government will prosecute you and put you in jail, if they find you buying any drug If anybody sells liquor, he will be put in jail. And here, my friends, you are told if you drink more, your health will be better, and if you eat more opium, you will be free from Malaria Think of such foolish ideas! And you take and sell them You are treated like the babies and the fools. My friends, you must have education, because education is like the light that removes all darkness of ignorance. Here you have a workshop and you need a place for education where these things will be told You would learn such things and our Vivekananda Society has been started with that idea for preaching progressive Hinduism. We have got a piece of land here. Now you will have to build a building there and establish a school and a hall where lectures on education will be given. Let your boys and girls receive proper education in proper age Education which you receive now, is not proper education My friends, schools, colleges and universities of this country do not give you proper education. The value of proper education should be to make you stand on your own feet and to make you able to think proper You get the B.A and M.A.

degrees, by memorising certain chapters from the books, such as Milton's *Paradise Lost* and Shakespeare's works on dramas, etc. They are of no earthly use to anybody except to those who are poets and dramatists I advise you to learn something more useful to your practical life, and that kind of education you are not getting. Even when you do get practical instructions, you need more spiritual instructions also. Spiritual instructions will help you in developing the spiritual insight, and your moral character will be developed By spiritual instructions you will be a complete man. In other words, physically, mentally, morally and spiritually you should receive education, and that is what you need. Therefore, I appeal to you that you should make efforts to establish a school here where the members of the Ramakrishna Mission will give you such kind of spiritual education in these different lines

The spirit of modern progressive Hinduism was shown by the great Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who was the master of Swami Vivekananda It was he who showed that need of the present day is the brotherly feeling and toleration of all religions. He was accepted by the Mohammedans and also by the Hindus of various sects. He was worshipped by the Christian, as he was worshipped by other religionists as their ideal In fact, in his teachings and character, we find the embodiment as well as the personification of ideals of all the great religions of the world. He showed us the way to love all and to recognize God in all humanity. He is regarded as the *Yugavatara* in this age and also as an incarnation of the Divinity. He came to show the way of harmony and progress. Where there is no progress that is stagnation, and stagnation means death. Therefore, my friends, we must be progressive, and must follow the path which was chalked out by our great *Yugavatara* Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa When we talk of humanity, we must not forget the women of our country The half of our humanity is women and you have neglected the women and, therefore, you are down-trodden today Remember the sayings of Manu who has told that where women are not worshipped, there the *devas* are neglected You must remember further that all women - your wives, your sisters, your mothers, are the mothers of the race. They are the mothers of the children who are going to take your place in future.

Unless the women are educated, how can the children be educated. If the mothers have *swadeshi* spirit in them, that *swadeshi* spirit will naturally flow into the veins of their children. So you must educate your wives and children. Give them proper education so that your children would be great in future. Remember this. Therefore there should be schools for the girls, factory for the girls, and factory for women. They should be educated, and their teachers should be women. In America, the women are more educated than men. They have more opportunities. They are the leaders of the society, and during the late war it was women that brought victory to the allies and not men. When men went to the battle-field, women took care of home, filled up their places, and helped them to take guns on their shoulders. My friends, our country has produced great women, such as, Chand Bibi, Rani of Jhansi. Rani of Jhansi used to wear a general's costume rode on horse, and commanded her army against the English during the mutiny. An English General wrote that the best General of our enemy was the Rani of Jhansi. We have produced such great women. So, my friends, the time has come when we must also produce other women like them. They were heroines. Our great and progressive Hinduism urges you to educate your women. Therefore schools and places of institutions in religious, moral and spiritual lines should be built in this town. Women of all sects should learn about their own religion. I do not mean it is only for Hindu women, but I mean for all women. They should be taught the fundamental principles which are the same in all religions, without mentioning any sectarian ideas. A Mohammedan can come and learn those principles and be benefitted. A Christian or a Parsi or a Hindu can come and learn and be benefitted. Different methods of worship are good for different classes of people. You must be tolerant. Toleration is the watch-word of progressive Hinduism, and this kind of progressive Hinduism is not a sectarian religion, but is the *Sanatana Dharma*, the eternal religion.

The Aryan religion is based upon the eternal truth which is the fundamental principle of all religions. You may regard Mohammed as the great Prophet, you may regard Jesus the Christ as an incarnation of God, you may recognize Zoroaster as an incarnation of God, or Buddha as an incarna-

tion of God. All the Buddhists, the Chinese, and the Japanese, are our brothers. They are all Hindus. So we should regard the Parsis, the Mohammedans and the Christians as the Hindus. The Buddhists and the Jews are also the Hindus, because our progressive Hinduism is the religion which embraces all. Hinduism has always shown the most absorbing power, and today progressive Hinduism will show that that power is not lost, and that it is still able to absorb the truth and the teachings of all other religions into its own body. We should absorb the truths, taught by Mohammed and Jesus the Christ, and tell that that is our religion. We should absorb the truth taught by Zoroaster and say that that is our religion. Because we are neither the Hindus, nor the Mohammedans, but we are all children of God. God is manifesting through us and, therefore, we are all brothers. There may be different ideals of heaven, such as a Hindu idea of heaven, a Mohammedan idea of heaven, a Parsi idea of heaven, a Christian idea of heaven and so on. So why shall we quarrel over these heavens? They are like so many planets. You see there is the sun, the moon, the earth, the Mars, the Jupiter, the Venus, the Saturn, the Neptune, and the Uranus. All these planets are revolving at the same time and we cannot deny their existence. Similarly we should recognize the heavens of all religions. If a Mohammedan wants to go to his heaven, let him go. Similarly if a Parsi likes to go to his heaven, let him go. Let them all go wherever they like according to their choice. Why should there be any quarrel? Progressive Hinduism does not believe in any forced conversion. You must not enforce your doctrines and dogmas to your brothers. Your brother has just as much right to believe in his own as you have in yours. Therefore you must not draw your sword and kill your brother because of his opinion, or of his belief. We are now living in the age of toleration and universal brotherhood. Therefore, my friends, advocate the command of progressive Hinduism, and carry the banner of progressive Hinduism to India. Go to Gujerat, Southern India, and all other parts, from north to south, from east to west and then go beyond India to China, Japan, Persia, Egypt, and Turkistan, and everywhere you preach the universal brotherhood, it will embrace the whole world. My friends, I have been doing this for 25 years. I have made friends in

America, Europe, and amongst different nationalities. They are proud to be called as the progressive Hindus, because this they consider as highest religion. And this has no limit. It teaches brotherhood and unity, and the time has come when we should unite ourselves and live in peace and harmony. All the commercialism and materialism which lead to war, must be done away with and must be destroyed. This is the bane of modern civilization. They are encouraging hatred, enmity, selfishness, and fight, and creating all other mischiefs. As I have already said that the power of spirit is greater than the power of sword. We should love our enemies as Jesus the Christ said "Love thine enemies". Do you know that five hundred years before Christ, Buddha taught the same thing, sitting under the famous Bodhi tree? So, my friends whether you follow Buddha or Christ or Mohammed, that does not matter, but you must follow the teachings of Vedanta as well as the teachings of other scriptures. Today we are not trying to take eye for eye and tooth for tooth, but we are loving our enemies. An enemy can be turned into a friend by love, and we shall bless our enemies. Therefore we should stand on our own feet and then we will be great and mighty. We will be free, self-governing, and self-ruling children of God. Our ideals should, therefore, be ever-lasting freedom and that freedom we will not enjoy in sins and sufferings and death. We will go beyond all heavens and enter into the everlasting abode of infinite love and peace. Sri Ramakrishna, the great teacher of progressive Hinduism has said. "Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever paths, I reach him. All men are struggling in various paths which ultimate lead to the infinite ocean of existence, intelligence, bliss, and everlasting love".

CHAPTER IV

THE MESSAGE OF VEDANTA

MR. CHAIRMAN AND FRIENDS,

The word 'Vedanta' as you perhaps all know, is a compound word. It consists of two words, 'veda' and 'anta'. 'Veda' means knowledge or wisdom, and 'anta' means end. The word 'Veda' is derived from the Sanskrit verb *vid*—to know. From the same root verb the English word wisdom is derived. Therefore it means the same thing. 'Veda' means wisdom. The English word 'end' is derived from the Sanskrit word 'anta' which means the same thing. Therefore 'Vedanta' means 'end of wisdom'. But ordinarily people understand by the term the latter portion of the Vedas which are known as the most ancient Hindu scriptures

There are four Vedas as you all know, Rig Veda, Yajur Veda, Sama Veda and Atharva Veda. The Rig Veda is the oldest of all. It consists of hymns. There are over 1,000 hymns, and in these hymns various gods are praised and invoked, such as, Indra, Varuna, Mitra, and so on. The Yajur Veda is the Veda which takes up these hymns of the Rig Veda and gives the proper use of each of them, where to use them, at what sacrifice and how to use them. All the rituals and ceremonies which were practised by the ancient *Rishis*, were also described in the Yajur Veda. The Sama Veda takes up these hymns and puts them into music. Hymns were sung in ancient times, and the Sama Veda practically teaches the art of singing and the science of music in the whole world. The other nations had five notes in the octave, but the Hindus had five to seven notes in the octave as you call, Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni.¹ These seven notes in the octave were first known to the Hindus long before any other nation had them. The Chinese had only five notes, while the Greeks had seven notes in the octave after they came into contact with the Hindus. The Sama Veda gives all the rules for singing and chanting these hymns. The *samans* were

¹ These are the *laukika* notes, and the Vedic notes are *prathama*, *dvitrya*, etc

sung with five and seven notes with tunes and rhythms. These *samans* were sung during the sacrifices. While the Atharva Veda contains the invocations of various deities and the method of curing different kinds of diseases. The healing power of the mind is described in the Atharva Veda.

Again these Vedas can be divided into two classes. One is called the *Karma-kanda* and the other, the *jnana kanda*, *Karma kanda* describes the various sacrifices, and rites by performing which one could go to heaven and enjoy celestial pleasures. *Jnana-kanda* describes the methods by which the highest wisdom can be acquired. The *Jnana-kanda* becomes the latter portion of the Vedas and is called Vedanta. The *Jnana-kanda* consists of the *Aranyakas* and the *Upanishads*, while *Karma-kanda* consists of the *Samhitas* and the *Brahmanas*. *Samhita*, as I have already described, consists of hymns. The *Brahmana* is that portion which is descriptive of the various sacrifices. The *Aranyaka* portion is to be studied by those who retire and enter into the *Vanaprastha Ashrama* or retired life, finishing the works of a householder, after the age of 50, giving up the charge of the family and household business to the children, and leaving the sons and grandsons in proper condition. Both husband and wife should retire and live in the forest. This is the forest-life which is called the *Vanaprastha Ashrama*. During that period they would devote their energy and attention to the study of the spiritual subjects and would give up all the rituals and sacrifices of the *Karma-kanda* and enter into the practice of devotional exercises, prayers, concentration, and meditation. Then afterwards the *Upanishad* portions were to be studied by those who acquired wisdom (*jnana*) and who were going to be the spiritual teachers of the people. There are one hundred and eight *Upanishads*. Of these ten *Upanishads* have been considered authentic by the various sects of the Hindus. The Vedas gave the fundamental principles of the spiritual conception of the universe, as it was understood by the ancient seers of truth, who were known as the *Rishis*. The Vedas were afterwards popularised in the *Puranas*, the *Ramayana*, the *Mahabharata*, and also in the *Tantras*. They are all based on the teachings of Vedanta or *Upanishad*.

In fact, Vedanta is the only philosophy which is considered as a living philosophy amongst the people of India, although

there have been six schools of philosophy. The *Vaisesika* system of Kanada which describes the atomic theory of the universe ; the *Nyaya* system of Gautama, the *Sankhya* system of Kapila, the *Purva-mimansa* of Jaimini, the *Yoga* system of Patanjali and the *Uttara-mimansa* of Vyas These are different schools of philosophy, but the Vedanta philosophy stands at the head of all. Other philosophies should be regarded as the stepping stones towards the highest ideal and highest conception of the universe, as given in the Vedanta philosophy. Vedanta philosophy is based upon the fundamental principle of one truth, one life, and one mind. There is one life amongst all. There is one mind amongst all, and there is one spirit amongst all. This spirit is called *Atman* or *Paramatman* and one life which is *Prana*. *Prana* is that force by which we live. It is *jivanisakti*, the living force. There is living force in the tree, in the grass and in the animal kingdom ; however small that animal may be, there is life in it. There is life in minerals, there is life in the sun, moon and stars There is life in all the planets. In fact we are just like bubbles in the ocean of eternal life. This life does not belong to any particular individual, but belongs to eternity. No one can create life ; life never comes from non-life or dead matter, but life is always life and God is a living God and God has life and God has mind. He is *sat-chit-ananda*. God is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our lives and the Mind of our minds. He is called in the Vedas the Brahman He is neither masculine nor feminine but at the same time He contains the root of that which is known as masculine, of that which is known as feminine and neutre. In fact all genders exist in that Infinite Being. The Infinite Spirit will turn away from you. But if you work and try to improve yourself and make your conditions better, good will be with you, and you will gain more power, more courage, more strength, and more ability The more you will try, the more you will gain the power to do it, if you understand this secret that the cause of your troubles is within you. You have remained as slaves for many centuries It is not only physical slavery, but you have also become mental slaves. You have lost the power of independent thinking. You do not know the conditions of your country. You do not know the conditions of your environments. What will better your conditions, you do not know and

so you are living like the babies. You have remained dumb like the lambs. You have no energy, you have become absorbed in what is called the *tamas* quality. That *tamas* leads one to inertia of sleep, to laziness, and to all kinds of things which we find in our dreams. We imagine that we shall do this and do that, but we have not the energy. In order to wake up from that sleep of *tamas*, what shall we do? We should have activity. We shall have to bring out the *rajas* quality and by that *rajas* quality we shall be the conqueror of the whole world.

Today you are like the slaves, but tomorrow you will be the conqueror of the world, if you bring out that *rajas* and that strength of character which goes hand in hand with self-confidence and knowledge of the Divinity which are dwelling in you. You will realize that you are the Brahman and the Infinite Spirit if you cannot take this idea: "I am a child of God and not a child of a demon and not the child of earthly parents". The parents could not create your soul, and, therefore, as an immortal soul, I am the child of God who rules the whole world. If you are a child of God, what would be your birthright? It will be measured by wisdom, conquest, and triumph over all evil and suffering. Look at the Western nations. They have developed their power through self-confidence and so they are now the masters wherever they go. You should have the same spirit. You must not think that you are born to do the menial work of a slave, but you must realize that you are just as great as they are, and you are the children of God as they are. Therefore, you have equal footing with them. Nobody can make you a slave. In order to realize that, you must feel the presence of the Divinity within you. You must feel the presence of the Divinity among your brothers, in your family, in your wife, in your children and in all members and citizens of your country.

My friends, there is no one to teach you this great truth; you are drifting from one side to another aimlessly. You do not know what will be the best solution of troubles that constantly disturb the peace of your mind, but if for one moment you realize that you are a child of God and that others are also the children of God, then you will have unity of purpose. And if you know that happiness is the goal of all, you will stand on that broad and universal platform of brotherhood, and not only of brotherhood, but also of universal oneness. There are some

people who talk about universal brotherhood, but they are just as much separate amongst themselves and as much fighting amongst themselves as the children who are quarrelling and fighting against odds. So, my friends, lip-brotherhood will not do ; you must have true feeling of love for others. The moment you have that feeling, you do not look at different people from the standpoint of their social position, but you look at them from the spiritual standpoint and realize that they are all children of God. Then you try to help them and make them better, and at the same time you progress with them

You see today in your community the Brahmanas, the Kshatrias, the Vaisyas, the Sudras, and the outcastes. All these caste distinctions have divided us into parts, also separated us from one another, kept us in bondage and also prevented us from loving all our own brothers. But from the spiritual standpoint there is no room for any caste-difference, because we are all children of God. In Vedanta, there is neither caste, nor creed, but all are one. Whether you are a Hindu, or a Mussalman, or a Parsee, you are all one. You are all children of the same God. There is no difference in the *Atman*. Whom you call a Pariah, an outcaste, a scavenger, a Methar or a sweeper, is just as great a child of God or as a Brahman of high caste, and that is what Vedanta teaches. But you have not practised that, and for that reason you are down-trodden. You should have the ideal of unity and should realize that all are your brothers. You will go to a foreigner and complain against your brother and for a few rupees you will take your brother and put him in jail. That is what you call your religion. You have no love for your brother. In order to get that love, you must study Vedanta and practise its teachings. The message of Vedanta is that there is no difference, as you are all one. And you realize that oneness, because there shines one Brahman in each one of you. You get a little position for a few rupees and think that this is the end and aim of your life. What a fool you are? You do not realize that you have the greatest ideal before you, and you have a great work to perform. You never pay any attention to help them, but, on the contrary, you think that your brother is your enemy. If anyone does any harm to you and if you cannot control to punish him, you just run to a foreigner and tell him to beat your brother, and you

take glory in that. What can be more degenerating than this? You are degraded, you are degenerated, and the only solution for you is the study of Vedanta. Follow the universal message of Vedanta, because Vedanta teaches: "He who sees the same Spirit in a well-cultured Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog and in a sweeper, is a wise man" (cf. *Gita*: "*panditah sama-darshinah*"). This is the ideal. Some of our friends think that this ideal is only for Pandits or the wise men and not for us, but I tell you, my friends, that which is the ideal for the Pandits, is also for you, and you are going to be wise men if you do not move from truth and do not follow the instructions of those who try to keep you as slaves in order to gratify their selfish motive and ambition. You must not do that. You should follow the ideal given in Vedanta and in the *Bhagavat Gita*. In the *Bhagavat Gita*, which contains the essence of all the Vedas, Sri Krishna said: "It is a part of my self that has become the *jiva* or the individual soul". Therefore every individual soul is a part and parcel of God, the same God whose incarnation was Bhagavan Sri Krishna, who said in the battle field of Kurukshetra that his soul or spirit is dwelling in all and he who does not recognize the divine Spirit dwelling in a human body, does not recognize God at all. He is an atheist. Shall we remain atheists, or shall we not realize God at all?

You think that God is dwelling above the clouds somewhere in the heaven. But, my friends, there is no physical heaven, it is only a mental state. We create a heaven within us and Vedanta teaches that heaven and hell are our own creation. Our mind can create a heaven and also can create a hell. The very moment we try to do injury to others, we ignore the existence of God in others, create a hell within us.

When we are slaves of ambition, gold and lust, anger and other passions, we have put ourselves into the hell. *Kama*, *krodha*, *lobha*, *moha*, *mada* and *matsarya* are the six great enemies within us. These enemies drive us in the hell which is *avidya* or ignorance. The darkness of ignorance is described as hell by all the scriptures of the world, and an ignorant man cannot grasp any meaning of both hell and heaven. You imagine that there is a place where there is a fire burning with sulphur, and that all kind of tortures and torments are given

to sinners by God who is at the same time called the merciful Father. Does the merciful Father punish his own children? No, God does not punish anyone, nor does He reward anyone. He is impartial and honest. Such a hell does not exist. You are the creator of heaven and hell. Whatever idea you create within you which your mind carries during your life-time, that idea or thought which is most predominant within you till the time of death, determines your future. This is also said by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavat Gita*. "Whatever thought or desire be predominant at the time of death that will determine your future, and you will be like that". So, if you have hellish desire in you, you will be in a hell. But if you have heavenly or celestial idea of the divinity of God as well as of the divine Spirit and if your life-works have been unselfish, then you will go to heaven and will enjoy the facility which is eternal.

So, my friends, that message of Vedanta you should carry at home and realize that you may be a creator of heaven or hell, both inside and outside. You have made also this country a hell today, and you do not know of it. It is worse than a prison. Try to get out of this country and you must have a permit from your Rulers. Is that not a hell? You can neither get into this country, nor get out of it, without being searched through and through. This country, therefore, is a big prison, or a big hell, and you have made it. You are really responsible for it. You are working like the prisoners in it and will die in it. Can you call yourselves men? Are you proud of yourselves for it? You have become great fools and you are getting a few rupees that are given to you for your hard labour for which you are giving out your life-blood like slaves. Stand on your own feet and realize the situation today and think out that what you have made, you can also unmake. You can be the saviour of your own country as well as of your own people. Realize that the power to save yourself will not come to you unless you have faith in yourself, unless you know that God is within you, and unless you become fearless. You can conquer that fear only by knowledge. Vedanta says: "Knowledge of Truth, or of the Brahman, takes away all fear". Therefore, my friends, knowledge is to be adored, and knowledge is to be worshipped. What is that knowledge, Vedanta says that the Brahman is *satyam* (existence) *jnanam* (knowledge) and *anandam* (bliss). This is the

assumed nature of the Brahman. If you know and realize that Brahman or Truth, you will be happy, nothing will make you unhappy, nothing will make you slaves. You have made yourselves what you are now. At present you are the creatures of a demon and that demon is no other than ignorance, or *ajnana*, or *avidya*. If you have some trouble or disease, you go to a doctor. Your mind is so enslaved that you believe that the doctor will cure you, but you do not know that your mind has the greatest healing power within you, and that you can heal all your troubles, because where there is God, there can be no sickness or disease. Your *Atman* is never sick. When you say that you catch cold, do you know that your *Atman* cannot catch cold? You surely know that a dead body cannot catch cold. Your body is like this table and cannot catch cold. Your *Atman* which is a part of God, cannot also catch cold. So if your body and the *Atman* cannot catch cold, then who catches cold? I ask you that question and think of the answer within yourselves. It is a delusion. Nobody catches cold. Therefore, my friends, the *Atman* or the true Self is free from all diseases and free from nature. This idea of Vedanta has been taken up in America by those who are known as the Christian Scientists and the New-Thoughtists. They preach mental healing and claim that there is no necessity for drugs and medical help, as all diseases can be cured by mental power. There are many serious cases which have been cured by the Christian Scientists and the mental healers. You may practise this method, and you will also be cured.

Vedanta teaches that you must be free from all your troubles and anxieties. You know that the Yogis have no disease, because they are free from delusion (*ajnana*). As the Yogis are free from all delusions, so all those who live the right kind of life, will become free from all delusions. But you have made yourselves so weak and helpless that you possess no knowledge of your true Self (*Atman*) and naturally you live like ignorant children and act like slaves. In order to get out of this condition, you should listen to the message of Vedanta. The message of Vedanta is that the knowledge of the *Atman* will make you a new being, will bring freedom unto you, and make you stand on your feet. In short, it will raise you as well as your nation to a high and divine level. The national spirit will come to you, and this national spirit which is based upon

the Vedanta-principles, is not to be found among other nations. All other nations have their national ideals of materialism and commercialism, but your national ideal is spiritual, your civilisation is based upon the spiritual laws, and you can preach that spiritual ideal in the whole world. You have that opportunity, but you have made yourselves ignorant and miserable. So whom shall you blame? Blame yourselves. If you blame somebody else, you become more helpless, but if you take the blame upon yourselves, you can better your condition. You cannot blame your parents and cannot blame your *kismat*. Now, what is *kismat*? If you believe in *kismat*, you will be fatalist. If your *kismat* has made you so, then you must have created your own *kismat*. The law of *kismat* is nothing but the law of *karma*, or the law of cause and effect. Therefore, your own *karma* is the cause of your sufferings. The moment you violate the law of nature, you reap the consequence.

The message of Vedanta is the highest message that any scripture can give to the world. Vedanta is not for the dreamers, but is the most practical of all scriptures. You must learn that absolute Truth in this life and make your conditions better. It teaches Karma Yoga, or the method by which you can make the works of your daily life as the means of attaining to the realization of the Brahman, the infinite Spirit. It is one of the various paths which are described in Vedanta for reaching to the highest goal. There are four principal paths which are called Yogas. The word Yoga means method i.e. the method of unifying the individual soul and the universal Soul. There is Karma Yoga, or the method (tricks) of work. The other paths are called Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga, and Jnana Yoga. Through Karma Yoga one can attain that goal of freedom and happiness which is called *moksha* in Vedanta. Here you may ask: "How should we work?" To this it can be said that you should work having the ideal that every time you do any physical work it is not merely for your gain, but is an act of worship of God. If you go to a factory and work there with a hammer striking upon steel, you should know that every stroke you give with the hammer, is an act of worship to the Lord who is governing your body, mind and the whole universe.

That hammering is your earnest prayer. Similarly, you make all physical and mental activities as service to the Lord.

This is Karma Yoga which is taught in Vedanta. So make every work an act of worship. When you eat, you should think that the Lord is within you, and that you are making a *yajna*, or are giving that food as an offering to the Lord. There is God in the fire that digests. Food is the oblation that is poured in the fire of the Brahman, dwelling in the stomach. Therefore the act of eating is an act of worship of the supreme Being. Every time you move, you must know that the power that helps you to move from one place to another, is not your power, but is God's power; and also when you walk, you should think that you are making a *pradakshina* round the temple of the Lord.¹ The temple of the Lord is everywhere, in the street, in the dust, and in every house. Where a man lives, there is also the temple of the Lord. Where do you want to worship him? You need realize that your body is a church, that your body is a mosque, that your body is a temple, and in that temple dwells the supreme Being. Worship Him in spirit knowing that God is within you, and that everything you do, is an act of worship. Sacrifice all the fruits of your actions at the feet of the Lord. This is the real worship. In the *Bhagavad Gita*, Sri Krishna says: "What you eat, what charitable work you do, what gift you give to anybody, or what sacrifice you perform, make that as a free offering to the Lord without seeking for the results thereof". Then your mind will be free from all bondage and ignorance, and you will be able to realize how God is dwelling within you. This is *moksha* or freedom from the law of *karma*. This message of Vedanta you should carry to your factory, and in your home. When you do anything for your children, you must know that you worship God in the form of your children. When you go to your wife, or to your sister, or to your mother, you should remember that God is there, that whatever you do for your wife, for your mother and sister, think that you are worshipping God. You have never been told this before, but this is our religion. This is the teaching of Vedanta. This is Karma Yoga. Remember that every woman that works here, however low she may appear to be, is a representative of the

¹ In a song of Sadhaka Ramaprasad this idea has been expressed in a beautiful way. As for example, ** 'nagara fera mane kara, *pradikshina Shyāmā māye*' etc.

Divine Mother. This idea will raise the womanhood into divine motherhood. We find this ideal only in this country and not in any other country. But, my friends, you are responsible for not practising it, and you are the cause of all degeneration of your own women.² You have kept them in ignorance and made them your slaves. You are reaping the results, that is, you in turn have been made slaves by others. This is a good retaliation which you have received. Thus you have brought all this slavery upon yourself. From today, you should educate your wives, children (boys and girls) and teach them that God is dwelling within them, that anything they do with selfish motive is wrong, and anything they do for the service of the Lord is grand, glorious, uplifting and helpful to all.

You must remember that this world is a stage, where each one of you is playing a part that you are fitted to play. One is playing the part of a father, another of a brother, another of a wife, another of a child, another of a king, an emperor or a prince. They are all players and are all actors. No one is really doing anything. It is the will of the Lord that is manifesting through them, but they do not know it, for their eyes are covered with the veil of ignorance and for that reason they do not see. When that veil is taken away, the real truth comes before the sight and the whole figure of this universe is changed ; and instead of seeing these different manifestations the individual soul sees the Divinity behind, which is the background of all phenomenal manifestations. You see the sun, the moon and the stars, but, my friends, behind them there is an ocean of Reality, and that Reality is the Brahman, the Infinite Spirit, the *Paramatman*, the Allah, the Father in Heaven, the Divine Mother, or whatever you may call it. You may call it Vishnu, or Siva, or Varuna, the lord of the sky, or Agni, the God of light. Wherever there is knowledge, there is light ; therefore light is the symbol of knowledge. So anyone may worship God as the Bright God, which is symbolised for knowledge ; and wherever there is ignorance, it is called darkness. Those who go to hell, go into the abyss of darkness, where they do not realize the difference between themselves and their surrounding conditions. That darkness is symbolised for ignorance which is the real meaning of hell.

² This lecture was delivered in 1922.

Let us come back to Karma Yoga. Through Karma Yoga each one of us will obtain the same goal of freedom. If we work for the good of the country and also for the good of our own people, then there would come to us the real spirit of freedom and independence. Then you will understand that you are a nation. You should have education on national lines, and you should have industries developed within your own country. Everything that you do and every work that you perform, must be for the good of yourself and for your people. National education you need today, and patriotic feelings will arouse love for your country. You know that in Japan there are two ideals, unity and patriotism, and, therefore, the Japanese nation have been raised to a free, independent and powerful nation. Who can tell what will become of you in the next generation? We may not be able to see that goal towards which the whole country is driving, but we expect to see that the beginning of a good thing is already done, and our future generations will realize the benefit of what we do today. So, my friends, sacrifice your own selfishness for the good of your country. Realize that your children are going to be the fathers of the next generation and they will carry on your work. You grown-up men have finished your career. We have no hope for you. We do not expect much from you, but we expect a great deal from your children. When you have brought your children into this world, you should try to educate them properly in a *swadeshi* way. Make them wear *swadeshi* cloths, *khaddar* and realize that what your motherland produces, is more beneficial to you than all the glory of other nations forced upon you in abundance. My friends, your religion will teach you to be the saviour of your own country. Why are you enslaved? Go and ask an Englishman, why does the British rule in India exist?³ He will say: "Because you are separated, because you have so many castes; when you become united, we will leave you." It is an open truth. Ask this gentleman here. He will say the same thing, and it is a fact. All historians tell the same thing. When you are united, you will rule yourself. They do not make a secret of it, and, my friends, you should know that.

³ This lecture was delivered in 1922, when India was in bondage.

you will realize the truth of oneness which is taught by Vedanta. Therefore, my friends, be devoted to that ideal of oneness and pray to that one God, whether you see a mosque or a temple. Remember that if any Mohammedan who worships in the mosque, is a child of God and, therefore, the mosque is just as good as the temple. If your God can remain in the temple, He can remain in the mosque and can also remain in the church. So, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa whenever saw a church, used to bow down and used to say: "There is the place where God's name is uttered. I revere and honour that place". When he would see a mosque, he would say the same thing and he would prostrate before the mosque. When he went to the temple, he did the same thing, because these are the different expressions of the same feelings of devotion and love. In Bhakti Yoga, there is no distinction of race, colour, and caste. So you must not encourage any prejudice or hatred among your brothers, because they do not eat the same kind of food as you eat, because they do not wear the same kind of clothes as you do, or because they do not shave their moustaches and beards as you do. What difference does it make whether or not you wear moustaches and beards? You are a child of God just the same. It does not make any difference, and such is the message of Vedanta.

The message of Vedanta should be given to the Mohammedan, to the Christian, and to the Parsee, just as much as to the Hindus, because it is one universal religion. It is nameless. It can be applied under all conditions by all peoples of the world. If the European nations follow the teachings and the message of Vedanta, there would be no more war. There would be peace and good-will among all. The commercialism which is the bane of modern civilization, will have to die tomorrow; and they would realize that all these peoples of the world whom they are trying to rob, are their own brothers. But they are not ready for that. We are more ready than they are. I have seen the conditions in the West, for I spent the best part of my life in Europe and America. As I know their faults and weakness, so I know their greatness too. But, my friends, when you have no power to compare, you think that you are greatest in the whole world. It is not so. All knowledge depends upon comparison, and if you

get out of this country and go to other lands and realize the conditions there and come back and see the conditions of this country, you will have a different idea altogether. I have never seen in the whole world any country governed by a handful of foreigners in the same way as this country is. There was no other country and government in the past when the Czar was living in Russia. In the whole history of humanity, we do not find this kind of government anywhere, because its ideal to both the governor and the governed was the same and where the consent of the governed was taken by the governor at every step. But, my friends, time in your country is not ripe yet. Therefore you must remain satisfied with the condition you have now, but you should hold the ideals of freedom and independence, taught by Vedanta, and you will surely find that goal through your religion, and with the help of the Lord within you, you will be able to become the conqueror of all the troubles and difficulties that you are facing today. I wish you success in your efforts.

The other method by which you can attain the ideal of Vedanta is the Raja Yoga. The Raja Yoga is the method of concentration and meditation. It teaches you how to conquer your own mind and body. It tells you how to practise breathing exercises or *pranayama*. By practising *pranayama*, you can conquer all diseases and can bring more strength, more courage and more power within you. You should not only practise *pranayama*, but you should also teach your children to breathe properly so that they can develop their chests. My chest measures 44 inches by practising *pranayama*. I had been teaching it in America and England for all these years and I have great many students who have received benefit from it. *Pranayama* is now recommended in the public schools as a new science. Ramamoorthy, the great Indian Sandow, held a motor car running in full speed and stopped it. Do you know how he had acquired that strength? He gained it by practising *pranayama*. Fifteen years ago, in 1906, I saw him in Mysore when I gave a lecture in his circus tent. He performed most wonderful feats. He came to salute me as I was the guest of the Maharaja of Mysore. I asked him whether he had practised *pranayama* and *kumbhaka*. He bowed to me and smiled. So, my friends, what Ramamoorthy could do, you and your children can also

do Teach them the Raja Yoga and they will have the power to do great things. But if you neglect yourselves and do not teach your children, what can the government do for you? The government will hiss at you, and laugh at you Why do you not take care of yourselves from schools and institutions. The Westerners are not here to teach you. You will have to teach yourselves The Westerners are for their business here. India is a great field for their business and you must not take it as it is, and serve them in their business if you wish, but so far as national education is concerned, you are responsible for it. You should teach your own children at home You should get your own teachers Why do you go like a begger and ask their help? Are you not ashamed of yourselves if you do such a thing?

The Raja Yoga is the best method by which you can control your mind and conquer your passions Look at our great man, Mahatma Gandhi. He is a Barrister-at-Law. You see how much self-control he possesses He lives like a cooly eating only that kind of food which a cooly can earn in a day. Can he not do better? Why does he do that? Simply to prove that the body is a slave of the mind and the spirit is greater than the body Could he not earn more and live in comfort? He could have lived in great luxury, getting drunk and intoxicated in the streets of Ahmedabad and he could have earned enough money if such a living were his ideal. Why did he choose simple living? Is that due to his ignorance? If you do not follow his example, you will remain slaves of whisky and brandy, and you will be paupers in the end

My friends, you have all opportunities to learn Take good qualities wherever they come from, even from a Pariah and even from your enemy. You should study great characters and enrich yourselves with those noble qualities, which your enemy possesses. Be a great man, a Mahatma yourself. The Raja Yoga gives us all these, self-control, concentration, meditation, perseverance and self-sacrifice.

Before I went to Europe I was a pure Sannyasi, travelling bare-footed all over India. Today you see me dressed differently, but twentyfive years ago I used to go about with a begging bowl in my hand and sleep under trees I walked over snows in Kedarnath and Badrinath bare-footed and I did not suffer for it. I used to eat one meal in 24 hours and never

carried a penny in my pocket. I was such a medicant for 12 years travelling from Kedarnath and Badrinath to Ramesvar and Kanyakumari. Once I walked from Tarakesvar to Benaras going bare-footed through all these places In Santal Parganas, my soft feet were bleeding, but still I continued to walk I was following the path of the great masters of the world. I had to pass through the hills and forests of Chota-Nagpur alone. While I was thus living the life of a true Sannyasi, suddenly a call came from my illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda from London. I responded to the call, gave up my begging bowl and dressed in hat and coat to fight the Europeans, and I did succeed in my fight. My fight was not a fight with guns, but a fight to drive-out their ignorance and prejudice. I am not boasting myself, but a tree is known by its fruit.

You know that I have great many friends in United States, who are proud to be called Hindus with names such as Gurudas, Ramadas, Sivadas, Haridas and so on There are men amongst the Europeans who are proud to be called the Hindus, because their ancestors were the Hindus, or the Aryans. I should say that these Aryan forefathers were the greatest civilized people of the world.

Christianity today is a proselytising religion, but it was not at first the proselytising religion. Buddhist preachers went from India and preached the *Sanatan Dharma* from Siberia to Ceylon, from China to Egypt. Those were the countries known to the civilized world in those days. So, my friends, Christianity is not the only proselytising religion. Buddhist preachers went out of India and preached peace and good-will amongst different peoples. They never carried a sword in one hand and the scripture in the other. Buddhism, as you all know, sprang from India, and Buddha is regarded by the Hindus as an incarnation of Vishnu. So, all Buddhists like the Chinese, the Japanese, the Siamese, and the Ceylonese, are our brothers. We must embrace them as our brothers, because they are the followers of Buddha who is also an incarnation of Vishnu. Why should you not recognize them today as Hindus? Moreover why should you not consider them as your brothers, who receive baptism. History tells us that baptism went from India to the Jews. Perhaps you do not know the process of baptism. A little water is sprinkled on the head in the name of the Father, then, Son

and the Holy Ghost, when a Christian is baptised. We can take the same Christian and give him a bath in the Ganges in the name of the Paramabrahman, or the *Sanatana Dharma*, and make him a Hindu. Why should we not do that?

There are some Christians, I mean some Europeans, who are proud to take a bath in the Ganges believing that it will do them some benefit and good in their spiritual life. Look at Mrs. Annie Besant, the leader of the Theosophical Society. She believes that if you take a bath in the Ganges, you will be benefited. She learnt all the truth from us and has come to teach us the same thing. But we are so foolish that we are worshiping her and calling her an *Avatar*, or an incarnation of Devi Sarasvati. Are you not ashamed of yourselves? So, my friends, it is the most ridiculous thing to think about. Remember that we have always been the spiritual teachers and we shall remain so in future. We do not talk about politics, as we do not clearly understand it. Religion is our life, and politics is the last thing to talk about. It is the science of administration, and when you have no administration of your own what is the good of talking about it. Leave it aside. Improve yourselves, develop your characters, and love your neighbours.

The teachings of Vedanta show that there is one underlying spirit amongst all. You may call it by any name. Allah of the Mohammedans, Ahura Mazda of the Zoroastrians, Siva of the Saivas, Vishnu of the Vaishnavas, Christ of the Christians, and Buddha of the Buddhists. There is no difference in the substance which is one, and the name only varies. Do you know that our infinite Spirit, Vishnu has infinite names. Christ is one among those and also Allah is one of them. So, my friends, have a little common sense. It will save you from all troubles, and it will bring you salvation in the end.

The other method, by which you can reach the highest ideal of Vedanta, is the Jnana Yoga. The Jnana Yoga is most difficult thing to practise. It is the path of knowledge or right discrimination. You must love everything that you see around and deny all evil. All evil is a delusion, and God is only good and perfect. There is no imperfection in the universal Spirit. If you are able to see that, then you have reached the highest goal, you have become divine, and you have become perfect. We see things as we think. The outside is the reflec-

tion of the inside. So long as we are imperfect, we see imperfection around us, but if we are perfect, we shall see perfection everywhere. This is the law of nature. So, my friends, how is it possible to see perfection everywhere? We can attain to perfection by reaching the state of *samadhi* which reveals to us that God is the only Reality, and other things of the phenomena and all other differentiations that you see, such as, the sun, moon, stars, planets, the animal-kingdom, vegetables and minerals, vanish in the ocean of Reality, which is the eternal Truth and in which we are like so many bubbles and so many waves. This knowledge comes to those who have attained the highest stage of spiritual progress and spiritual evolution. At the same time you must remember that *samadhi* is not confined to any particular religion of the world. All religions lead to the same Truth. Just as a Vedantist says '*aham brahmasmi*', i.e. I am the Brahman', so Christ said. "I and my father are one". A Buddhist will say the same thing: "I am one with Nirvana." Their version is the same as that of yours. Just as if you rise on the top of mountain with other religionist friends who are following different paths, will also come to the same top. All of you will have the same view of the landscape around that mountain. So the followers of all religions will have similar realization and same experience. There is no difference. This is the highest goal and the highest ideal of all religions, and this is taught in Vedanta. Therefore, Vedanta is all-embracing. It embraces all the religions of the world. It teaches the highest Truth, and at the same time it is the most practical religion. It teaches us to be great men, and to see the divine Being in all. It makes us realize that we are parts of the whole humanity and that humanity is Divine and one. If you divide that humanity and separate its parts, such as, the Europeans, the Asiatics, the Hindus, the Christians and the Jews, you will be making a great mistake. You cannot divide humanity. It is all one. You cannot make two faces look alike. If you can make two faces look alike, you will have to break the faces and smash them. There will be no faces left in the world. But, my friends, that would be an impossible task. We see the variety of manifestations through which that unity is running undercurrent, and this is the message of Vedanta. This will make you strong, holy, and spiritual. Then you will be able

to remove the ignorance of your brothers, and improve the social conditions amongst women and your children. There will be peace in your own soul, and you will enjoy eternal happiness. The greatest message which Vedanta gives, is that you are not going to be afraid of a devil. Vedanta denies the existence of a devil. But, my friends, it is the law of *karma*. There is no such thing as *kismat*, because you are the creator of your own *kismat* and the maker of your own destiny. God is not responsible for your future destiny, but He gives you the results of your thoughts and deeds in harmony with the law of *karma*. In other words, your thoughts and deeds will bring the results naturally by the law. Therefore it is stated in Vedanta. "God never punishes the wicked, nor rewards the virtuous, but the wicked punish themselves by their thoughts and deeds and the virtuous reward themselves by their own thoughts and deeds". The ignorant people do not know, therefore, they put up two Gods, the one as the God who gives rewards and the other a devil who punishes the wicked. But, my friends, all these are superstitious ideas, doctrines and dogmas. Vedanta gives the real truths or the fundamental laws which govern the whole universe. Therefore the moment you will understand its message you will love your people and have no fear of death, because you will realize that you will continue to live after death.

You are a part and parcel of the Spirit which can never die. When you die, you give up the body, just as you throw away your old worn-out garment and put on a new one. So after throwing away the physical body you get a better one which is a spiritual body. It will be subject to your past *karma* which you call *kismat*, i.e. your thoughts and deeds which determine your future. If you have earthly or human desires which can be fulfilled on this plane, you will come back to this world in the same way as you have come this time. You will reap the results of your experience and go on progressing from one stage to another until you reach perfection and manifest the divine potentiality that is already within you and become one with the heavenly Spirit (the Brahman), the Father of all. This is a grand message. There is no fear of death and there is no fear of punishment; but there is all happiness, which you will enjoy not only after death but enjoy also in this

life All other religions tell you that you may go on doing all miserable works here and after death you will enjoy the highest pleasure , but Vedanta teaches *jivanmukti* and shows the way to freedom and highest happiness even in this life. You cannot become perfect after death unless you become perfect before death. So, my friends, some people think that they will be angels Their wings will grow after they are put in the grave and in this life they may eat, drink and enjoy all the luxuries of life, and harm their brothers ; but it is like throwing dust in their eyes. The wings of the angels will never grow on them. Because they will be determined by their thoughts and deeds which they have done in this life This is the eternal law and this law no one can escape It is inexorable. It goes on relentlessly, mercilessly and governs the whole humanity. I can talk to you for hours, but time is up. I have talked for an hour and forty minutes The signal is given for stopping, so I must stop here

I thank you for listening to this discourse so patiently and with such interest and rapt attention. But the last word I will say, my friends, is this message of Vedanta You should carry this message in your home and remember all that I have said I have given you the best advice as your friend and your brother would give you and I wish that you would receive it as a friend and brother would receive it

CHAPTER V

IDEAL OF A RELIGIOUS INSTITUTION

*(An inaugural lecture on the occasion of the foundation of
the Vedanta Society at Jamshedpur in 1922)*

MEMBERS OF THE VIVEKANANDA SOCIETY AND FRIENDS,

I have been listening to the report of the Vivekananda Society which has given you some idea of the work that has already been accomplished by the members of the Society. They have a plan which has also been described very nicely, comprising of a scheme to help the poor, to educate the mass, and to propagate the spiritual ideals of our holy scriptures, especially the ideals of the Vedanta philosophy. The Vivekananda Society was established about three years ago in this Tata town, which consists of all classes of people working in the factory, and where there is a great need in spiritual lines to uplift the ideals of humanity. There have been good occasions to relieve the distress of the people, and the members of this Society spared no pains to take such opportunities and lent a helping hand to all irrespective of creed and colour so that the sick might be nursed, the poor might be fed and clothed, the ignorant might be taught, and the seekers of spiritual life might receive knowledge in the path of Godconsciousness. You have already heard what our Swami Karunanandaji¹ said. He described clearly the reasons and ideals which this Society has and you have also heard the remarks of the President of the Society which showed how the work has been carried on under great difficulties. You have also heard the appeal. You must come forward and put your shoulders under the wheel, not because you are working in the factory, not because you are educated in different lines, but because you are a part of the humanity. You should learn to feel for the poor. You should live to help others. Your life will not worth anything unless you help other. Life of a selfish

¹ A member of the Vedanta Society, Calcutta, at this time.

man is death in reality. He does not live, but is dead to the society. Therefore, in order to live, we should know the art of living. We must learn to live like a living man and to sacrifice our selfish interests and to stand on the platform of unselfishness. Let us uplift the mass, educate them, and give them what they really need. A gift of knowledge is the greatest gift. It is not that you should give them a few pice, or a piece of cloth, or a handful of rice, but you should feel that you have found an opportunity to serve God who is before you in the form of a poor beggar. You should consider it a privilege that a beggar has come to your door and has given you an opportunity to give alms to him. But you should remember that you are not helping the poor, but you are helping yourself, you are uplifting yourself, and you are marching onward towards the path of divine light. Whenever you will help a poor man, just think that you are worshipping the *Daridra-Narayana* i.e. Narayana in the form of a poor man. Whenever you take a handful of rice to give to a poor beggar, you should have that feeling in your heart that Narayana is at your door. It is an opportunity or a privilege that you have to serve Narayana in the form of a beggar and to give him all that he wants. You may not be able to sacrifice very much, but if you cherish that feeling, it is enough. Swami Vivekananda called some young boys and gave them the advice that they should feel for the poor and for the down-trodden. If you wish to live, you should live in order to help those down-trodden classes. In this age of materialism, commercialism and disbelief, we are drifting away from the path of righteousness and we have forgotten the real spiritual ideals of our life. We have forgotten that we are the living souls, that we have a mind, that we are parts and parcels of the Divine Being and that we are the *Atman* which is free from sorrow, suffering, misery, disease, and death. We have forgotten that there is a future life which is more real than the life which we now live in this material world. We do not realize that God dwells within us and that we are a part and parcel of the *Virat-Purusha*, the all-pervading Divine Being who dwells in all living creatures. We have forgotten that our duty is not merely to rear children and to do a little duty of a householder's life. We have a greater duty to perform. The Hindu ideal is that as soon as a man is born in a community,

he has some debts to pay off, and those debts are: *Pitri-rin*, *Rishi-rin*, *Deva-rin* and *Atma-rin*. You have a debt to your parents, you have a debt to your spiritual teachers, you have a debt to your Maker or the Creator of the world, and you have also a debt to your Self or the *Atman*. The debt to your Self or the *Atman* is higher. Have you been able to pay off these debts? No, on the contrary, you have forgotten your debts and do not know your duties. The Ramakrishna Mission and the Vivekananda Society were established to remind you of your duties and to show you the way by which you can pay off your debts without thinking of further results. When you pay off your debts, you do not seek anything else in return. Neither should you seek any glory, nor seek a name of fame, but you should cancel your debt, and there it ends. You should work incessantly to pay off your debts. Then your heart will be purified, i.e. your *chittashuddhi* is accomplished. Now when your *chittashuddhi* is accomplished, there comes the God-vision, as Jesus the Christ said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God". Really, purity of heart brings the God-vision, and when you have the vision of the Lord in your soul, you will attain to peace and happiness which are unbounded and eternal. Then there will be no end of your happiness.

This world is a great school. You are going from one class to another. You are rising from one grade to another and learning your lessons. Whilst you are learning your lessons, you might pay off your debts at the same time, but if you become attached to worldly pleasures and also to senses and sense-objects and other belongings, then you will be miserable in the end, because these things do not really belong to you. You have not brought them with you when you were born and you will not be able to take them away with you when you die. This is as true as you live here. But when you forget this, you live a life of self-delusion. Then you are deluded by the inscrutable power of *maya*. So you should not claim anything as your own, for you could never possess it. The Vedanta philosophy tells us that we must know the eternal Truth, otherwise we shall remain in bondage and reap the results of our acts in this life and hereafter. If you do not know the Truth, then how can you attain to freedom? You should understand that

the knowledge of Truth will bring freedom to your soul. Do you think that God is dwelling above the cloud and is far away from your reach? No, but you should know that God is everywhere. He is in the table, He is in every human being, and He is in all lower animals. You should feel his presence everywhere. "*Isvara sarva-bhutanam hiddeshe Ajuna tishthati*", and you also remember the first *sloka* of the *Isha Upanishad*: "*Isha-vasyam idam sarvam*", etc.

When you will be worthy of worshipping the Divinity and will be filled with that Divine Being, your lower self will be dead and you will resurrect and will become divine. This is the ideal which has been held by the Christian people. They believe that Jesus must die and Christ must resurrect. In fact, each individual soul is a spiritual Christ and each individual soul is a child of God. You should feel it and make the best use of your energy to serve God who is within you and also in every particle of the universe.

My friends, it is necessary for us to think about our present conditions. How degraded we have become, how selfish we are, and how much hatred we have in our hearts against our fellow beings. Today you will find nothing but hatred in the socalled civilization. I am using the word 'socalled civilization', because real civilization never brings unto men the idea of hatred and jealousy. Today our civilization, nay, civilization of all nations of the world, are false or psudo-civilization, and so it cannot uplift the level of human consciousness and also of human race. Both Eastern and Western civilizations are in danger, so we cannot expect better result from them. However, you should not entertain hatred against any one and anything, but practise love, fellow-feeling towards all. Christ and all the Saviours came to establish peace and good-will amongst humanity, but Christ's and other Saviours' followers have gone astray. Now they need a new leader and a new spiritual teacher to point out the mistake they are making. They have no love for the poor. They are rather self-centred and hate others in order to gratify their self-interest. This has been the greatest evil in both the Eastern and Western civilizations. It will never lead to real peace and happiness. It will reap its unhappy consequence in the end, because that is the natural law.

The great teacher Buddha who flourished about 600 years

before Christ, declared in a trumpet voice before the world: "Hatred is not conquered by hatred, but by love". My friends, if any one hates you, you must learn to love him, and that love is God. Therefore you must forgive. God is the embodiment of pure love (*prema-svarupa*), nay, He Himself is love. Therefore you forgive and love every one instead of doing injury. There is no other God in the world but unselfish love. If you can love your fellow brother as a part and parcel of your self, if you can think that he is a part of your soul and if you work for him in the same way taking similar interest as you take for yourself and for your kith and kin, then you have expressed that Divine Love. In the Divine love, you should not seek any remuneration or return for love. You must, therefore, be disinterested. Give out that free offering of love to your fellow beings and that is the greatest kind of worship to the Lord. These ideals must be kept alive and you must be told again and again and taught again and again, otherwise you will forget them. The only way of attaining to the highest wisdom, as it was given by the ancient teachers of the Vedic period, is the *Atman*. '*atma va a-re drashtavya, shrotavya, mantavya, nidhi-tyasitavya*' i.e. the *Atman* should be directly perceived, should be heard, should be thought of and should be concentrated and meditated. Therefore you must learn the methods by which you will realize your true Self, the Divine *Atman*, and by these methods you must hear it again and again. You should hear every day that you are the *Atman*, that you are birthless and deathless. '*nainam chhindanti shastrani nainam dahati pabakah*', etc, i.e. 'fire cannot burn me, water cannot moisten me, air cannot dry me, and sword cannot pierce me; I am breathless, deathless, free from disease, sin, sorrow, suffering and misery. That is my true Self'. If you realize that no power in the world can subdue the living God in the form of your own Self, then your body might be blown into atoms, but still you would be deathless. The moment you realize this, you become fearless (*abhayam*). Then this world will appear as nothing before you. If the whole world is destroyed, you will still remain as the master of matter and forces. You are really the Spirit. So realization of God is the aim of all religions. But all sectarian religions have missed the aim. They have gone into the non-essential part of religion which are the set of doctrines, dogmas,

beliefs, creeds, and traditions. You must shake off the non-essential and take the essential truth and find out that there is but one God and our individual souls are parts and parcels of that God, nay, our individual souls are non-different from God in essence. A question was asked by a seeker of Truth to a great sage as to what was the ideal of Vedanta and the reply was given: "I will speak to you in a few words the spirit of Vedanta, and that is, God is real, the world is unreal, and the individual soul is nothing but the inseparable part of God. The individual soul is just like a spark of the fire, and that spark is, in truth, inseparable or non-different from the fire. This is the essence of the Vedas." My friends, we have to bring that essence into practice. We must follow it first and feel it in ourselves and then seek it in others. Then there would be unity, because there is no separation in spirit. There is only one and undivided Spirit—*ekamevadvitiam*, and that one Spirit is all-pervading. Then how can you hate other? How can you call yourself higher than a down-trodden Pariah? It is impossible, because you all are one and the same in Spirit. And that idea will raise India to its past glory. You must be united in spirit and live as one soul. That will bring together all the disintegrated elements and make them into an integrated complete whole. To bring out that love, the Vivekananda Society gives you that opportunity to come forward and learn how to love everyone and everything.

Twentyfive hundred years ago Buddha sent out his disciples to preach love, to help the poor and to start hospitals for men, women and children, and not only for men, but also for the lower animals. The first public hospital was established in Europe only in the 17th century A.D., and the first public hospital was established in India 2500 years ago by the Buddhist monks and Emperors. The Buddhists knew that public service was the only way of attaining to the realization of Truth. In truth, Buddha's religion was a religion of humanity and for humanity. Buddha asked his disciples to forget their own selves and place their own selves in others, so that they might become one with others and live as one body. My friends, during the Buddhist age India enjoyed the highest glory and that glory reached its zenith in every line, in religion, in sculpture, in painting, and in education. That golden

Buddhist age was glorified in the educational systems, in the line of universities, in the line of preachers, in the line of hospitals, and in the lines of philosophy, logic, science, and medicine. In every line and in every thing, India showed her best in that Buddhist age in the past. It was during the Buddhist period that all those young men from Bengal went out as preachers in the foreign lands. They went to China, Tibet, Japan, Burma, Siam, Ceylon, Java, and as far as to Alexandria and even to Greece. My friends, let me repeat that you have forgotten your past glory. Try to remember those memorable days. You know that there were great universities. The Nalanda University near Patna had a principal who was a Bengali and whose name was Silabhadra. He was the teacher of Hiuen Tsang, the great Chinese traveller. According to Hiuen Tsang, students from Kashmir and far off places came here to study and remained in India for a number of years under the guidance of the great Bengali teacher, Silabhadra. The Nalanda University had about 10,000 students and ten hundred teachers. There they had moral and spiritual teachings. There they were not imparted only a little knowledge so that the students might not become clerks; those students used to receive there both educational and spiritual trainings. There was also a great University of Odantapuri. There was another great University at Taxila. I went to see the ruins of the great University at Taxila where great many students used to come to study Sanskrit from all parts of the civilized world. There were good arrangements for the studies of Nyaya, Vaisesika, Tantra, and other subjects and that was the home of our grammarian Panini. So we had a past glory which no other country had. Now, our ambition is gone, we are lifeless and our moral ideas have left us all. Wherever I go, in India, I find lethargy, weakness, fear of death, and hatred in the heart of the people. But these are not good signs for any country.

My friends, you go out and see the rest of the world. The whole world is progressing and we are going backward. I have toured round the world. I had been to China, Japan, Phillipines and most parts of Europe and America. I have seen their children so happy. Young boys and girls are playing there merrily. But our people in India seem lifeless. Look at the *Pariah* and the *Methars*, and the sweepers, as they have got no

happiness in their lives. They cannot earn sufficient to have a second meal. They are ill-fed and ill-clothed. They have no future. Are you not willing to give them something to make them stand on their own feet? And that virtue you should practise. In order to do that, you should learn these ideals. What Buddha taught, was forgotten after the revival of the Hinduism, or after the Brahminism came into power, in the 8th century at the time of Sankaracharya. The caste distinction was abolished during the Buddhist age. All were considered equal in right and privilege at that time. Those who had qualifications in any particular line, were allowed to have full scope to apply their talents. But we find, during the Brahminic age, when Buddhism was almost dead, degeneration began and we began to lose everything. Now we have lost all those good things and qualities which we had during the Buddhist period. But we have to revive them now and the whole country needs another store-house of divine energy. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna came as the Yugavatara. His university education was nothing. Therefore he remained unlettered, and yet he knew all. He had a vast storehouse of wisdom. He understood other languages and also understood all kinds of topics of the scriptures. I saw on one occasion two gentlemen were talking in English and he was listening and smiling. I found that he understood every word of the talk. I have seen it with my own eyes. He used to tell us: "Do you know that I can read your mind through your eyes? Just as I can see through the glass of the window, so I can see what is going on in your minds". So, my friends, you have that spiritual power latent in you. You can gain that power, but you do not care for it. You are rather neglecting it. You must never try to know that you do not have that power. Sri Ramakrishna showed us that greatest worship of God is to serve the *Daridra-Narayana*. He realized that the poor are also the living embodiment of Narayana who is the Lord of the universe. So, we must feed the poor, help them, educate them, and must not feel that we are higher than them. On one occasion Sri Ramakrishna thought that a *Methar* was not higher than him and he felt so much afterwards that he prayed to the Divine Mother to take away that pride from him. For this he prayed to the Divine Mother: "I may be a Brahmin, but there is a *Methar* in whom

the Lord of the universe also lives So, Mother remove my pride" Generally a *Methar* thinks that he is lower than a Brahmin, because what he can do, a Brahmin cannot do, but that is not the reason that a *Methar* will be regarded as down-trodden. So Sri Ramakrishna wiped the door of the *Methar* with his long flowing hair so that he could consider him lower than a *Methar*. My friend, you should learn to do that what Sri Ramakrishna showed to the world Break your false pride that you are higher than a *Methar* or a sweeper You give him the opportunity to understand that he is doing the work which you cannot do, and for that he is not greater than you. Similarly you have also no right to look down upon him, but you should feel that he is a man and through him the divine power is manifested If you do not do this, you will be punished The Lord is already punishing you severely Your whole nation is disintegrated and you are gradually dying out So bring out that love and reverence and feel that it is a privilege for you to serve humanity

My friends, in this age of reasoning, we have to bring out all that glory of the past which we have had in the Buddhist period. We shall not stop until we reach the goal and the whole population and the members of all caste and creed must have one ideal They are all children of immortal Bliss. You should learn to love them all, and regard them as your brothers. Take the *Methars* as our brothers Look at the society of America. There is no *Methar*, there everybody does his own work, and all are progressing with their civilization When we lived in America, we also did our own work in our Asramas in America. So where there is no system of drain, you just clean the drains at certain times. It is not a disgrace. From the work of a cobbler to the work of a priest, every kind of work is a worship of God. There is no higher kind of work and no lower kind of work, and so we have learnt to do all kinds of work Come forward, my friends, and I will show you the method of work. Then you will be worthy of your name as a real Hindu. Buddha himself was a Hindu, because he was a Kshatriya by birth and he preached the principles of Vedanta, which were extremely practical to him He did not discuss about whether God is in this form or that form, but he kept silent on that point and showed the way to salvation through work in middle path.

And that kind of work we must do now to raise ourselves, to raise our motherland, to resurrect ourselves and to bring unto us the past glory so that we may live for future generation. We should teach our children this lofty ideal that they are birthless and deathless. We should teach them the Upanishadic truth that they are, in reality, the *Aitman* which transcends the cycle of birth and death. We should also teach their mothers that they are the parts of the Divine Mother. Then their children would be fearless. That is the only remedy. My friends, if you do not begin it now, what you will do? Death will be the end to you all. Your whole race will be dead. But now, if you become united with one mind, surely you will gain success. Forty millions of Englishmen have one-mind and we have more than 80 million men with 80 million minds. What can you expect from such conditions? Look at Japan. They have one mind and have self-respect. If you talk harshly to a Japanese, he will kill you. He would not bear it. And every foreigner is warned by guide books against talking harshly to a Japanese. Whether he is an Englishman or an American, he is afraid of a Japanese, because he cannot show his temper there. If you will also be like them, you will have the same self-respect. Remember that. The law holds good everywhere. So, my friends, stand up on your own feet and have self-respect. Do not consider yourselves as slaves, but think that they are parts and parcels of God, and therefore, nothing can down you. You are equal to all human beings, whether white or black. Be above all kinds of prejudice, and see everywhere and in everything the divine manifestation of all merciful God. God is everywhere and in everything, and try to realize this truth, and after realizing truth, serve all the living beings with infinite love and patience, and this will be the ideal of a religious institution *Om Shanti.*

CHAPTER VI

UNIVERSAL AND SYNTHETIC RELIGION

*(Delivered at the Jubilee Hall, Rangoon, on October 25,
1921, Tuesday)*

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Let me correct first a mistake made by the honourable Chairman. He told that I am the disciple of Swami Vivekananda I am not his disciple, but the spiritual brother of the Patriot-Saint Swami Vivekananda My Master and *Guru* was Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa by whose name the Ramakrishna Mission had been established Swami Vivekananda was the speaker's predecessor and co-worker in the field of spreading truth of the universal religion all over the world. The religious history of the world says that all great religions of the world, such as Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism and Buddhism, had tried their best to convert all people into their faith. Buddhism was one of the religions which was spread before the birth of Christ from Siberia to Ceylon and from China to Egypt, without any bloodshed Other religions, such as, Christianity and Mohammedanism were spread not with the idea of spreading peace and good-will, but to enforce doctrines and dogmas of those religions into the minds of the people whether they were willing to take them or not. Some of these teachers and preachers went so far as to draw their swords and use guns and start firing in order to gain their objects But, in spite of all their efforts, they had not succeeded in making their religions as universal ones The question, therefore, naturally arose why they had not succeeded and what was the cause? In the first place, each of these sectarian religions was limited by the personality of its founder and, therefore, could not be universal Christianity was built around the personality of Jesus the Christ, Mohammedanism around that of Mohammed, Zoroastrianism around that of Zoroaster, and Buddhism around that of Buddha. These personalities were the central

figures in their religions and each of them gave to the world his experiences in spiritual progress towards the realization of the ultimate goal or ideal of his religion. As two faces were not alike, they could not hold one set of ideas and enforce them upon the minds of all. One personality might appeal to a certain class of people, while there might be another set of people who would not care for that particular personality which would have a different ideal. And these sectarian religions had not made that provision. Christianity had been preached among all classes of people, but that which fitted the minds of the majority of Europeans and Americans, might not fit the minds of the Asiatics. There was no provision made for the Asiatic minds and, therefore, Christianity of Europe and America would never have success in Asia. Although Jesus the Christ was an Asiatic and his teachings were similar to the teachings of other Asiatics before him, still the Hindu minds and the minds of China and of other countries might find something in the personality of Christ which might not be exactly what they wanted. But some people might find comfort and consolation in his teachings and might think that religion of Jesus the Christ was going to be the universal religion. But religion which went in the name of Christ, was not exactly the religion which he taught¹. Christianity was a set of doctrines and dogmas which were probably never dreamt of by Christ. He never meant that such ideas would be preached in his name. There had been as many sects among the Christians and each trying to compete with the other and each trying to condemn the other on account of certain differences of opinion and ideal in their religious life. There were among the Christians, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Congregationalists and lastly another sect whom the orthodox Christians did not consider as Christians but as heathens, who, according to them, were not going to get salvation. But these heathens claimed to be the Christians. Here they would find a set of doctrines and dogmas which was not based on national grounds and scientific facts, but upon only tradition, hearsay and blind faith.

For this reason scientific men of the world did

¹ It is said that present Christianity, or Christianity which prevailed after the death of Christ, was preached by St Paul who was not a direct disciple of Christ, but only saw Christ in his dream.

not accept the doctrines and dogmas of Christianity which was to be called not Christianity but Churchianity. Christ never taught any doctrine or dogma. All these doctrines and dogmas were gathered from different sources, were pagan and a great deal of it had been taken from Buddhism. In this way, when they examined all the various religions of the world, they found that no religion which was founded upon the personality of its founder, could be called universal religion. If a person believed in these doctrines and dogmas and tried to teach them among the people and told them that those who would not accept them, would go to eternal damnation, was such a man truthful and honest in preaching those ideas? No, it was absolutely absurd to preach such ideas. It was as absurd as a man trying to condemn every passer-by in the street, whom a particular coat which he held in his hand, did not fit. So in trying to find out the fundamental principles of universal religion, they would have to remember that it must not be based upon the limitation of any personality, but upon the eternal spiritual laws which governed their life. Such spiritual laws were known by the founders of those great religions, but the followers made a different structure out of their teachings when they preached among other people. For instance, Buddha never spoke about a personal God, neither did he deny, nor admit its existence. But 500 years after his death a personal God was manufactured, because the tendency of the human mind needed a personal God whom it could worship and that personal God might or might not have a human form according to their conceptions.

There were other people who considered that God was not only personal, but also impersonal. There were others again who believed that God was dwelling in them and that they were parts of one stupendous whole. There were also those who believed that they were one with God. How were they going to reconcile these different ideals? So universal religion must be one which would find in its scope all these different ideas and conceptions. It must be broad and universal. Another most important thing at this age is that universal religion must be in perfect harmony with the ultimate conclusions of modern science. Any of the sectarian religions did not harmonize with the latest conclusions of modern science. There had been a war between science and religion in Europe and America in the last

century and that war had not stopped yet. It was still going on, but science had gained a victory over the sectarian religious doctrines and dogmas. One of the dogmas was that this world was created out of nothing, but science told them that there was no such creation possible. On the contrary, it said that the world had come into existence through the gradual process of evolution which had taken millions of years. How were they going to reconcile it with this sort of creation given in the Genesis in the Bible? Was it possible to imagine that the world came into existence before the sun was created as described in the Genesis? It was an impossibility. There were many other points which would show that religion, called Churchianity, did not harmonize the conclusions of modern science? Modern science told them that there was one life which was universal and there was one mind and that all their individual minds were like different drops in the eternal current of the cosmic mind. They were all related together and hence should not think that one mind was quite different from another. It was one mind that was all-pervading and was working in and through all the forms whether animal, human or vegetable. So there was one all-pervading Spirit. They were not created all of a sudden for the first time although they had no existence previous to the birth of their body. All life was eternal. Christian dogma told them that after one had come into existence in his life all of a sudden out of nothing, one would continue to live throughout eternity.

Eternity did not mean only the future, nor did it mean hundreds, or thousands, or millions, or billions of years. Eternity meant time without beginning and end. The Christians had taken one half of eternity and solved the problem, but they had not recognized the other half which was the most important half and that eternity must be in the past as well in the future. So a soul that had birth in time and space, could never be eternal. But a soul that had no beginning in time and space, would continue to live throughout eternity. That was the proper solution. That was the scientific and rational ideal of eternity. If they compared this ideal with the doctrines of sectarian religions, they would find that the latter would not stand against the test of science, reason, logic, or philosophy. For that reason, it would not be universal religion, because the

ideal of all scientific researches was to discover the truth and they must know that truth was one whether it was discovered by the scientists, or by the philosophers, or by the spiritual leaders, or by the incarnations of God. They must not separate the truth discovered by science from the truth discovered by Buddha or Christ. Truth was one without a second and that must be the fundamental principle of a universal religion. There were an infinite variety of methods by which this truth could be reached. As two men were not alike, so two methods for reaching at truth would not be the same. They all stood on different wrungs of the ladder of evolution and that which would be helpful to one, might not be helpful to another. Therefore these sectarian religions could not give to all classes of men the ideals they needed. If they could find a universal religion which would embrace all the fundamental principles of sectarian religions and be able to harmonize with science, philosophy and reason, they would accept it and try to follow its teaching and live up to its ideals. Unity in variety was another point on which a universal religion should stand for unity of manifestation. Could they show one sectarian religion which taught this unity in variety? They would not find it in Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, or Buddhism, but it must be the fundamental principle, because it was the plan of nature. There was one life, but in manifestation they saw so many varieties of vegetables, animals, and human beings, through each of which the same life-force was working. Each human being was like an electric lamp. The current was invisible, but when they saw the light, called the effulgence, there was the expression of that invisible current.

Similarly the life-principle was invisible. How could they trace the existence of life? They would trace it by its manifestation, and the first manifestation was the mind. They would find that this ideal of life was not to be found in sectarian religions, but it was described in eternal religion which was nameless and formless, and that was the universal religion, based upon eternal laws which were described only in the earliest hymns of the Rig Veda, which said that each existence was one and men called it by various names. The lecturer wanted them to remember that there was no other religion or scripture where this ideal was emphasized, as it was done by the seers of

Truth and the *Rishis* of ancient India. Again in the Vedas, they would find this ideal of unity in variety. It has been said in the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* that as one fire, entered into the world, appears in various forms of manifestation, so one all-pervading Spirit is manifested in and through the variety of forms that exist in this universe. As one air entering through different holes produces various notes of music, so the one eternal Spirit was producing music of the world by entering into the holes of a human heart. So unity in variety must be the fundamental principle and that religion which was based on this, was called universal religion. It was nameless and yet they could give it a name. It was eternal religion or the highest wisdom, and this was called Vedanta or the highest wisdom in that conception of unity in variety. Then again they would notice that it was not built around any personality. This eternal religion had no founder. Even the ancient *Rishis* referred back to other seers who lived before them. Even Sri Krishna was not the founder of eternal religion. He was only one of its teachers, because he said in the *Gita*: "Those who lived before me, understood and explained it in this way".

This eternal religion would embrace all the other religions of the world, because it had three different phases, namely dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and non-dualistic phases. The dualistic phase of this religion embraced all the monotheistic religions of the world, such as Judaism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, etc. The qualified non-dualistic phase embraced all those who considered that God was a stupendous whole and they were all parts of that all-pervading self, and that He was larger than the solar system and yet He dwells in the hearts of all Whosoever realize him, will attain infinite peace and everlasting bliss. God was smaller than the smallest, otherwise how could He live in an atom. He was also the largest. The same smallest and the largest met at the same point. They might not be able to conceive it. They could not find it expressed in any of their experiences on the sense plane. They had to rise above the sense plane. They had to rise above the sense consciousness in order to realize it.

Religion had two parts, the essential and the non-essential. The essential was one in all religions. The non-essential varied

according to the doctrines and dogmas of different kinds of people which they must discard. The essential part of all religions was self-denial, self-control, self-sacrifice and self-mastery and also the knowledge of Truth. The knowledge of Truth included the highest unselfish love. Whether they followed the path of knowledge or that of devotion, they would reach the same goal. Through devotion they would gain knowledge, and through knowledge they would gain devotion. That was the most beautiful part of Vedanta. Highest love and highest knowledge were the same. They could not love God unless they knew Him, and he who knew God, could not but love Him. There were preachers who knew nothing about religion coming and saying ; "Your religion does not teach love. Our religion teaches toleration, sacrifice and immortal love". Jesus said : "Love thy neighbour as thyself". But the question was raised : "Why should I love my neighbour as myself. Why should I not cut his throat and take everything he has?" None of the Christians would be able to answer the question. The answer was given in the Vedas and let the Christians read the Vedas to find the answer to that question. The Vedas said : "Love thy neighbour as thyself". Why? Because of *tatvamasi* i.e. 'you are thy neighbour in spirit and love is the expression of one-ness? Feel that you are his neighbour and there is no difference between him and you, and the moment you recognize the one-ness, there is the expression of love which you cannot help'. They had noticed in Europe how they had practised love in the late war. They had not loved their neighbours as themselves. Because their civilization was based on selfishness and commercialism which would go to pieces if they loved their neighbours as themselves. They could not live and would have to give up everything. So universal religion must have love and wisdom as its foundation and they must recognize the saying of the Veda 'that thou art myself'. The all-pervading Spirit was everywhere and that idea was emphasised by the later teachers like Sri Krishna who said that wise men see the same Spirit in a well-cultured Brahmin, in an elephant, in a cow and a dog and in a Pariah. They posed themselves as superior to a scavenger. No, he was quite as great as their mighty selves. They had no right to condemn a man if they followed the universal religion which brought unto them equality and love, fraternity

and brotherhood. Love would make everything appear as one. But they could not see that oneness on the external figure, and in order to see it they must go into the bottom of the heart of each individual just as they found the same air in the lungs of men but could not see it from outside.

So they required another eye to see the invisible Spirit which was the Soul of their souls, the Life of their lives and in which they lived, moved and had their being. Jesus said: "I and my father are one" It was not Jesus alone who said that, but each one would have the privilege of saying the same thing and becoming Christ. This was the endeavour of universal religion. Universal religion did not ask them to worship Christ or his person, but to become Christ themselves. Just as Christ spoke in parable, so also Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahamsa who never went to any school, spoke in parables. His originality was unique. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna was the embodiment of universal religion, because he came in this age when there should be harmony among all religions and that when there should be no quarrel or dissension among them. It was this ideal of universal religion that was going to rule the world. Sri Ramakrishna's religion was not Christianity, yet he accepted everything that Christ taught, and regarded him as an incarnation of the Divinity. His religion was not Islam, but the ideal of Islam he followed and he accepted the grand ideals which Buddha gave to the world 500 years before the birth of Christ. They would have to bring down that universal religion of the Vedas which was called eternal religion through the ages. We find the culmination of those ideals as well as personification and embodiment of those truths in the late manifestation of the Divinity in the person of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, and in him they would find a cessation of all sectarian religions that would make them realize the fundamental unity in the essential parts of religion.

So, in universal religion, the monotheistic phase was the most important part. What was the ideal of all religions? They might have been told that the ideal was to go to heaven to enjoy celestial pleasures. But such places did not, in reality, exist. They could manufacture thousands of hells and heavens according to their ideas. Now they were living in an age of reason and science and so they should not believe in all those things.

When they found peace and happiness without envy, jealousy, ambition or pride, they were in heaven, and when they were trying to rob their friends, tell lies, and suffer from the pangs of ambition, greed and lust, they were in hell. So heaven and hell are in the mind of the human beings. However, they could harmonize all the ideas of heaven and hell that existed in the different religions of the world. They were not going to any particular heaven, but were going to reach that state of God-consciousness when they became omnipotent and omniscient and one with God. That religion which enabled them to become one with God, was the best religion whether it was Mohammedanism, Christianity, or Hinduism. It was a disgrace to humanity that one person, or a body of persons, should condemn another religion. It was disgraceful for anyone to take up the task of going round and trying to convert a person belonging to one religion into their religion. On the contrary, they should spread this universal religion and establish harmony among all religions as far as their essential and fundamental points were concerned, leaving aside their doctrines and dogmas, as so many paths leading to the same goal.

Universal religion did not believe in something out of nothing, but believed in evolution and they would not find that idea of evolution in Christianity, Judaism, Mohammedanism, or Zoroastrianism. In the Vedas, it was described that the whole universe had not come out of nothing, but had come out of an eternal Being. If they told people that the sun was created after the earth came into existence and so on, they would be going to eternal perdition. It was time for them to wake up and talk about the common sense that God had given them and which, if properly developed, would become highest wisdom, or Divine sense, or the *Brahmajnana*, which was the goal of the common sense. Both the dualistic phase and the non-dualistic phase embraced all the religions of the world, and, therefore, they found harmony. And then after standing on the platform of universal religion, they might regard Christ as one of the incarnations of the Divinity. They might regard Mohammed as a Prophet of God and likewise regard Buddha and Sree Krishna as the incarnations of God, and thus there was room for all and for those who had come in the past and also are coming in the future. Taking this as the basis of universal

religion they must go abroad all over the world preaching the gospel of Truth, comforting the minds of the foolish and the superstitious and asking them to see the Truth for themselves, which they inherited from their ancient seers and *Rishis* who lived in the past.

Now eternal religion was going to rule men's minds all over the world, because after the late war people had become tired of sectarian religions that one should kill another man instead of loving him. So they wanted a religion which would make them love their neighbours as themselves and be friendly to them, and they were looking up for it. If they could find teachers among them they could send them abroad to teach the Christians about universal religion. Today this idea has been taken up by the Christian Scientists who said that they did not believe in the personality of Christ. They regarded him as impersonal and that was in everyone of them. They had got this idea from eternal religion of Vedanta. They learn this not from the Bible, but from the *Bhagavat Gita*. There was this phase of spiritualism which was gaining ground very fast among the Europeans and the Americans and which had given a death-blow to the orthodox Christianity which taught that the wicked should suffer and could not rise till the day of judgment. But spiritualists had found that they could communicate with the wicked ones, they were perfectly happy and were not in the purgatory. Their death-blow did not strike eternal religion of Vedanta which proclaimed that this world was to be taken as a dream and not as real and that one idea was the absolute eternal existence intelligence and bliss. "Infinite Spirit is Reality. The world is not real and the individual soul is no other than a part of the individual Spirit". This was the fundamental principle of the monotheistic phase of eternal religion. By that they would be able to conquer the sceptical mind of the atheists and the agnostics. Old religions used to say that all those who did not believe in God, were the atheists, but universal religion said that he who did not believe in himself, was an atheist, because God dwelt in him. When he found Brahma, Vishnu and Siva in himself, he found the same in the universe. Just as a self was the creator of the physical body in an individual, so was Brahma the creator of the mental in the universe. The same was the case with regard to Vishnu and

Siva. This universal religion gave them ideas which they would not find in any other scriptures, and when they followed these ideas, they were tending to the same goal. In closing, let me recite a verse from the *Mahimnastotra*, the meaning of which follows: "Oh Lord, as rivers rising from different mountains flow towards one ocean, so all these sectarian religions tend towards the same definite existence of intelligence and bliss and everlasting life."

CHAPTER VII

PHILOSOPHY OF THE VEDANTA SOCIETY

(Delivered in May, 1904 at St. Louis, New York)

Friends and Gentlemen,

In this world of diversities, there remains one unchangeable Reality, and that Reality is Truth and Freedom. Sometimes we find controversies in ascertaining of the truth of the world. But, my friends, I can tell you from my own spiritual experience which I gained through the blessings of my Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, that truth is one and cannot be many. By studying all sciences, philosophies and religions of the world, you will find that truth is one and absolute and only its manifestations are multiform. The absolute Truth is again the Reality of the universe, which is unique and one. This absolute Truth or Reality is known by the names of God, the Absolute, the *Atman*, the Brahman, the Father in Heaven, etc. We know from the sacred sayings of the holy scriptures and also from our spiritual experience that all the created beings of the world are marching towards one God, the eternal Truth or Reality, and in some days or other they will reach God. God is universal and one without the second, but we call Him Allah, Christ, Buddha, or the Brahman. Vedanta says that the absolute Truth or Reality is one, just as the substance water is called by various names by different peoples. In English, you would call it by the term 'water', in Germany they would call it 'wesser'. The attainment of God must be in this life, when we are in flesh and blood.

Our present life, as we know from our everyday experiences, is the result of the past. We make our future by our own thoughts and deeds. What we will do tomorrow, we make it today. So the present is the result of the past, and the future will be the result of the present. If we live a moral life, we will be happy, but if we live a wicked life, we will be punished. God does not punish the guilty or reward the virtuous, but

our works produce results and these results come back to us. We punish ourselves and reward ourselves by the law of action and reaction. But it is a fact that all acts produce results.

There are no such places as heaven and hell. They are very attractive to those who believe in those things, but others would not care for any such conception. We create our own heaven and hell according to our thoughts and deeds. God is not responsible for all this. We have come to this world to fulfil the purpose of life, and we ought to understand what that purpose is. We are not sent, but we have come, because we had a desire to come to fulfil certain desires which can only be fulfilled in this human plane.

It is very difficult for me to give you an idea of the Indian philosophy which I represent in this country (America). It is so vast that it takes a long time to go into detail. In fact, it is the philosophy which solves the problems of life and death. It is the oldest philosophy in the world and not a new one, as it is sometimes improperly called. You have heard about the New Thought Movement in this country. This is nothing new, although it is called under that name. Jesus the Christ said in his teachings: "Ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free". In this teaching, we find two words, 'truth' and 'free'. What is truth and what is freedom? Such questions often arise in our mind and every body tries to explain them in their own ways. But truth is one and the same, though its interpretations are different. Similarly, the same eternal Being is worshipped under various names by different nations, but truth is one and that one truth must be worshipped in spirit and by spirit. A thing which is unreal or untrue, cannot be known as truth. That which is unreal like darkness, is dispelled by the light of truth. It is the Soul or the *Atman* that can be worshipped as truth, because the Soul or *Atman* is eternal.

We do not understand what the soul is, but our religion teaches the method by which we can understand that we are the Soul or Spirit and not the mortal bodies. The identity of the Soul with the body prevails from ignorance, and ignorance of our true Self deludes us. The moment we understand that we are the Soul, we become free from the bondage of flesh and blood of the body. Body is the covering or garment of the

Soul, and so body is not immortal, whereas the Soul is immortal and is free from all kinds of bondage and ignorance. It is the *Atman* or the Brahman which is all-bliss and all-existence.

CHAPTER VIII

UNIVERSAL OUTLOOK OF THE VEDANTIC RELIGION

(*An Address of Welcome*, presented by the Hindu Citizens of Dacca on 21st February, 1922, at Raja Babu's Maidan, Dacca, and the lecture was noted by S. R. Das Gupta, M.A.)

Mr President and the Citizens of Dacca,

I thank you heartily for the warm reception and kind expressions that you have uttered this evening, on this occasion of presenting an 'Address of Welcome' to me. I thank you heartily also for the kindness you have shown towards me on other occasions during my visit to this city. I feel that I have come to the heart of the province of Bengal. This historic city of Dacca has had its past which is glorious. When I think of the people of this city, who have done various kinds of works in literary lines and also in philanthropic lines in the lines of domestic industry and other avocations, I feel proud of myself as being a fellow-citizen of this province of Bengal. I consider it as a great privilege to me to be present at this meeting and to express, the work that I have done in foreign countries for the last twentyfive years. I have spent the best part of my life to spread *Sanatana Dharma* which we have inherited from our ancient *Rishis* and to help humanity irrespective of their caste, creed, and nationality. Through our labours India has been raised in the estimation of the Western people, especially of the American people. Today you find hundreds of young students who are studying in the United States of America, I went there in 1897, and then I was the only one Hindu in the whole Continent, and I had to fight tooth and nail to correct the misrepresentation which were started by the American Missionaries. When these Missionaries return to America from our motherland, they give wrong ideas which are really incorrect. I will give you an illustration of one of the methods of raising funds which are generally adopted by these Christian Missionaries. Really they adopt the method of mis-

representation. I noticed that there were text-books in the Sunday Schools connected with different Churches and in those Sunday School books there were pictures of the Hindu mothers throwing their babies into the Ganges to feed the crocodiles. The mouth of the crocodile was open and the mother was represented as a dark woman throwing a white babe at the mouth of that crocodile, and it was represented as the highest ideal of the Hindu religion. When I first went to America, I was regarded as a heathen i.e. as an uncivilized savage, but through efforts, patience and untiring perseverance, I succeeded in changing the ideas of the American people. I remember the occasion of the Parliament of Religions at Chicago (Dr. Barrows was the President) where our illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda represented the ancient philosophy, religion and culture of India. I remember that Dr Barrows mentioned in one of his discourses that the Hindus had neither morality, nor religion, nor philosophy, and whatever they have today, they had learnt from the Christian Missionaries. But I had to contradict such a statement and I showed the American people that it was not true that the Hindus have learnt what they have today in the lines of religion and philosophy from the Christian Missionaries, but, on the contrary, what the Christian Missionaries regard as the highest philosophy and religion of Jesus the Christ, came from India and that their holy baptism also came from the banks of the Ganges. I showed them that the parables and the teachings of Jesus the Christ were the feeble echo of the teachings of Gautam Buddha, the founder of the great humanitarian religion known as Buddhism. For twenty-five years I have struggled with all my untiring efforts against odds and convinced the people that the philosophy of the Vedas and the *Upanishads* are the highest philosophy of the whole world. The philosophy of the Vedas and the *Upanishads* contains the essence of all religions and holds the key to unlock the doors of wisdom among all nations. I had the good fortune of coming in contact with Professor Max Müller, the translator of the Rig Veda and other vedic literature. I had also the good fortune of meeting Prof. Duessuen of Kiel University who wrote a book on *Philosophy of the Upanishads*. Perhaps you know that Prof. Duessen was the only Sanskrit scholar in Europe, who could speak in Sanskrit. It was he who came to Bombay

many years ago and delivered his address in Sanskrit. But you will be surprised to know that Prof. Max Muller could not understand Sanskrit when I spoke to him in that language. He could read and write well in Sanskrit, but his ears were not trained to the sound of the Sanskrit words, and, therefore, he could not speak in Sanskrit.

My friends, here allow me to mention when I went to America and how I went. Our President has already told you that our illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda, whose name is honoured and revered all over the world as the great patriot-saint of modern India, went to represent philosophy and religion and culture of ancient India at the great Parliament of Religions which was held at Chicago in 1893. He gave his message before that vast congregation which consisted of men of talents from all parts of the world, where gathered the great philosophers from all countries, including China and Japan and other parts of Asia and Europe, and where there were Bishops and Archbishops, monks and giants in literary lines. Before that vast assembly Swami Vivekananda, who never lectured before a public, stood up unprepared at the call of the President of the Parliament of Religions, and with his benign manners and kindly expression, he addressed that vast assembly with the sweet words, "Sisters and Brothers of America". That was a new way of addressing the public in America. Other speakers who went before him, had not addressed the audience with those expressions, and those two loving words touched the hearts of the whole congregation. They cheered and cheered, and that cheer would not stop, and Swami Vivekananda did not know what happened. His mind was confused and he thought that he made the greatest mistake of the day, because other speakers addressed and the audience had not behaved in that way. Sometimes he stood there like a statue and from his lips dropped words of wisdom while he was nearly unconscious of himself and that was his first address. He could not remember what he said and afterwards when the reporters published the report of his speech in the daily papers, the anxiety of his mind was abated. Then he knew that he had not committed any mistake, but they liked the expressions and that he was the hero of the day.

After giving his message before that assembly he was

regarded as a gigantic magnet of the whole congregation and people sat at his feet and listened to the words of wisdom which dropped from his lips with reverence, admiration and astonishment. Afterwards Swami Vivekananda was invited in different parts of the country to deliver his message. For nearly three years he remained there and delivered the message of Vedanta and the wisdom of India before the hungry population of the United States. After spending nearly three years of untiring labour, he was invited to go to England to spread the universal gospel of Truth in that land of coldness, dampness, and fog. Therefore he went there (in England) in 1895 and further in 1896 and stayed there for a while. While staying in England, he sent his request to me and called me to come over and take up the work which he had started. I responded to his affectionate call and went alone, and crossing the different oceans, landed at London in 1896. Giving the charge of his work to me, Swami Vivekananda returned to India and asked me to stay in England and to continue the work which he had started. Therefore I stayed in London for a year and a half and lectured three or four times every week. My first lecture before the public was on the *Philosophy of Panchadashi* in London in a foreign tongue before an English audience, and I continued to do the work as I was directed by my predecessor, Swami Vivekananda. Then at his request I went to New York and started to continue the work which he had also started there. He left only a handful of students in New York, who were eager to continue the study of the Vedanta philosophy of India. They also invited me to go to New York. I started my work in America with this handful of students. I continued to work with the name of my beloved Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and established there a big society, known as the Vedanta Society of New York. It was incorporated and well-organised. After some years Swami Vivekananda returned again to America and lived with me for two months in New York. He saw the work that I was doing and was highly pleased with the extent of my well-organised work. It was through our efforts that the Vedanta Society published many of the Swami's writings and also other works which contained our lectures. We made the Vedanta Society of New York known all over the world. We published the *Gospel of Ramakrishna* and you will be

surprised to hear that the book was afterwards translated into Spanish and Scandinavian languages and also into other languages of Europe. Now the people all over the world are eager to know the truth which was given out by our great Master, Bhagavan Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Sri Ramakrishna gave his new ideal before the world and his ideal is the ideal of eternal and universal religion which I called *Sanatana Dharma*. Swami Vivekananda was the first exponent of that all-embracing ideal in the Western world, and I followed his footstep and kept up the work, and the seed that was planted by Swami Vivekananda, was fostered by our continuous effort and works.

Now I have given you a short outline of all the works which were started in the West during twentyfive years. I travelled London and Paris and New York, and crossed the Atlantic seventeen times, and went to different parts of Europe and delivered the message of Vedanta to different people. Then I crossed the Continent to the United States which is about 32,00 miles wide and crossing back and forth many times, I lectured in the Universities of New York, Chicago, Cornwall California and Toronto. I travelled from Alaska to Mexico and through Canada. I met men like William James of Harvard who was the greatest psychologist, Prof. Lanmann who translated the *Atharva Veda* into English, Prof. Jackson of Columbia University, Prof. Hiram Carson of Cornell University and other great intellectual giants. All of them were my friends. I made them honourary members of our Society of New York and they were glad to bcome connected with our works. We made quite a number of students who were known as the Brahmacharins. We gave such names to them as Sivadas, Ramdas, Haridas, Gurudas, Kalidas, and so on. One of our students Gurudas (who took the name Swami Atulananda) joined our headquarters at Belur Math. We made also Brahmacharinis, who were devout students of Vedanta and were initiated by me and their names were Bhavani, Sankari, Narayani, Satyapriya, and so on. They were proud to be called by such Indian names. They also claimed themselves as Hindus. But, my friends, when they called themselves Hindus, you must not think that their religion was *chhutmarga* and that their religion was confined to the kitchen. But they had a different

by recognizing one and the same Divinity in all. Therefore we have a better method of meeting our friends and strangers by saluting (*namaskara* or *pranama*) as well as by recognizing the Divinity in all. In this way, you will find that our *Sanatana Dharma* teaches that God is all, God is in all and God is all-pervading and even in a Pariah one and the same Divine Spirit dwells all the time. We must recognize that divine Spirit in a Brahmin, in a cow, in a dog, and in a Pariah, and so Sri Krishna has said in the *Bhagavad Gita* that you must recognize the same Divinity in a highly cultured Brahmin, in a cow, in an elephant, in a dog, and in a Pariah whom you sometime regard as a scavenger. You should remember that the socalled scavenger is as great as you are, if not greater. What you cannot do yourself, your scavenger does for you. Therefore he is also greater than you. So regard him as the living God and then you will be able to uplift the down-trodden masses of your society. Because they have the power to regenerate India and to elevate and animate India with their spirit and ideas. Sometime it is found that the higher classes are worse than the lower classes. Because the lower classes have conserved their energies for centuries and if they will let loose that energy, they will move the world.

Do you know how Buddhism was spread all over India? It is found in the history that Buddhism was spread by starting with the lower classes. Do you know how the religion of Chaitanya was spread? It was also spread by starting among the coolies, the malis, and the jeles, and they overran the highest classes afterwards. Do you know how Christianity was spread? We know that Christ had only a handful of fishermen as his disciples who were down-trodden and hated by others, and when Christianity was spread in Rome, the higher classes never put their attention and care to these things. The slaves accepted the religion of Christianity, because they found more freedom in Christianity and afterwards conquered the Emperors and made them disciples and that means Christianity conquered the whole nation of the Western world. The same thing happened in our country, in India. So we must remember that the lower classes are the living gods, nay, the living embodiment of the Lord Narayana. So long as you have treated them with ignominy, the Lord has punished us and we are down-trodden today. Therefore, for propitiating the deity and expiating our sinful acts

as well as the sinful acts of our forefathers, we should now regard the Divine Spirit in all and recognize them as the sacred temples of the almighty Being is the universal and all-embracing religion of Vedanta. Today I am going to preach before you the religion which was started by the *Rishis* of ancient times, who expressed their conviction and also their realization of the eternal Truth in the language which is known as the *devabhasha* i.e. the language of the gods. In the Rigveda, we find a beautiful expression: '*ekam sad vipra vadanti*' ; i.e. 'that which exists, is one, men call it by various names ; that which exists, is one (*ekam sat*)', but it varies in forms and names. In fact, that eternal Truth has many names, but is one.

Today¹ your Dacca city is honeycombed by hundreds of sects whom you regard as *sampradayas*. One is trying to beat the other, and one is trying to condemn another, and some call themselves as the teachers and preachers of *Sanatana Dharma*. But, my friends, the fundamental principle of *Sanatana Dharma*, or the universal religion, is to recognize God is all and God in all, that there is one God, and that one God has many names and forms. We may call him Vishnu, or Siva, or Kali, or Durga, or Brahman, or Allah, or Jehovah, but all are one and the same God. Therefore why do you quarrel? Why do the Vaishnavas call the Saktas by names and drive them into eternal damnation? Is that our religion? No, certainly not. The Vaishnavas are worshipping the same God, whom the Saktas worship. The Hindus are worshipping the same God, whom the Mussulmans are worshipping. So, why do you not recognise the same God under different names, because God is the fundamental principle and the real essence. Our great Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, whose name was mentioned in this 'Address of Welcome' as the *Jugavatara*, was an incarnation of the Divinity. In this cycle (*yuga*), Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna came to establish the harmony of religions that the same God who is worshipped by the Hindus of all sects, is worshipped by the Mahammedans, and also by the Christians. Sri Ramakrishna gave an illustration that as the same substance 'water' is called by some as *pani*, by others as *bari*, by others as *jalam*

¹ Today these numbers are greatly increased.

and in France, they call it *eau*, in Germany, they call it *fisser*, and in England they call it water, but the substance is one and the same. Now, when an Englishman is thirsty, he will ask for that water by calling it in English, but the same water will quench the thirst of a Frenchman, although he does not use the English word, and the same water will quench the thirst of a Hindu who calls it *jalam*, *pani* and *bari*. As water is one and the same, names only vary, so there is only one God, whose names are many, but whose substance is one and the same, and Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna came to prove to the world by his own practices (*sadhana*) and experiences (*anubhuti*). You are familiar with all the spiritual experiences he attained during the time of his spiritual *sadhana*. When once he wanted to know whether through Mohammedanism the same ideal can be reached, he ate like a Mohammedan and dressed like a Mohammedan, and through that method he found that the same ideal can be attained also by *sadhana*, as prescribed in the Vedas. Then through the Christian method he discovered the same ideal. So he emphasised that He who is worshipped by the Christians, by the Mohammedan, by the Vaishnavas and by the other sectarians, is one and the same God. Have we not seen with our own eyes the Christians coming at his feet and worshipping Sri Ramakrishna as their ideal Christ, who is regarded as the Son of the almighty Father? Have we not seen him worshipped by the Mohammedans as their ideal, by the Sikhs as Guru Nanak, by the Vaishnavas as Vishnu, by the Saktas as the Sakti and by the Saivas as the ideal Siva? We have seen a living example of harmony of religions in Sri Ramakrishna, and today we must follow his footsteps and his example and live up to the ideal and then we shall spread this idea of harmony of religions in all parts of the world among all nations.

You know that your forefathers were the first preachers of great religion which inundated the continent of Asia in earlier times and propagated by Buddha, the great founder of Buddhism. You know that Srijanana Dipankar was born in Bajrajogini, and Shilabhadra, a great professor of the Nalanda University, was a native of your land. So it is your duty to take up the banner of Sri Ramakrishna and spread his universal gospel of truth all over the world. I want from among you a dozen of young men who will go to establish centres in Japan,

and in others parts of Europe like Germany and other lands, speaking their language and teaching them the universal religion of Vedanta, which was taught by Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. This is your duty, because religion is our life, religion we speak, religion we dream and in religion we live and have our beings. Politics we do not speak, because politics is the last thing. Our ideal is the attainment of *moksha*. *Moksha* means the spiritual freedom, and you should know that the spiritual freedom includes all other kinds of freedom and even the political freedom, which is a secondary thing. *Moksha* is our ideal, and that ideal we shall hold close to our bosoms and regard it as aim and object of our life, and if any system would interfere with this ideal, we would fight tooth and nail to overcome that obstruction. In fact, *Sanatana Dharma* is the Vedantic *Dharma* which is non-sectarian and universal. The outlook of the Vedantic *Dharma* is broad. This *Sanatana Dharma* teaches that we shall be all united, because unity is the goal of our religion. The Hindus, the Mussulmans, the Parsis and the Christians should be all united for the good of their motherlands. There should be no dissension among different *sampradayas* i.e. sects and communities like the Vaishnavas, the Saktas, and the Saivas, but we should all join our hands and hearts together for the good of our country and people and regard all the Saviours as the incarnations of the Divinity. We should remember that each one of us is a temple of the Almighty and we must recognize that upon the alter of the heart of each individual soul is seated the almighty Being and that almighty Being is to be worshipped in spirit and by spirit: When we have succeeded in recognizing the Divinity among all, then we shall find a solid foundation upon which the structure of unity should be established.

You know that in modern Japan, the ideal of religion is unity and patriotism. You also know that in Japan, there are about sixty millions of people, and these sixty millions of people have one mind. In Bengal, we also have about eighty millions of people and so we have eighty millions of minds. Now, how can you expect to do anything when you cannot hold your heads together and form a company. We have great things to learn from the Europeans, or from the Americans, for their methods of work. The fundamental principle of business

in England and America is honesty. But are you honest in your business? If you are not, study the European characteristics. Go and find in the European shops how they follow the method. Their method is whatever they say, they do, and they mean it. But you say one thing and do a third one and preach a fourth one. But if you go to an European shop, they will tell you plainly that this is so and so as it is written on the label and they mean it, and you pay for it, otherwise you get out. But, my friends, go to your shop, the worst thing is supplied, a false label is put on, the worst thing is presented to you as the best thing and you give the full price and you are cheated, and when you come home, you curse that man and say: 'I shall never go to that shop again'. But I do not say that all the businessmen practise this bad habit. I mean that by that way you cannot live, you cannot raise your country, and you cannot even maintain your independence by dishonest method. So you must be honest in dealing with others; you must be absolutely honest and this honesty you have to learn from the Europeans, because you have lost it and therefore you shall have to gain it again. Instead of imitating their vices, drunkenness, and their gambling in the race-course, you just study their honesty and follow their practice of truthfulness. You should also practise *brahmacharya* i.e. control upon your nature and habit. Go to a European community and there you will find young boys of twentyfive or even thirty and the young women of twentyfive or thirty, who are pure and chaste. So, regain your ideal and educate yourselves with the moral and spiritual laws. That is your religion. You must note that your religion and practical duties in everyday life are one. I have preached for you in the foreign countries that we the Indians eat religion, drink religion, live religion, and sleep religion, and now I have come back to tell you that you must do that, because that is our ideal. It is your duty to take this up, for your religion is not only in the kitchen, but also in the street and in the ponds where you bathe and wash your dirty clothes and wash your utensils and you drink that water. Naturally for dirty water you will have cholera. So you will have to observe all hygienic laws.

Science, logic and philosophy all are one with our religion. We do not separate science, logic and philosophy from religion,

because religion is the whole thing, within which all other subjects are included. In India, we live religion, but in the Christian community, you find religion is only for one day in the Church, because they do not live it and they do not even pretend to live it. Once in a while they come to the Churches and pray for a while and after that their religion is finished. In fact, they live a different kind of life. But as I have said before that we live religion, eat religion, and drink religion. In short, religion is the basis or support of our life. Therefore we should live up to the ideal. The universal ideal of the Vedantic religion, or of *Sanatana Dharma*, teaches us that we should educate our young men and women. And here one thing is to be learnt from the Europeans and specially from the Americans. In America, you will notice that women are most enlightened. The teachers in all the schools are almost women. I have seen that a Deputy Commissioner of Police in New York is a woman. I can tell you, my friends, that a woman has better ability and strength and has better intellect and spirituality than men. If you study their character, you will find that they are more self-controlled and their mind are more concentrated. I will stand up for women under all conditions, because I have seen them and have also learnt from our Master, Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna, that every woman is a representative of the Divine Mother. In Europe and America, you will notice that when men and women are walking together, women are allowed to go first and then men. They do not elbow the women and put them behind as we do here in India. Women are always respected there. If you study the *Manusmriti*, you will find that woman has been described by Manu as holy. Manu has said that a woman should not be struck even with a flower, and one mother is greater than a thousand fathers. But we do not pay our respect and regard to them today. We do not even care to educate them.² Our ideals are Gargi, Maitreyi, Kshana, and others. We have had the Rani of Jhansi who fought against the English during the Mutiny, wearing the uniform of a General, and the English historian did not know whether it was he or she, and did not know that Rani means a woman. So, we have all these beautiful examples in our history.

² The condition of education for women is quite different at present and women are taking education properly.

We should, therefore, follow these ideals, and educate the women, and give them opportunities. It is said in the *Manusamhita* that when a woman sheds her tears, those tears touch the throne of the Almighty and curses of the Lord fall upon those who are the causes of shedding those tears. Therefore, ask the blessings of women and ask them to save you and bless you and forgive you for what you have done in the past, and then your sins will be expiated. Go to the temple of the Divine Mother and say that you have made mistakes and from today you will rectify your errors and will do justice to women. Read my lecture on *Woman's Place in Hindu Religion*³ which I gave in New York. There I pointed out that at the time of creation, man was divided into two halves, one half became male and the other half, female (*Ardha-nariswara*) and that woman had equal rights with man. But where are women today in India? In America, you will find women's votes are equal in this respect with men. This has happened within the last twentyfive years through our teaching there. This should be the ideal. There Christian ideal, as you know, in the Old Testament, was that she was tempted by Satan and ruined man and she brought disaster into the world. But, my friends, we do not consider that story as correct. Our story is better and it is more philosophical, rational and correct. Other nations are receiving ideals from us and are getting glimpses into the *Shastras*, but pity is this that we are not studying them and are not practising even one-hundredth of what we have inherited from our forefathers. It is a disgrace, and this mistake we will correct if we follow the footsteps of our illustrious brother Swami Vivekananda and live up to the ideals of Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna. Now we see that within thirty years after his death, we have spread his ideals all over the world, from Calcutta to the Antipodes. In New York, we have spread the principles of Sri Ramakrishna and he is respected. Now his photograph is worshipped and held as the ideal incarnation of the Divinity. So it is now the high time for you to recognize Sri Ramakrishna as your ideal, and if you do not recognise him as your ideal, you will be the loser. *Sanatana Dharma*, when properly established, will bring freedom to our

³ This lecture has been incorporated in *India and Her People*.

soul, freedom in our community, freedom in our politics, and freedom as represented in the *Shastras* which is the highest ideal of all religions. That freedom is beautifully described in the *Upanishads* of what will happen when that freedom comes. The highest realization of oneness with the Divinity will come at that time and then will also come what is mentioned in this verse which I chant before I conclude:

भिद्यते हृदयग्रन्थिश्छ्रद्धन्ते सर्वशंसयाः ।
क्षीयन्मे चास्य कर्मानि तस्मिन् हृष्टे परावरे ॥

That is, when that realization of the Self or Brahman comes, all doubts will cease for ever, all the knots will be torn asunder, and all the individual souls will transcend the laws of *karma*, and will become absolutely free from all limitations and will enter into the infinite abode of eternal existence, endless bliss and everlasting life.

APPENDIX

VEDANTA AS INTERPRETED BY THE WESTERN SCHOLARS

Prof Max Muller says for all practical purposes that Vedantist would hold that the whole phenomenal world, both in its subjective and objective character, should be accepted as real. It is as real as anything can be to the ordinary mind. It is not mere emptiness as the Buddhists maintain. And thus the Vedanta philosophy leaves to every man a wide sphere of real usefulness and places him under a law as strict as anything can be in this transitory life. It leaves him a deity to worship as omnipotent and majestic as the deities of any other religions. It has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all.

In the Hindu philosophy, John Davis speaks of Kapila's philosophy as the first recorded system of philosophy in the world, and says, "earliest attempt on record to give an answer from reason alone, to the mysterious questions which arise in every thoughtful mind about the origin of the world, the nature and relations of man and his future destiny".

Mr. Devis says in reference to the German philosophy of Schopenhauer and of Hartmann that it is a "reproduction of the philosophic system of Kapila in its materialistic part, presented in a more elaborate form, but on the same fundamental lines. In this respect, the human intellect has gone over the same ground that it occupied more than two thousand years ago ; but on a more important question it has taken a step in retreat. Kapila recognized fully the existence of a soul in man, forming indeed his proper nature, the Absolute of Fichte, distinct from matter, but our latest philosophy both here and in Germany can see in man only a highly developed organization".

Prof. E. W. Hopkins has also contributed some thoughts on Vedanta. He says: "Both Thales and Parmenides were anticipated by the Hindu sages, and the Eclectic School seems to be but a reflexion of the *Upanishads*. The doctrines of Anaxamander and Heraclitus were perhaps not known first in Greece". Similarly Frederic Schlegel writes: "The divine

origin of man, as taught by Vedanta, is continually inculcated to stimulate his efforts to return, to animate him in the struggle and to incite him to consider a reunion and re-incorporation with the Divinity as the one primary object of every action and reaction. Even the loftiest philosophy of the Europeans, the idealism of reason as it is set forth by the Greek philosophers, appears in comparison with the abundant light and vigour of Oriental idealism like a feeble Promethean spark in the full flood of heavenly glory of the noonday sun".

Now band of European, German and French scholars have discussed about the philosophy of Vedanta, and they have tried to throw light upon many of the problems of Vedanta, which can be applied in daily life of man. However, in this connection, it should be remembered that Vedanta is not only a speculative philosophy, but a practical one, and can be applied in human life, and enlighten the human life with Divine lustre. The Vedantic thoughts as taught or interpreted by Sankara and the Sankarites are sublime, and they are the unique production of spiritual India. Those sublime thoughts evolved from the intuitive perception (*aparokshanubhuti*) of the seers of different ages, and have divinized the Indian thoughts which have surpassed all other thoughts and ideas of the world.

VEDANTA TOWARDS RELIGION

v

PREFACE

Vedanta Towards Religion is a collection of seventeen lectures on the study of the philosophical and religious thoughts of India in a comparative way. These lectures were delivered from time to time on various occasions in different philosophical, educational and religious institutions of the United States of America before talented audience from 1907 to 1920. Swami Abhedananda's keen intellect, profound knowledge and scholarship in the systems of philosophy and religion of both East and West as well as his analytic and comparative treatment on the subjects with deep and penetrating insight and intuitive perception have made the lectures or discussions very rich and thoughtful and at the same time very much lucid and appreciative.

Vedanta Towards Religion is a thesis on philosophy and religion, discussed from different angles of vision. It attempts to prove the identity of two orders of reality, the transcendental one and the phenomenal one, and ventures to establish a relation between the theoretical or speculative side and the practical or intuitive side. Swami Abhedananda says that philosophy is flesh and bone, whereas religion is blood and life, and these two things make up the whole of the absolute Truth. In other words, it can be said that philosophy itself is religion, because a synthetic and perfect system of thought invariably reveals the inner core of knowledge or wisdom which exists already in man.

The Swami has made it clear that Vedanta philosophy and Vedantic religion admit the process of evolution, both external and internal—material and spiritual. He views that as the whole universe evolved gradually from the causal to subtle state and from the subtle to gross material state, from the womb of the primordial Energy (*Prakriti*) which is known as the norm or matrix of creation or projection, is also the nature and condition of the human world. Both evolution and involution adopt gradual process. In the human world, we find that the human beings evolve from the causal to the subtle and from the subtle to the gross material planes, and they rise gradually

from the material to the ethical or moral plane, from the moral to the religious plane, and from the religious to the spiritual plane.

In respect of doctrinal point of view, we find also the same evolutionary process when men of most material outlook proceed to the goal of God-realization, first gradually from dualism to qualified non-dualism and from qualified non-dualism to non-dualism or monism. The states of consciousness (*jnana*) or those of Divine revelation (*anubhuti*) involve also the grades of gradual evolution. So we find a close relation between philosophy and higher science, or between religion and science. The eminent scientists like Profs Max Plank, Eddington, Jeans, Whitehead and others are of the opinion that there prevails no conflict between philosophy and science. Prof. A N Whitehead specially appeals to the philosophers to bring together two streams of thought, philosophical and scientific, into a coherent system. He writes in his work, *Science and the Modern World*: "It should be the task of the philosophical schools of the century to bring together the two streams into an expression of the world-picture derived from science, and thereby end the divorce of science from the affirmation of our aesthetic and ethical experiences" Similarly Prof. Max Plank says in his *Where is Science Going*, that science is the complement of religion and therefore, there is no conflict between science and religion. He writes: "There can never be any real opposition between religion and science, for one is the complement of the other". The philosophers like Prof. C E. M. Ioad and Prof Hirsk have given stress upon the idea of bringing science and philosophy into a coherent unity Swami Abhedananda is also very hopeful that in near future there will be perfect wedding between the final conclusion of philosophy and that of modern science Prof. Hirsk has proved in his books, *The Foundations of Metaphysics in Science and Nature, Mind and Modern Science*, that higher science has no conflict with philosophy.

Swami Abhedananda says that everyone in this universe will not be lost, but be saved sooner or later, and each human being has free choice for his spiritual progress and each one is free enough to choose either the path of Yoga, or the path of Bhakti, or the path of Jnana, or the path of Karma, to reach

one and the same goal, the attainment of the immediate knowledge of the Absolute.

In the first chapter the Swami has explained the problems of Vedanta, Theosophy, Spiritualism, Buddhism, New Thought Movement, Psychology, Ethics, etc., and has said by quoting the sayings of the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. "By knowing what, can one know everything of the universe" ('ekasmin vijnane sarva-vijnanam bhavati'). Because the Brahman is the source or fountainhead of all the knowledge of the universe and it is the substratum (*adhishthana*), and so if we realize it (the Brahman) as our own being, we shall realize everything of the world. The Brahman is like the inter-connecting thread of the garland of pearls and it is the base and the goal.

In the second chapter the Swami has called into action the theoretical aspect of philosophy and has instructed us to apply that in our practical life. He has discussed the doctrines of the schools of dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism or monism, and has said that all these schools are the gradual steps towards one and the same Brahman. He has stated: "When one realizes that his body is the temple wherein dwells that Divinity and identifies himself with his body, he says: 'I am nothing, Thou art mine all, Thou art the Creator, I am the creature'. When he sees the Divine image that is within him, he says: 'I am part and parcel of Thee'. And when he sees the Spirit, which is divine and immortal, he says: 'I and my Father are one'. In fact, a man should realize his own essence, the *Atman* or the Brahman.

The third chapter has been dealt with the ideal of Vedanta and its methods of attainment. There the Swami has dealt with both theoretical side, approaching through intellect and reason, and the practical side, laying stress upon the immediate experience of the Absolute. Regarding the speciality of Vedanta, he says: "Vedanta does not go on speculating and speculating, theorising and theorising, like other philosophies, but it starts by taking the present conditions of our life as they are and then shows the way out of it, by removing their cause. The cause of such a slavery is nothing but our ignorance of the Truth". Ignorance (*ajnana*) is no other than the non-knowledge about the absolute knowledge, and realization (*aparokshanubhuti*) means the simultaneous functions of correction of error

from the material to the ethical or moral plane, from the moral to the religious plane, and from the religious to the spiritual plane.

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(*bhranti-apanodana*) and revelation of the Brahman-knowledge (*jnana-prakasha*).

In the fourth chapter Swami Abhedananda has discussed about Vedanta in daily life. In this chapter he has shown the practical applicability of the Vedantic principles and truth in our life. He says that we shall have to live the life of Vedanta, otherwise Vedanta will merely be a means to our intellectual pleasure, and it will not be able to enter into the core of philosophy and also of religion. Swami Vivekananda was a living example of it. He showed the world how a true Karma Yogi works in the spirit of worship of God which is the practical Vedantic principle as well as ideal. As all men are bound to work in this world of activities, so they must disinterestedly work for God and for the people and then selfless work will purify their heart and will take them to the temple of God, the Absolute. The Swami has said that we must be strong in every walk of our life, physical, mental and spiritual. The practice of Raja Yoga helps us in this respect in acquiring this strength. Sri Krishna has emphasised this type of work in the *Gita*, and says that they are misers, who desire for the fruits or results of their works—'*kripanah phala-hetavah*'. So works should be done without the hope of results.

The fifth chapter contains discussions on ethics of Vedanta. The Swami writes that ethics must be the foundation of religion, because perfect morality and highest standard of ethics must be at the root of a true religion. The eternal ethical laws are included in three broad categories like *dharma*, *dana* and *daya*. The foundation of the whole of Indian ethics is based upon these three 'D's—*dharma*, *dana* and *daya*—religion, charity and compassion. 'Charity' involves an element of self-denial, 'compassion' creates sympathy or the same feeling between two minds and 'religion' animates and elevates the mind and turns it into shining power of discrimination (*vichara*) that rejects unreality and accepts reality and thus helps men to realize the *Atman* which is above intellect and reason.

The sixth chapter deals with the true basis of morality. Morality is an ethical quality, and it proceeds from virtuous acts. Judgment helps men in the act of virtue. The Swami has surveyed in this connection the ethical philosophies of different Greek philosophers and other philosophers of the

West. According to Plato, morality or moral fabric is based upon justice, and by justice he meant the State. Plato believed that social ethics govern the sensuous principle, and the social institutions can suppress the lower nature of man. Virtue begins in the State. Aristotle differed from Plato and said that moral element in man, being the outcome of the physical nature, is not purely intellectual. But Socrates regarded moral conduct as the result of rational enlightenment, while Aristotle held that the former proceeds from the latter. Aristotle believed that man is a political animal and so a society can produce a truly human and moral life. The Stoics differed somewhat from Socrates and Aristotle. The Stoics admit the utility and influence of nature upon human mind and so they instructed to follow nature and to live in harmony with nature. They believed that pleasure comes accidentally, and, consequently, whatever action ends in pleasure, cannot be moral. But this morality or moral nature was absolutely denied by the sceptic Epicurians. The Epicurians can be compared to the Charvakas of India to some extent. Like the Charvakas, the Epicurians advised to seek pleasure and avoid pain and to live in this world with material pleasure.

In the Middle Ages, there evolved the scholastic thought of morality in Europe, and the ecclesiastical authorities had to face many difficulties for propagating their ethical thoughts among the people. Then came the reformation in the 16th century and the philosophers arose in different parts of Europe to discuss afresh various problems of moral law, soul and God. But all these things ended in the sceptical and nihilistic doctrines of David Hume. Immanuel Kant appeared in Germany and aroused the philosophy of Hume from dogmatic slumber. Kant said that moral law is not a hypothetical imperative that promulgates that such and such means will end in such and such results, it is rather a *categorical imperative* and originates in pure reason "which is autonomous, one and universal". Kant rejected both utilitarian morality and theological morality, because utilitarian morality is conditioned by the objects of desire and theological morality depends upon punishment and reward that proceed from a personal God. According to Kant, reason is the highest interpreter of the Bible as well as the foundation of an ethical religion that lay in the heart of all

human beings. The post-Kantian philosophers like Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and others followed Kant, but also developed the system of moral philosophy in their own special ways. Afterwards Schopenhauer came and taught that "all our actions proceed from certain motives which can be known as desire to further well-being and desire to cause will. He divided each human action into four classes, malice, egoism, compassion and asceticism. The first two motives are called as will-to-live or affirmation of will, and the last two motives are called as denial of will. Schopenhauer said that denial of will-to-live is the true basis of morality, which brings happiness and freedom unto men. Schopenhauer's great disciple Dr. Paul Deussen loved much the ideas and ideal of the *Upanishads* of India and said in his book on *Metaphysics* that the highest ideal of the Christian morality was preached by the *Upanishad* which maintains the recognition of oneness of the individual soul with the universal Soul.

The seventh chapter deals with Vedanta towards religion. Swami Abhedananda says in this chapter that the theoretical side of religion is philosophy and religion is the practical side of philosophy. "Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower, while religion is the fruit." So it is understood that the Vedanta philosophy is intimately connected with its practical aspect which is religion. Religion is realization itself, or it can be said that religion is realization of the Absolute.

Now the aspect of religion, says Swami Abhedananda, can be divided into several categories like vedantic religion, universal religion, scientific religion, personal religion, speculative religion, anthropological religion, natural religion, primitive religion, symbolic religion, sectarian or non-sectarian religion, mystical religion, etc. The religion of Vedanta, or the Vedantic religion, is like a huge structure of a palacial building containing many stories or floors—(1) the first storey or floor is monotheistic. The monotheistic Vedantic religion believes in a personal God with manifold qualities; (2) the second storey or floor is ritualistic, ceremonialistic, or symbolic. In this aspect, God is personal and impersonal and beyond both. God assumes many names and forms for the satisfaction of the devotees. He is both the Father and the Mother—both of masculine character and of feminine character, and again He

transcends both the ideas of sex ; (3) the third storey or floor is meant for those who go beyond all relativity. But it should be remembered that these divisions of the Vedantic religion are merely conceptual and not real. It is, in truth, universal, undivided, and one. And true religion is absolutely concerned with the knowledge of the Absolute, now, true religion is itself the Absolute.

Swami Abhedananda is of the opinion that religion of Vedanta is inseparable from science and philosophy, because science and philosophy are nothing but so many attempts of the human efforts to grasp some particular facts and truths and also an appreciation of one and the same eternal Truth, which is known as the infinite Reality. Further, this Vedantic religion recognizes the spiritual growth or evolution in the path of realization. So we should know the true character and highest purpose of Vedantic religion. We must realize universal religion of Vedanta which says that God is seen, or the absolute Brahman is immediately known or given to our intuitive knowledge, when our minds are sufficiently purified and tranquil and are consequently transformed into pure consciousness or *chit*.

The eighth chapter deals with the intrinsic characters of both religion and Vedanta. The intimate relation between religion and Vedanta has already been discussed before. Swami Abhedananda says that religion is a spontaneous outgrowth of spiritual nature of the human beings. The unity in variety is the aim of true religion, and this aim of true religion has been discovered by the sages of India through their supersensible ecstatic vision. Three phases of religion, dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and non-dualistic or monistic are the gradual steps towards Divine realization of the Absolute. There are also other spiritual practices like Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga. These Yogas or the Yogic practices are the *alternative* paths to reach one and the same goal, the Divine realization. Sri Ramakrishna is also in favour of these *alternative* methods of *sadhana*, though in the ultimate analysis these methods or spiritual paths lead to the absolute Truth which is all-inclusive and universal.

Swami Abhedananda writes that true and nonsectarian religion is not a mere structure of creeds and doctrines and faiths, but is a living and driving force that brings out all the

manifold *sadhanas* or experiences into a coherent system and brings the feeling of intense love for all humanity and for all creatures and establishes eternal peace and harmony on earth. The sectarian religion, on the other hand, brings divisions among the upholders of different faiths, laying stress upon mythology, rituals, and doctrines. But it should be remembered that religion transforms our individual self into universal cosmic Self and gives an integral feeling of the Absolute. Dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism (*dvaita*, *vishistadvaita* and *advaita*)—all these *alternative sadhanas* lead us to one and the same Godconsciousness. These are like so many rivers flowing towards different directions, but fall at last in the same unfathomed ocean.

The ninth chapter deals with theory and practice of Vedantic religion. The universal religion includes both theory and practice, and Swami Abhedananda says: “The theoretical part of Vedanta is known as ‘philosophy’, but when philosophy is put into practice, it becomes religion of Vedanta”. The Vedanta philosophy also believes in the theory of evolution which has been accepted by modern science. Sometimes it is wrongly believed that Vedanta has borrowed this idea of evolution from science. But that is not correct, as in the *Upanishad* and in the *Samkhya* philosophy of Kapila, the systematic treatment on the theory of evolution has been beautifully recorded. Vedanta has stated that though phenomena evolved in the way of gradual process, yet it evolved from one infinite substance which appears as both mind and matter, as subject and object. The practice is commonly considered as superior to theory, but theory is also an essential part of practice. “Practice means”, says the Swami, “a striving with one’s whole mind and energy, sense and sensibility, to realize the ideal in question.” The God-vision or Godconsciousness is that ideal. So we should strive hard for attaining that ideal and should know that mere intellectual apprehension is meaningless until and unless we realize that Divine ideal as the be-all and end-all of our life.

The tenth chapter treats with the subject on evolution and religion. The Swami says in the outset: “Although in the eighteenth century Kant and Laplace attempted for the first time to intrude into the mystery of creation in the light of Newtonian laws and sought to trace out the beginning of

the world from the vast mass of nebulous matter, although Laplace tried to explain the mechanical formation and separation of different planets by the help of his nebular hypothesis, yet the theory of evolution hardly received any comprehensive scientific treatment before Darwin and Haeckel". The planetary systems, the sun, the moon, the stars, together with other heavenly and cosmic bodies are subject to change of evolution and involution. The basic material of the universe also changes into various phases of transformation, such as, liquid, gaseous, and solid, before a planet or a cosmic body becomes inhabitable either for vegetable, or for animals, and origin and growth of all human beings were possible step by step. The earliest scientist and philosopher Kapila was the father of the evolution theory in India. The Greek philosophers and the neo-Platonists are likely to be influenced by the ideas of the *Samkhya* school. Plato knew in his life some of these Indian philosophers. And from these it appears that there was a link of ideas of philosophy and science regarding the theory of evolution among all the nations of the East, the Middle and Far East and the West. However, the wheel of evolution is rotating from very ancient time and will continue through the endless eternity to maintain an order and a law in this cosmic world. But the supreme Being, the absolute Brahman, is free from this wheel of evolution, because if we admit evolution of the absolute Brahman, then we shall limit it by the categories of time and space and that means we shall reduce the transcending Brahman into a non-eternal and temporal substance. But that is impossible, because though the absolute Brahman is regarded as the fountainhead of all things of the universe yet, in reality, it is the causeless and groundless Brahman. Vedanta further says that from which everything of the universe originates, on which everything is sustained and in which everything rests after dissolution, know it as the Brahman. But the categories of cause and ground are imposed on the Brahman only for explaining the work of creation or projection, which is not, in reality, real. The indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman neither becomes the cause, nor the ground, and it is the determinate (*saguna*) Brahman, *Isvara* who assumes the forms of cause and ground. However, the Brahman is the eternal source of peace and happiness and so it should be

sought for and be attained for unfastening the fetters of false-knowledge or ignorance (*mithya-pratyaya* or *ajnana*), because when the false-knowledge or ignorance is removed, the self-revealing eternal Brahman is realized.

The eleventh chapter deals with the necessity of religion. Swami Abhedananda writes that material prosperity is the cry of the day and commercial motive moves mankind. The moral and spiritual elements of the human nature are submerged and the brute force seems to have got the upperhand in the universe. So mankind in general is hopelessly wandering through the world without any aim and object. So it wants some guidance and that guidance is religion, which is not merely a set of doctrines and dogmas, but the realization of the immortal *Atman*.

Religion, which is limited by sectarian ideas and beliefs and is guided by blind faith, is not religion at all. Swami Abhedananda says that world needs today a religion which will make us forgetful of the fighting ages that are gone by, will make us forgetful our narrow individuality and small interests, and which will help us to perceive the Infinite Being. In fact, we should follow a large and universal ideal which will guide our vision and will lead us to the royal road to the Infinite Being. We should intensify our longing and love for the absolute Truth, because that kind of longing and love will lead us to the freedom of the soul and also the freedom from all bondages. It should be remembered that the necessity of true religion widens the limitation of the mind and thus prepares the ground for receiving the divine flash of the absolute Brahman.

The twelfth chapter deals with the aim of true religion. The nature of true religion has already been explained. Swami Abhedananda has historically and beautifully dealt in this chapter the aims and ideals of different religions of different nations. He has specially described about the ideals of the English Churches, and has said: "As, in the Middle Ages, the aim of Catholic clergy was to convert the heathens into the Christian faith and to punish the heretics by torture and persecution, so even today we find the same spirit of fanaticism goading on many of the Missionaries who do not hesitate to commit similar inhuman crimes in non-Christian lands in

the name of their religion". The pages of religious history are likewise filled with such horror of persecutions, massacres, and all sorts of diabolical crimes committed by the priests and fanatics of different nations for establishing the creeds, the rituals, and the ceremonies of their own religions. So these are not the works of the followers of true religion which knows no enmity, sectarianism and selfish interest. "True religion", says Swami Abhedananda, "does not consist in following a creed, or in believing in dogmas, doctrines, or spiritual writings, nor does it consist in holding aloft the banner of a particular Prophet and by joining a sect, or a denomination, but its aim is to lift the individual souls above the limitations of the senses and to bring it in communion with the Infinite." Therefore aim and object of true religion are the realization of the absolute Being which shines supreme in its own undying and surpassing glory.

The thirteenth chapter deals with unity in variety of religions. The Swami raises the question: "Where is the harmony? How can we find peace? Harmony and peace will come only by seeing the unity in variety of religions, but where is that unity?" In truth, we do not find this unity or harmony in the scriptures, nor in doctrines and dogmas, nor in the lives of the founders of many religious faiths, but in the highest ideal of all religions and also in worshipping the *Atman* in the core of our heart, which is the living sanctuary of God the Absolute.

The fourteenth chapter contains universality of Vedantic religion. Swami Abhedananda says that the word 'Vedanta' conveys the idea of the ultimate goal reached by all relative knowledge. The relative knowledge means the knowledge related to the phenomenal objects or the sense objects. According to strict logic, the phenomenal or relative knowledge is not a true kind of knowledge, and the knowledge of the absolute Brahman is the real knowledge. Swami Abhedananda has clarified elsewhere that in knowledge of the chair and in knowledge of the Brahman, knowledge is one and the same, whereas the contents, the chair and the Brahman only differ. In his book, *Divine Heritage of Man*, he has said that the common sense is the Divine sense. In his lecture on *Unity and Harmony*, he has also said: "We should use our judgment, because

common sense is the best sense which the Lord has given us. This common sense will develop into Divine sense if we protect it from being crushed by the weight of ignorance and superstition." In fact, the self-luminosity or the self-revealing nature is inherent in every kind or every piece of knowledge, and this self-revealing nature is an abiding essence of the absolute Brahman, as it is neither an attribute (*guna*), nor an adjunct (*upadhi*), of the Absolute. So when we are immediately aware of the Brahman-knowledge, the intrinsic nature of all kinds of knowledge whether phenomenal, or intellectual, or intuitional, or scientific, are known or revealed, and so the *Upanishad* or Vedanta says: "*ekashmin vijnane sarvamidam vijnanam bhavati*". And now it will not be difficult to understand why Swami Abhedananda has said: "The idea is that the 'end of wisdom' means the goal which is reached by all relative knowledge, by all knowledge which proceeds from the phenomenal world, or from our sense-perception." Further, the Swami says: "Where is that wisdom? ** Is it outside our bodies? No, it pervades the whole universe. It is in outside, as also is in inside. It is everywhere. We have wisdom in our souls. In fact, our souls are but the manifestations of that infinite wisdom which is the foundation and end of all phenomenal existences."

Now, from this we can get an idea of universality of Vendantic religion. The Swami has further raised here the questions of those doctrines of dualism, qualified non-dualism and non-dualism or monism, and has said that these are the *alternative* methods to reach at one and the same Truth. The limiting categories of time, space and causation create obstruction in the path of Divine realization, but when the knowledge of the Absolute is attained, those categories are removed and this removal of the categories or *maya* means the correction of error.

The fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth chapters deal with universal religion of Vedanta, science of universal religion, and ideal of universal religion. These three lectures on universal religion and Vedanta were delivered on different occasions. Swami Abhedananda says that the Brahman is both material and efficient cause (*upadana* and *nimitta karana*) of the universe. It is also the ground or substratum (*adhishthana*) of the world. But from the strict non-dualistic standpoint of Vedanta the

determinate (*saguna*) Brahman may be recognized as the cause and ground of the universe, but the absolute indeterminate (*nirguna*) Brahman is neither the cause, nor the ground, being absolutely raised above all kinds of category or adjunct.

Our individual self (*jivatman*) is enchain'd with the fetters of *maya*, and it always struggles to get away of this bondage, and this struggle is known as the spiritual *sadhana*, and when the self comes to know its real condition of bondage, it regains its power and cuts asunder the chain of slavery and attains to knowledge of the *Atman*.

The eighteenth chapter contains steps towards realization Swami Abhedananda says that realization of the Absolute is described in Vedanta as the highest ideal of earthly existence as well as the final goal of all religions. If there be a beginning, there must be an end, because eternal marching towards an unknown destination is meaningless. So knowingly or unknowingly, each individual soul is striving for attaining to perfection where absolute peace and happiness reign supreme. Now it can be asked as to how an individual one attains realization. To this the Swami says that there are some steps towards the path of realization and they are the means awakening in the soul, dispassion, purification of heart, right discrimination, non-attachment, etc. There are seven tentative steps or stages in the progress to realization. In the seventh stage, spiritual illumination comes and a sincere man attains to *samadhi* or Nirvana which is no other than Godconsciousness.

The nineteenth chapter contains the discussion on Divine realization which is the ultimate goal of all human beings. Swami Abhedananda writes: "Being and becoming divine are the meaning of realization", and this realization can be attained in this life and not after the grave. A realized man feels the presence of Divinity within him and simultaneously in all living creatures. The realized man communes with the Divine Being and ultimately becomes one with it.

Two appendices have been added which deal with the Vedantic Truth and Unity and Harmony. The first lecture was delivered in the University of California in September 6, 1906. In conclusion, the Swami says that the fundamental principle of Vedanta is absolute oneness. The Thing-in-itself is a pure assumption of Kant, a superficiality is not in any way

justified by Kant's own data and so the successors of Kant were forced to reject the Kantian Absolute and set up rationalism as opposed to transcendentalism. In fact, Kant's Absolute is separated from the plane of experience, whereas the Vedantic Absolute is founded upon an immediate experience of the Absolute, or in the recognition of the forgotten Truth. Vedanta gives a rational formation to religion which harmonizes with the latest conclusions of modern science and philosophy.

The second one, Unity and Harmony, delivered on 18th March, 1915 in the Hindu Temple in San Francisco, California, U.S.A. The lecture, unity and harmony, was delivered after the untimely death of Swami Trigunatitananda, when there were party feelings and inharmony among the students of Vendanta in the Hindu Temple in San Francisco. Swami Abhedananda was lecturing at that time in Los Angeles in South California. The Swami tried to bring a spirit of amity and brotherly feeling among all the members of the Hindu Temple and also among all men of the world who cannot find out a solution to solve all the inharmonies and discords among them. Swami Abhedananda said that universal outlook and universal love are only things which can bring unity and harmony in this world.

SWAMI PRAJNANANANDA

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CHAPTER I

THE VEDANTA PHILOSOPHY

Since the year 1893, when our illustrious brother, Swami Vivekananda, delivered his address on the Vedanta philosophy before the Parliament of Religions at the World's Fair in Chicago, a genuine interest had been created in the minds of the people of this country to make a careful study of philosophy and religion of ancient India. Since that time many of the wrong impressions and erroneous notions have been removed from the minds of the Western people by the writings of the Swami and such able scholars as the late Prof. Max Muller, Deussen and others. But the majority of those who have not studied such writings, often ask such questions: "What is Vedanta? Is it the same as Theosophy? Is it Spiritualism? Is it Buddhism? Or is it the same as the New Thought Movement which makes the healing of diseases the highest end of life?"

Before we discuss the difference between Vedanta and Theosophy or Spiritualism or Buddhism or the New Thought Movement, we should understand clearly the fundamental principles of the most ancient and most sublime philosophy that has ever been given to the world. We should remember that the word 'Vedanta' means the 'end of wisdom'. By this we do not however dogmatize that there is such a thing as the 'end of wisdom'. We simply mean by Vedanta that wisdom which includes all the different phases of knowledge gathered by studying nature and various branches of philosophy, psychology, etc., which include all the partial knowledge. In ancient times a disciple asked his spiritual master. "By knowing what, can one know everything of this universe?" The seer of Truth answered: "By knowing the Brahman, the eternal infinite Being which is the source of all powers that are manifested in this phenomenal universe, one can know everything." Knowing that Brahman alone, one ceases to search after anything higher or greater. That infinite source of all powers, all sciences, all philosophies, and all beauty and love, is the goal of all religions.

and philosophies. Therefore, the highest ideal of the Vedanta philosophy is to lead the human mind to the realization of that eternal One, which is the ground of the world. By knowing that eternal Truth alone, one can know everything, by understanding that eternal One, everything is understood. The highest conception of that absolute One has been expressed most beautifully in the Rig Veda, the most ancient scripture in the world. The Rig Veda says "That which exists, is one, men call it by various names". That infinite Absolute, or the eternal One which is nameless, formless, is the foundation of this Vedanta philosophy. That One has appeared as manifold through the manifestations of various powers which exist potentially in this source of all things and all beings. Therefore, unity in variety is the fundamental principle of the Vedanta philosophy. We must strive to see oneness which underlies the diversified phenomena of the universe. Our aim should be to unify all these different manifestations into that one absolute Being and to make so many phenomena into one undivided mass of Reality.

The Vedanta philosophy does not teach that this world has been created by some extra-cosmic Being, who sits outside the universe and acts from the heaven and moulds matter by being outside of matter, but, on the contrary, the Vedanta philosophy teaches that this whole universe is nothing but the expression or manifestation of all the powers that are latent or existent potentially in that absolute Being. But truly speaking, God of Vedanta is not an extra-cosmic Being; He is not a personal God with a certain form as that of a human being with two hands, sitting on a throne etc., as we find in the Christian conception of God, but God of Vedanta is immanent and resident in nature. He dwells in nature. He dwells in us and in each individual soul. He is personal, impersonal, and beyond both. He appears as personal to one who believes in a personal God. He appears as personal to the dualists. He appears impersonal to one who has risen above that state of dualism and has unfolded that spiritual sight by which He can see the presence of Divinity in every living and inanimate objects of the universe. But there is still higher conception of that Being. And it is the absolute oneness of spirit, which is the Reality of the universe. Jesus the Christ realized

similar to the doctrine of reincarnation. We do not lose our identity after death. We do not lose our individuality, but our future becomes the resultant of our present, just as much as our present is the resultant of our past. We mould our own destiny. We create our own future by our thoughts, words and deeds. Bound by the inexorable law of *karma*, or the law of causation, as it is called by modern scientists, each soul is passing through various stages of evolution and manifesting those powers that are potential within itself. By passing through these different stages, we gradually rise higher and higher until the purpose of life is fulfilled, until the goal, the end of wisdom, is reached.

The Vedanta philosophy does not say that a soul is born a sinner, but on the contrary, it teaches that each soul is a child of the immortal Bliss. One of the ancient seers, after realizing that eternal Being, said in a thundering voice before the world. "Oh, ye children of the immortal Bliss! listen to me, I have discovered the eternal Truth, and by knowing that alone one can cross the ocean of life."⁴ The Vedanta philosophy teaches that sin is nothing but selfishness, and that selfishness is caused by the ignorance of our true Divine nature. The moment we realize that we are divine and are one with the universal Spirit, we rise above the sense plane and all phenomenal appearances, and then all attachment to petty things and all attraction to the objects of senses, absolutely vanish. When we come to realize that we are one with our friends and foes, there is no one in the world who can be called enemy or foe, but all are friends. All are one in spirit and that realization of oneness is called love, the Divine love. When Jesus the Christ said: "Love thy neighbour as thyself," he did not say why. But why should we love our neighbours as ourselves? Christ did not explain it. But if they are not already one with our true selves, why should we love them? The explanation of this aphorism is to be found in the Vedas. In the Vedas we find the explanation in one short sentence: *tat twam asi*, i.e. Thou art That." Because we are our neighbours in spirit, we cannot but love our neighbours, we are forced by nature to love neighbours as ourselves—we cannot separate the Self of our neighbour from

⁴ *Svetasvatara Upanishad*, Ch II 5, III 8

our Self. We must not love our neighbours on account of their good works, not on account of their meritorious deeds, not on account of something they have done for our benefit or for our good, but because of that internal oneness (oneness in spirit) which can never be broken by anything in this phenomenal world.

The Vedanta philosophy is based entirely upon the doctrine of evolution. Standing on that firm rock of evolution, it tries to establish a religion which harmonizes with ultimate conclusions of modern science and philosophy, and which applies the rules of logic in its search after Truth. One characteristic mark in Vedanta is that it never separates religion from philosophy, science and logic. Vedanta rather says that which is illogical, unscientific and unphilosophical, cannot be religious. It accepts the supremacy of reason and follows the rules of logic, and, therefore, it is perfectly scientific. By making reason as the supreme guide in search after truth it makes its foundation scientific. A study becomes scientific when you make reason your supreme guide and when follow the rules of logic. Vedanta teaches what is illogical, unscientific, unphilosophical, cannot be religious, because the object of philosophy, science etc is to discover truth, and religion teaches us how to live a life that will harmonize with the truth that has been discovered by science and philosophy. Philosophy is the practical side of religion and religion is the life and spirit of philosophy. Philosophy is the flesh and religion is the blood. In India, these two are one. A philosopher is a spiritual man in India. He is not sitting in a corner, but is practising what he has learnt. A spiritual man in India necessarily becomes a philosopher, because philosophy and true spirituality are inseparable. If a religion cannot teach us the true nature of the soul, its beginning and destiny, if it does not enlighten us with the knowledge of that one eternal Truth, then it is not worthy of its name. Therefore religion, according to Vedanta, is not a belief in a particular set of dogmas, or in any creed, but is the science of the soul. It teaches us who we are, what we are, what we were before this body came into existence and what we shall be after the dissolution of this body. It also teaches us what relation this soul bears to the absolute Being. It tells us that the soul existed before the birth of the body,

because it is immortal. By immortality we do not mean that it has beginning on one side and endlessness on the other, as Christian theology teaches. We say that which has a beginning, must have an end. If the soul was created by any being, then that soul must have an end, consequently, that cannot be immortal. If you once admit the birth of the soul, then you will have to admit the death of the soul. Therefore, the Vedanta philosophy tells us that the soul has neither beginning nor end. It is eternal like the divine Being itself. The Vedanta philosophy tells us that this soul has passed through the lower stages of evolution. The lower animals have souls, but they are not so well-developed at present. By the process of evolution they will go on to the higher stages, will become human beings, and go on with the evolution until perfection is reached.

What is meant by perfection? By perfection we mean the realization of our own true nature, rising above all that is included in the word selfishness, having knowledge of everything, mastery over nature, mastery over the senses, over the body, over the mind, and attaining perfect freedom and God-consciousness. That is, what we mean by perfection, is the attainment of perfect freedom and Godconsciousness. Each individual soul is divine, but very few of us have realized it. The moment we realize it, we become Divine. The difference between a great spiritual leader like Jesus the Christ and an ordinary man is in degree of realization and not in kind. An ordinary man who lives like an animal, becomes divine the moment he realizes the Divinity in himself. Then he will cease to be selfish, or his acts will proceed not out of selfish motives, but for the good of the world. He will say the same as Jesus said. "Whatever is *mine* is *thine* and whatever is *thine* is *mine*." *I, me, mine* would become one with *thou, thee, thine*. The Vedanta philosophy tells us the methods by which that can be attained.

Like modern science, the Vedanta philosophy is not built around any particular personality, nor does it depend on any authority of any person, ancient or modern, nor does it depend upon any book. On the contrary, it includes all the teachings of all spiritual leaders who lived in different parts of the earth in different times, and those who came after them or will come in future, because it includes all the ultimate truths.

that have been discovered by the greatest thinkers, scientists, and philosophers, irrespective of caste, creed, or nationality. In short, the Vedanta philosophy has room for almost every religion, nay, it includes them all, as Professor Max Muller has said

This Vedanta philosophy tells us how Godconsciousness is to be realized. It gives us different methods. The method of love and devotion is called Bhakti Yoga, the method of good works is called Karma Yoga, the method of wisdom or discrimination is called Jnana Yoga, and the method of concentration and meditation is called Raja Yoga. The term Yoga is a Sānskrit word which means 'the path or method by which Godconsciousness can be attained, by which knowledge of Truth can be acquired'. Each of these methods is good, and one is just as good as the other. One may have a devotional nature, and for that person the path of devotion and love would be the best. One who is emotional, need not destroy one's emotion in order to become spiritual, but through emotion that highest end of life can be obtained. We must not destroy anything which we possess now, but we should direct our powers and feelings towards the highest ideal. This is the secret of devotion. If you do any work, you must know the secret of work. What is the secret of work? The secret of work lies in doing work and having no motive. It may seem to you absolutely impossible. How can a person work without any motive? By motive I mean the selfish motive? "To work you have the right, but not to the fruits thereof."⁵ Work constantly without seeking the result of work. Do your duty with love, and then leave the results to the care of them. Do not worry about results, but work. Go on working constantly and in this way you will find that all the obstructions of your mind will be washed away or cleaned off, and this kind of work will be the means of knowing the Supreme which is dwelling within. This path is called Karma Yoga or the path through unselfish work. The path through discrimination is the path through analysis of your own nature. Analyze your nature. Seek to know whether you are a spiritual or a material being, whether you are the result of some force

⁵ Cf. *the Bhagavad Gita*, Ch II, 47.

merely, or whether you are something higher than matter or something better than blind force. Discriminate, have right knowledge, have right understanding of yourself and with that right knowledge and right understanding, you will reach the highest goal and fulfil the purpose of life. This was expressed by the Delphic Oracle to Socrates when he asked: "What is the highest wisdom?" He got the answer: "Know thyself." If you can know your true Self, you will know God, you will know the true nature of the universe, you will know whether there is such a thing as soul, whether there is such a thing as divine Spirit or not. So, this path of discrimination leads to the same goal. Then there is another path through concentration and meditation. By concentrating your mind upon your Divine nature, which is dwelling within you, which is not outside of you and which is inseparable from yourself, you will gain the knowledge, and will get that light which can illumine the dark corners of your mind, and fill it with Divine light. That path is called the path of Raja Yoga, or the methods of concentration and meditation. All these paths or methods lead to the same goal. There is nothing mysterious and occult in these teachings. Some people call it mysticism, but it is not mysticism. It does not make anything mysterious, cloudy or hazy. On the contrary, it makes everything clear and distinct. And as it does neither teach mysticism nor occultism, nor does it depend upon the sayings of some invisible *Mahatmans* or imaginary being, it differs from the teachings of Theosophy. The Theosophists have almost all the principles of their study from the Vedanta philosophy, but it is mixed up with occultism, psychicism and all kinds of psychic phenomena. It is no longer simple and pure, consequently, it differs entirely from the Vedanta philosophy.

The Vedanta philosophy is not the same as Spiritualism, because although it believes in the existence of departed souls, it does not tell us to go to these departed spirits for enlightenment or true knowledge of our Divine nature. These souls, who are supposed to communicate with the living beings, are called the earth-bound spirits. They are mostly ignorant. They do not know themselves, so, how can they teach others? Modern Spiritualism is another name for ancient Ancestor-worship. It is just the same, it does not go far enough. It has its place in the

path of the investigations of truth, but it cannot help us in any way to the knowledge of our true or Divine nature. It may satisfy the curiosity of those who seek to know whether there is such a thing as a living soul after death and there it stops, but cannot illumine us with the beatific light of the *Atman*.

The Vedanta philosophy is not the same as Christian Science, because it does not make healing diseases as the highest standard of spirituality. Vedanta does not deny the existence of matter as the Christian Scientists do. One can cure diseases and heal the sick without being spiritual at all, but the Christian Scientists believe that one cannot cure diseases or heal the sick without spirituality. I have seen cases in India where power would cure diseases, but it does not possess this psychic power, and some of us are again born with highly developed psychic power. Those who are not born with it, can develop it if they wish. But that has nothing to do with spiritual light or true spirituality. I saw a Mohammedan Fakir who had wonderful power of curing diseases, simply by a single word, or by blowing over a glass of water and telling the patient to drink that water, or by giving some mental treatment, but he was neither a spiritual man, nor a believer in Christ. You know the Mohammedans do not believe in Christ as the Saviour of the humanity. There are many such instances which I can quote, and these instances show that one can cure disease and heal the sick without being spiritual at all. So the Vedanta philosophy tells us that curing disease cannot be a high standard of spirituality, but healing the soul of the ignorant is the highest ideal. Therefore, heal only the sick souls that do not know their true nature. If one understands the principles of life and lives a life harmonizing these principles with the actions of life, then he will not be sick and will go on with a pure body and a pure mind. Much of our sickness comes from the violation of the laws that govern our life. We violate those laws, because we do not understand them, and this violation brings uneasiness to our health. The moment we come to know them, we cease to violate them, consequently, we live a life with a healthy body and mind, and at the same time we unfold the spiritual powers that are already latent in our soul.

The Vedanta philosophy gives a logical foundation to ethics. I have already said the logical explanation of 'love thy

neighbour as thyself' and it is to be found in the Vedanta philosophy. And there must be a logical explanation, otherwise they will say: "Let us eat, drink and be merry, and let us help ourselves without helping others" What are you going to do with such a person? Can you convince such a person that there is a rational foundation of ethics and morality, if you do not go to the very bottom of your soul and try to establish ethics upon that basis?

The Vedanta philosophy gives a foundation also for a universal religion which is nameless and formless and is without any creed, and without any belief in heaven or hell. The Vedanta philosophy believes that all religions are like so many paths that lead to the same goal. There runs a passage: "O Lord, as rivers rising from different mountains run through different paths towards that one ocean, so all these various sects and religious creeds rising from different points of view run through different ways towards Thee, the infinite source of existence, intelligence and bliss"¹. The same idea has again been expressed by Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita* when he says: "Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him. All men are struggling in the paths which ultimately lead to Me, the Eternal."² So Vedanta does not know caste, creed and colour, it is universal and all-embracing philosophy and at the same time religion; it is both theoretical and practical. The ideal of Vedanta is to enrich us with the knowledge of the *Atman* by which we can make us free from the fetters of false knowledge (*mithya-pratyaya*) which is *maya*, or nescience³.

¹ Vide *Mahimna-stotram*

² Vide *Bhagavad Gita*, Ch IV, II

* The lecture has been reproduced in the way Swami Abhedananda delivered

CHAPTER II

PRACTICAL VEDANTISM

Some people think that Vedanta is absolutely theoretical and speculative, it cannot be carried into practice. Such ideas are untrue to the facts. Vedanta is most practical of all philosophies that exist in the world. Well has it been said by Prof Max Muller ‘Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies, and the most comforting of all religions’.

In India, philosophy has always been the theoretical side of religion, and religion has always been considered as the practical side of philosophy. Of the tree of knowledge, philosophy is the flower, while religion is its fruit. If we remember this idea, we shall be able to understand whether Vedanta is practical or not.

Let us understand the meaning of the term ‘Vedanta’. If we analyze the meaning of the term ‘Vedanta’, we find that it is a compound made up of two words *veda* and *anta*. The word “*veda*” is derived from a Sanskrit root “*vid*” which means “to know”, and ‘*veda*’, therefore, means “knowledge” or wisdom. The word *anta* is the same, as the English word “end”. Therefore, the word ‘Vedanta’ signifies the “end of wisdom”.

But where is that end and how is it—is the next question to be solved. Where can we find the ‘end of wisdom’? All the sciences and philosophies of the world are trying to discover the truths of nature, and to know the truths *as they are in reality*. The end of knowledge will be there where there is no more relativity and no more relation between time, space and causality. The end of wisdom cannot be limited knowledge, cannot be knowledge of a particular portion of the phenomenal world, but it must be the knowledge of the universal Being. This universal Being is the infinite ocean of wisdom. It is the source of all phenomena. It is the foundation of our life, and the true basis of our earthly existence. That source of the phenomenal world is also the end of all wisdom.

The Divinity is the end of all wisdom. What can there be greater than Divine wisdom, which is higher, is nobler,

and is truer? That Divine wisdom is the end. We must reach that end sooner or later. All philosophers are trying to discover that end, though they call it by various names. Plato called it the *Good*; Spinoza called it the *Substantia*, Kant called it the transcendental *Thing-in-itself*; Emerson called it the *Over-soul*. Some call it the *Noumenon* and others the Brahman, Brahma, Vishnu, Siva, Father in Heaven, Allah, Ahuramazda and by other names. The ocean of wisdom is one, although it is called by different names. We may not see and realize the whole of it, but we may catch a partial glimpse at certain moments of our life. If we try to understand our own existence, if we wish to realize what we are in reality, we shall discover in our inner depths a spark which is potentially Divine. It has emanated from that eternal sun of knowledge and intelligence. It is like a bubble floating on that infinite ocean of Reality. All these phenomenal objects which we perceive with our senses, are mere expressions of that one divine Energy or Will-power which is the mother of all forces in nature. Whatever we perceive with our senses, or conceive by our mind and intellect, is the result of that one stupendous Energy or Will-power of the infinite Being which is described in Vedanta as *maya*. *Maya* is the source of all phenomena, and modern science has proved to us that all the physical forces of nature can be interchanged. In fact, heat, light and motion are interchangeable, and they are the various expressions of the one universal Energy.

The whole world is the result of the vibration of the will-power of the infinite Being which is also described in the *Upanishad* as the *Prana*.¹ This *Prana* is known as the Hiranyagarbha Brahma. Whatever you see in this universe, is the result of that which makes the earth rotate on its own axis, and which makes us move and act in the same way in which we are living, moving and performing our duties. The force is one, but the manifestations are many. The same force of the *Prana*, or the will-power of the infinite Being which is described in Vedanta as *maya*, is called nature in modern science.

What is nature? Nature is nothing but *Prakriti*, and

1 यदिदं किञ्च जगत् सर्वं प्राण एजति निःस्तम्।

—Katha Upanishad, II, 3 2.

this *Prakriti* is the same as *maya*.² In Tantra, *Prakriti* is called *Mahamaya*, and in Vedanta, it is known as the *Avyakta*. But is *Prakriti* or *maya* separable from that infinite source of wisdom? No, it is inseparable. As the burning power of fire cannot be separated from fire itself, so *maya*, or the will-power of the Lord is inseparable from the ocean of wisdom, which is called the Brahman. Sometimes this power remains latent, and at other times it is manifested in the form of the phenomenal world. We have found that the infinite ocean of wisdom is on one side, and *maya* or will-power, or the nature, or the *Prakriti*, is on the other. When we combine these two and consider these two as one, we get *Isvara*, the personal God (*saguna Brahman*) who is known as the Creator, the Preserver and the Destroyer of the universe. If we separate the creative power from the preserving power and the preserving power from the destructive power, then we have three entities, Brahma, Vishnu and Siva. In fact, they are all inseparable from that infinite Brahman.

There are three systems of Vedanta. Let us take the Dvaita (dualistic) system first. So long as we think of ourselves as the body and so long as we are conscious of the external world or the world of senses, we find that there is a Ruler, a Creator, a Governor, and that Governor is *Isvara*. At first we think of Him as extra-cosmic, sitting somewhere in the heaven far above the clouds, we cannot reach Him, and He is beyond the reach of our minds. This phase we find in Judaism. The dualists believe that God cannot be perceived; He cannot be realized. He is too far away from us, and He is too majestic to be approached. This idea is also developed in Mohammedanism. This we must consider as the first step in the realization of the infinite Being, or in the realization of the infinite ocean of the wisdom which is the foundation of the phenomenal universe. In this stage, God appears to be extra-cosmic, or outside nature. Then gradually as we understand the true nature of the Divinity and our relation with that Divinity, what do we find? We find that He is not very far away from us, He is here and there, He is everywhere, He is within us, He pervades

2 मायान्तु प्रकृतिं विद्यामायिनन्तु महेश्वरम्।

—*Svetasvatara Upanishad*, IV, 10

this universe. In fact, He is immanent and resident in nature. He is also intra-cosmic, as He does not rule from outside, but from within. As the soul is the ruler of the body and also rules over the body, so the Lord of the universe has entered into the phenomenal world. He rules over every particle of this phenomenal world from within and not from outside. All the individual souls form the parts of the Deity and those parts are *Chit*, *Achit* and *Isvara*. The relation between *Chit* and *Achit* on one side and *Isvara* on the other is the relation of the body to the soul. This is known as the doctrine of qualified non-dualism.

There is the school of *Advaita* (non-dualism). Sankaracharya, the great exponent of the *Advaita* philosophy, teaches that men must rise above all anthropomorphic tendencies and then realize that they are the true Self, the essence of their inner-self as well as of the *Jivatman* and the phenomenal world, and then they find perfect unity and harmony amidst all the disunity and disharmony. Then they attain to absolute oneness in spirit with the *Paramatman* and all external things drop off and that means all things are saturated by the divine Spirit. That is the meaning of the word *So'ham*, or as Christ said: "I and my Father are one." The best reconciliation between the *Dvaitavadins* (dualists) and the *Advaitavadins* (non-dualists) is to be found in these words of Hanuman: "Oh Lord, when I think of myself as one with the body, I am the servant; when I think of myself as a *Jiva*, I am thy part, but when I think myself as the *Atman*, I am one with Thee." This is what he said. So the prayer of Prahlada also is: "I bow down to myself." What does Sankaracharya say? He too utters the same ideal or truth. "When I think of myself as one with the body, I am Thy servant; when I think of the one with the body, I am Thy servant; when I think of *Atman*, I am one with Thee."¹ Thus here we find the absolute harmony that exists or underlies all sectarian doctrines, dogmas, faiths, rituals, ceremonials and beliefs.

1 दासस्तेऽहं देहदृष्ट्याऽस्मि शम्भो
जातस्तेहंशो जीवदृष्ट्या त्रिदृष्टे ।
सर्वस्यादत्मनात्मदृष्ट्या त्वमेवे
तेयं मै धीनिक्षिता सर्वशात्मैः ॥

—The *Sankara-Digvijaya*.

Here you will find the most practical side of Vedanta. First realize the unity of Godheaded under the authority of all religious sects and creeds This is the most important thing and we can practise that to our best advantage, because we are born and brought up under such divine teachings But with other nations it would be very difficult to grasp this ideal of toleration. But this ideal will produce most wonderful results in the end. Because if we follow this ideal, we shall find that we are all one as a body, not merely as a nation, but as a whole humanity we are one, and are worshipping the same Lord under different names and forms only This sublime ideal was given to the world by Gautama Buddha. And this sublime ideal teaches that there are many ways by which this grand ideal of unity and unending ocean of wisdom can be reached or appreciated. Take, for instance, one of these ways or methods which are called Yogas in Sanskrit, by the practice of which we can realize the eternal Truth, can know our true life and can become one with that infinite Being Let us take Karma Yoga, for instance. Can there be any thing more practical than this? No, because it is the most important thing We have to work constantly during our earthly existence We cannot live for a moment without work, and that idea was given by Sri Krishna in the *Bhagavad Gita*. But, in the midst of all our works, you will have to find out a way by which we can transcend the law of krama. Every act that we perform, must produce its result, and that result will come back to the doer or actor You must work constantly, day and night, devote your whole energy and yet the results remain in the hands of the Lord Let every action of your daily life be a free offering to the world Let us all work for others and die for others, and if you do this, you will be worshipped today as a living God. Therefore stand up and work for work's sake and not for the hope of its return.

The method of Karma Yoga is for those who are tremendously active and are constantly engaged in business, trades, commerce, and in other kinds of industries But there is another method for those who do not care to bother their heads about industries, trades etc ; but who are meditative in their nature and like to sit in solitude and perform certain functions of the mind which are called concentration, medita-

tion, *samadhi* and so on. This method is called the Raja Yoga. If we practise this method, we shall get more wonderful results. Take, for example, concentration. Is there any thing more practical than this? Without concentration you cannot expect to become an artist, or an astronomer, or a musician, or a painter, or say a motor-car driver. The Raja Yoga teaches that concentration fully well.

Then the practice of *pranayama* is absolutely necessary. *Pranayama* means the control of breath. It will bring perfect health. Many of my students who are physicians, give breathing exercises to their patients and cure many diseases, with complete success.

There is another method which is equally practical and beneficial to us and that is called the Bhakti Yoga, which will make us realize that we are not of this world. Tremendous love for the Lord and for all is necessary. What can be sweeter and more tender than this feeling of love and devotion, which is manifested in the life and character of a true devotee of God! A true devotee does not care for the world; he sees the play of the Divine will everywhere. When any disease comes, he would consider that the Lord has sent him his guest, and would take care of him! When death comes, he would welcome it as his sister. What can be more practical than this? Vedanta will enable you to live the right kind of life. It will bring freedom to your soul, and ultimately will make you happy throughout eternity. All other things which you call practical, may bring temporary results, but you cannot achieve the real result anywhere except in the religion and philosophy of Vedanta.

Theosophy is an imperfect imitation of Vedanta. It would not do any good. There have been some good workers among the Theosophists to whom we are grateful, specially, to Mrs. Annie Besant, because there has been some good educational work done by her. But she has only set an example, and now it is for us to stand up and do better work. People of India have now become so degenerated that when certain truths fall from the lips of the white faces they appear to them as revelations. Truths are always eternal, whether they fall from the white lips or dark lips. Therefore we must revere the truth and not the personality of any man or woman.

CHAPTER III

IDEAL OF VEDANTA AND HOW TO ATTAIN TO IT

The ideal of Vedanta is to solve the problems of life, to point out the aim of human existence and to make our ways of living better and more harmonious with the universal will that is working in nature. It makes us realize that the will which is now working through our bodies, is, in reality, a part and parcel of that universal will which is known as *Isvara* or God. It teaches us that the body, or the pleasures of the senses, are not the *summum bonum* of human existence and makes us feel that at present we are living like slaves, bound hand and foot and we should search for the emancipation from the slavery. Its ideal is to open our eyes to Truth or Reality which is unchangeable and eternal. It shows us how we can live in this world without being overcome by sorrows and misery, and without being affected by sufferings and misfortunes that are sure to fall on every human being in some way or other. Its ideal teaches us how to conquer death in this life and how we can embrace death without being frightened in the least. Above all, the chief object of Vedanta is to make us live the life of unselfishness and purity and attain to perfection in this life. Although by natural process of evolution each individual will become perfect after going through all the stages of chain of evolution and gaining experience at each step, still it is a hard and most tedious process not to be desired by such who know what that process is. Therefore Vedanta tells us how we can escape that chain, and how we can shorten the time of attaining to that perfection and get it in this life, without coming again and again to reap the fruits of our work.

Ideal of Vedanta is to let us know what powers we possess already and how great and majestic the real nature of man is. Its aim is to establish true universal brotherhood. I do not mean that kind of universal brotherhood which we often hear and which when properly examined appears to be like an outward garb under which is hidden hatred, jealousy, quarrel,

animosity, fight for name and fame, ambition for petty worldly property and so forth. But I mean something more than the socalled universal brotherhood, which is real love for all without seeking anything in return. I mean that kind of brotherly feeling proceeds from pure and disinterested love. Love means the expression of oneness, or we may say the feeling which proceeds from the realization of oneness of the Spirit. The mission of Vedanta is to establish that oneness and to bring harmony, peace, toleration amongst different religions, sects, creeds and denominations that exist in the world. Its object is to teach us how we can recognize the rights of all men and women alike from that standpoint of spiritual oneness, and thus to give a strong foundation to all kinds of social, political and religious movements of all countries and amongst all nations of the world. You will notice that each of these ideals of Vedanta is not confined to any particular place, time or class of people, but is universal in its aspect as wide as the heaven over our head. And such is the grand, many-sided and all-embracing ideal of Vedanta.

Now let us see what Vedanta has to say regarding each of these ideals which I have just mentioned. In the first place, I shall explain how Vedanta solves the problems of life. One truth we learn from Vedanta is that the solution of a problem becomes easy when we understand the universal principle and universal law under which it acts. As long as an event is isolated or insigle, it remains a mystery to us. We do not understand it, and cannot explain it. As long as we think our life as an isolated something or as separate from the rest of the universe, so long the problem of life remains inexplicable. But Vedanta explains our life by describing its relation to the universal life-principle or divine energy which is expressing itself through various forms of nature. It says that our life is nothing but a symbol of eternal life-principle, conditioned by time, space and causality. The whole universe is an expression of one living substance. There is no such thing as dead matter. When that life expresses or manifests through time and space, it appears in different forms which are related to one another and also to the whole. That relation is like the relation of a part to another part, and a part to the whole, all difference being a difference of degree and not of kind. So, our life being a part

of the eternal life, is eternal. It has not come out of nothing as many people believe, nor has it been created by the fiat of some other being, who lives somewhere in the heavens. Each of these manifested particles of that eternal life-principle is evolving from lower to higher, from higher to still higher, from the limited towards the unlimited. In this process it has some definite purpose at each step. It does not evolve blindly as some think, but gain some definite object to fulfil the desire that has existed potentially in that particle of life from the beginningless past. It has its aim. That aim may vary in particular manifestations under particular conditions, still it is tending from imperfection towards perfection, and, consequently, Vedanta points out that aim of human life is perfection.

Then as we approach nearer to perfection, the ways of our living become better and better, and by experience we come to know that the best way of living is not to follow the dictates of a narrow and limited will, but to obey the universal will. We start at first with a tiny, little, weak, and thin thread of will, which grows stronger and stronger as we rise higher and higher in the scale of our life. Then gradually by passing through different stages of manifestations we gain more and more experience and begin to see how the thread of the individual will is connected with the universal will, and slowly understand their relation, and ultimately realize that our will which we have so long thought to be ours is not ours, but a part and parcel of that one universal will which is moving the universe from the minutest atom to the biggest solar system, and our bodies are nothing but so many small instruments through which that all-pervading will is expressing itself. But as long as we do not realize this and think that our will is a separate will and is not related to the universal will, we believe that by following our imperfect will we shall gain the highest benefit, but the result is suffering, misery and sorrow, which we experience in our everyday life. This idea of separation or mistaken notion makes us think that we are free, while, in fact, we are bound hand and foot like a slave, and, consequently, we do not seek freedom. How can we seek freedom when we do not know that we are bound. First of all, we shall have to examine our own nature whether we are free or bound, then we can search for liberation if we really need it.

Very few indeed in this world can realize that we are living the life of a slave. Amongst those who can understand it very few, can get freedom from that dreadful drudgery of a slave, but the majority delude themselves by thinking that they are free, consequently, they like their present condition and do not care for any other.

It is very curious to notice that those who are born and brought up as slaves and live constantly in the society as slaves, will rather die there than become free citizens. If any one of such slaves fortunately get the idea of freedom and try to acquire it, then his fellow slaves will think that he is going in a wrong way and will try their best not to allow him to get out of their community. But if his desire for freedom be extremely strong, he will never be dominated by the influences of other slaves around him, but will seek the company of such as are free and not bound by the chains of thraldom, and have wiped out the mark of slavery from their forehead. Then perhaps, he will come to help those who want to be free. The community we are now living in, is exactly like that of slaves. We are born as slaves, brought up as slaves and live amongst slaves. If we look around, it will be almost impossible to find a man or a woman who is truly free. If any person gets the idea of freedom in his mind and tries to attain to it, our first duty will be to find fault with the ideas of that man or to dissuade him from following his ideal. Are we not slaves to our own desires, own passions and own senses, are we not slaves to our own body and to the changes that are constantly going on in the machinery which we call the human body? Are we not slaves of anger, hatred, jealousy, emotion, pain or sense enjoyments? Are we not constantly obeying the commands of hundreds of such masters that are ruling within us? If anybody utters sweet words or 'expressions, we feel ourselves flattered and elated, and how we feel insulted, wounded or hurt when any harsh word enters our ears. Is it not a slavery? As long as we are seeking pleasures, are we not slaves of the desires for pleasures? Are we not slaves of insatiable greed for wealth and of ambition for social and political power, name and fame? What can be worse than such a state? But how amazing it is to notice that although we are slaves of desires and passions, slaves of pleasures, comfort and luxury, slaves of

ambition, pride and vanity, slaves of beauty which is skin-deep, slaves of sweet words, anger and hatred, slaves of body and sense enjoyment, slaves of life, death and everything, yet we do not feel it and are not conscious of it. Still we never think of any other condition better than this.

In fact, we are sleeping unconsciously after drinking, as it were, the cup of the frightfully intoxicating liquor of self-delusion. The whole humanity is madly pursuing the phantoms of hope which change their colour as we come nearer and which suddenly disappear and after a moment appear at a distance with new brilliance and fresh colours that attract our attention again and force us to chase them again and again and drag us headlong in that breathless pursuit. This process is continuously going on in each individual life.

Really we have made ourselves slaves of delusion, and also slaves of the phantoms of hope. How can we have happiness under such conditions? How can a slave become happy? He may delude himself by thinking that he is happy. But after all it is not happiness; it is a delusion. Happiness does not consist in slavery, but in freedom. He who is free, is truly happy. That happiness, which comes through freedom, is unbounded and eternal. If we want that unbounded and eternal happiness, we shall have to become free and shall have to break down the chain of slavery. And before we become emancipated we must have to know and to be conscious of the fact that we are at present in bondage. The moment we come to know that we are living like slaves, the moment we begin to see the real conditions of our present life and existence, that very moment we begin to feel the effects of slavery in our everyday life. Then we seek the company of those that are free and have broken the chains. Then we appreciate their sayings, then we understand their meanings, and if we follow their instructions, we gradually become free as they are. From that time we remain no longer slaves of passions, desires and senses, but we gain mastery over them, we control them, and we conquer them. All passions and desires can no longer bind us, but they remain as our slaves. This freedom from constant slavery, or this emancipation of the soul from the bondages of delusion is the highest ideal of Vedanta. It is called in Sanskrit *moksha* which means liberation or freedom. Vedanta does not go on speculating and

speculating, theorising and theorising like other philosophies, but it starts by taking the present conditions of our lives as they are, and then it shows the way of it by removing the cause. The cause of such a slavery is nothing but our ignorance of truth. As Jesus said: "Ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free", Vedanta also teaches that the knowledge of truth will bring that freedom. By knowing the truth we shall be free. Jesus did not describe the nature of that truth nor the way of knowing it. By reading his sayings we do not understand what kind of truth Jesus meant. In Vedanta, we find the meaning, the clear rational explanation of that truth and also the way of knowing it. According to Vedanta that truth is one; it cannot be many. It is the unchangeable Reality of the universe, and it is our real nature as well. By knowing that Reality of the universe, and also by knowing who we are and what we are, we shall gain that freedom. Whether we call that unchangeable and eternal Reality, God or the *Atman*, our real nature remains the same and the difference lies in names only. The dualists call that truth Good, because they look at it from outside. And those who look at it from within, call it the *Atman*, or the Self, or the Reality within us. It depends upon the different standpoints from which we look at that Reality. According to Vedanta, that one Reality, when looked through the conditions of time, space and causation, appears as the subject and the object, as the knower and the thing known, as either sun, or moon, or heaven, or God, or hell, or a spook, or man, beast, insect or plant. These are nothing but so many appearances of that Reality, which is one throughout. The knowledge of that Truth means the knowledge of the underlying unity of existence. Vedanta says that freedom will not come until we know the unity of existence, the oneness of the Reality in us with the reality of the universe, until we realize that all these appearances are phenomenal and exist in relation to our mind and that the *Atman* or the Self is behind the mind, until we can go beyond the sphere of relativity and plunge ourselves into the ocean of absolute Bliss. Here you may ask, if we are all slaves and if our real nature must be like a slave, then how can it be otherwise? In answering to this, Vedanta says that our real nature is perfectly free. It is divine and immortal. "If so", you may ask, "why are we the slaves?" The

answer is, it is because of our mind. It is the mind which is the cause of our bondage or freedom. When our mind is imperfect, it is attached to the phenomenal appearances and makes us their slaves, but when it is purified and learns to go below the surface of things and begins to discriminate the eternal from the unreal, then it becomes the cause of our freedom, then we understand what freedom is. Each individual mind is bound to attain to freedom and perfection through gradual experience (of course it takes ages) by going through the process of evolution. That process is slow, tiresome, and most undesirable. Wise men do not want to go through that slow method. Vedanta tells us when each one will have to become free and perfect then what is the good of taking that long and tedious journey. Let us find a shorter way. Let us shorten the time by trying our best to attain to freedom and perfection in this life. The easiest way is by knowing the Truth in this life and realizing our true nature, or self, or the *Atman*, which is immortal, free, divine and perfect. It is free from death, disease and sorrow. The moment we realize the *Atman*, that very moment vanishes the fear of death and we become unselfish and are conscious how great and majestic we are. Then we know that all the powers of the universe have proceeded from the infinite source of powers which lies within each individual soul. Then and then alone we arrive at the foundation of that universal brotherhood, or Self-hood, or oneness. Because, if you know your own nature, you will know the nature of the universe and of God. Then you will see that each individual soul is perfect, divine and immortal and is a living God on earth. In such a state there is no such thing as sex. The *Atman* is pure, sexless, and one. The woman's rights and man's rights will be equal. As long as we are slaves of animal nature we see a man or a woman, but from the standpoint of the *Atman* all is divine. Then we shall be able to reform the social, political and religious evils that exist today in different parts of the world. Then superstition and prejudice which arise from our ignorance of the Truth, will no longer reign on earth. All religious animosities will cease for ever. Then will the kingdom of Heaven manifest here. Therefore, Vedanta tells us that realization of the *Atman*, or of our true nature will create a revolution in every department of our life. And the

way to such a realization is described in a line: आत्मा अरे द्रष्टव्यो
श्रोतव्यो मन्तव्यो निदिष्यासितव्यः। First of all hear constantly and re-
peatedly that your *Atman*, or the real nature, is divine, then think
of it day after day and night after night. Let each of your nerves
and brain cells pulsate with the idea that you are divine, you
are immortal, and you are one with the Supreme. And then
concentrate your thoughts upon that central truth of that one-
ness, and through that concentration will come the highest illu-
mination of wisdom and bliss. Then you will be happy both
here, hereafter and for ever.

CHAPTER IV

VEDANTA IN DAILY LIFE

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

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

There is an impression among some people that teachings of Vedanta are fit for those only who live like ascetics in caves and forests, but not for those who lead a busy American's life. Such people are entirely mistaken, because they do not know that truths of Vedanta were first discovered and practised not by ascetics who dwelt in caves or forests, but by kings and monarchs, ministers and statesmen, who lived the busiest and most luxurious lives that we can imagine. If we read the *Upanishads*, the Epics like *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and other historical works, we find that there were not only the Hindu

ministers and statesmen, but also the kings sitting on their thrones discharging their royal duties of governing the states and looking after the welfare of their numerous subjects and living a busier and much more responsible life than that of an ordinary businessman of the present day, could find ample time and opportunity to study Vedanta and to carry out its sublime tenets in their practical lives. When such persons could live the ideal life as specified by Vedanta, what can we say of ourselves? We are not half as busy as they were. I can quote from the *Upanishads* many names of the ancient Hindu monarchs who faithfully followed the teachings of Vedanta while fulfilling the duties of their royal position. They not only lived up to the ideals of Vedanta, but also taught others and were considered by the people as the living examples of this practical philosophy. Those who have read the *Bhagavad Gita*, or the *Song Celestial* by Sir Edwin Arnold, will remember that the great commander of a huge army, standing in the midst of the din of battle at Kurukshetra, found time to discuss the ideals of Vedanta and succeeded in applying them in practice.

Many of you have seen and heard about Swami Vivekananda. He was a living example of the practical side of Vedanta. Up to the last moment of his life he worked like a giant under all conditions, favourable or unfavourable, bearing all kinds of hardship, discomfort and tribulation and never moving an inch from the highest ideal of this great philosophy and religion of Vedanta. He lived a pure and chaste life always, working for others and trying to help humanity without seeking any return. He showed to the world what a true Karma yogi was like. In other words, he proved by his example that even in this age of materialism and commercialism, one can be a sincere worker who always works for others and lives for the good of humanity without being guided by selfish motives or selfish desires.

The most practical ideal of Vedanta which will appeal to American minds, is the Karma Yoga. The Karma Yoga is that branch of Vedanta which teaches that we should always work and fulfil all the duties of life, household, social or official, but, at the same time, we must not consider that the performance of these duties is the highest aim and ideal of our life. On the

contrary, we must regard duties and works of our daily life as a means to a higher end. We should also remember that each one of these works brings us new experience, makes us realize the transitoriness of earthly objects, purifies our inner nature and uplifts our souls, if it be not guided by any selfish motive. Vedanta teaches that any work which proceeds from extreme selfishness, is wrong and wicked and we should avoid it. Moreover, it tells us that every action must bring a similar reaction and all bad or selfish works produce evil results such as sorrow, suffering, misery, disease and death. Holding this ideal before his mind and applying it to his practical life, a student of Vedanta can go anywhere and live under any condition without deviating from the path of righteousness and virtue, and under all circumstances, he will live a pure, unselfish life and remain contented. This is the simplest and easiest thing to practise.

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

Every householder should study the Karma Yoga and understand the philosophy of work, and applying those teachings to the daily life, he will eventually attain to the highest ideal of all religions. If he believes in a personal God, or in an impersonal God, or in any Divine incarnation like Christ,

Buddha, Krishna or Ramakrishna, then what should he do? He should offer the results of his daily works, both good and bad, to Him every night before retiring and, by this method, he will become free from the law of *karma*, or the law of action and reaction, and reach the highest goal of salvation in the end. The works of our daily life will be transformed into acts of worship when we have learnt to offer their results to the supreme Lord of the universe, and this can be accomplished by any man or woman engaged in any kind of profession or business. It is the easiest method by which we can make the religion of Vedanta enter into every plane of our daily life wherein lies the secret of great success and freedom, that is, either offer the results of our works to God, or do work as an act of worship. He who has learnt to offer the results of his daily works to the Almighty, has learnt the secret of work and is always peaceful and contented. This will be beneficial to all those who live the busiest lives, engaged in any kind of work. Works are neither low nor high, as every work is great and every work will be a means to the attainment of the Divinity.

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

Vedanta teaches that the less passion for work there is, the greater and more we work. If we read the lives of all the great workers of the world, we find that they were wonderfully calm men. Men and women of impulsive nature are restless and impatient, and so they cannot do great work and, as such, they cannot be steady workers. They will lose their heads. Persons

who are easily disturbed by passions like anger, jealousy, hatred, ambition and selfishness, cannot accomplish much. They will shatter their nerves and eventually become useless. As we find in this country (in America), persons who are impulsive, can do great work for the moment, but in the reaction, they break themselves to pieces. They suffer from nervous prostration. Therefore, self-control is the secret of great work viz. success in business, health and longevity. This we learn from Vedanta. What can be more practical or beneficial than to gain self-control and to exercise it in our everyday life?

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

The same power of concentration can be applied for material prosperity and also for spiritual advancement. If we want material prosperity, we can use our power of concentration in that direction and can get wonderful results. If we are spiritual-minded, we can gain spiritual results by it. Concentration, when practised for spiritual results, will gradually lead us to meditation, and meditation will eventually direct the soul into the state of Godconsciousness and then we shall

be able to realize the true nature of the soul and its relation to God, the Absolute. Thus you can understand how in Vedanta the highest ideals of true religion are applied into a practical science which is intensely useful and beneficial in every possible way.

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

A student of Vedanta does not require any special or separate training in ethics or religion, because the highest ideal and the practical side of ethics are included in the teachings of Vedanta, and, if we try to live according to the ideals of Vedanta, we cannot but be ethical. For instance, one of the injunctions of practical ethics is to be truthful. Why should we be truthful? The question has never been answered by any system of ethics so rationally as by Vedanta. Vedanta tells us that truthfulness is not a mere virtue, but the means of attain-

ing the absolute Truth. The absolute Truth is revealed to those only who are absolutely truthful in thought, word and deed Moral weakness and selfishness lie at the bottom of falsehood, and therefore, we should abandon them We should shun the company of those who are untruthful , and although we may go through all kinds of suffering, sorrow, misery and changes of fortune, yet we must not give up the ideal of truthfulness and we must hold on to it until the last breath has passed out of our body, because truthfulness will lead to absolute Truth. The eternal Truth is never gained by falsehood but by truth

Another ethical law which is considered to be the highest law in all religions is "Love thy neighbour as thyself" Now, here I can ask the same question. Why should I love my neighbour as myself? Like Christianity, Vedanta teaches this ideal. Christianity teaches it as a dogma based upon the authority of its scriptures, and does not give any reason in favour of it, but Vedanta gives the rational explanation and tells us why we should love our neighbours as ourselves: because the true Self of our neighbour is one with our true Self And that *recognition* of this spiritual *oneness*, when understood, is the meaning of love Love means spiritual oneness, oneness of two souls, and that is true love Where there is true love, there is the Divinity, and there is the manifestation of God, and that Divine love reigns in the heart and soul of a student of Vedanta and, therefore, he loves all humanity. When the same love which we call human love, is not backed by selfishness, it becomes Divine love and that Divine love is the means by which we can realize God. God can be realized through Divine love. Therefore we should practise in our daily lives that unselfish love which is the highest, and never encourage or practise that which is not love and which means something different, is based upon selfishness, produces attachment and brings bondage in the end Neither we should practise nor indulge in it, otherwise we shall be the sufferers, and the ideal of love, which is divine, will not be attained by us

The highest aspiration of the individual soul is fulfilled when it realizes its spiritual oneness with the divine Being and that spiritual oneness is the central idea and ideal of

Vedanta. Vedanta teaches that there is one existence, one reality, one truth, one God, one life, and one spirit All these differentiations and distinctions which we perceive with our senses, are fictitious and unreal. They are all on the surface. Go below the surface and there you will find the undercurrent of one spirit, and when that one spirit is properly realized, we understand that we are inseparable parts of that one stupendous whole. We must love, we cannot help loving and through that Divine love we realize the highest ideal of our lives A student of Vedanta, who recognizes that spiritual oneness, sees that one universal Spirit is manifesting through all living creatures and all human beings, and, therefore, he loves all human beings. And also he loves all animals The most practical result of this love, or the recognition of oneness, is that a student of Vedanta never injures or kills any living creature, because he knows that there is one life and the difference between an animalcule and a human being is only in degree but not in kind. The same life-force is expressed in so many ways Wherever the humanitarian ideas of Vedanta are preached, there prevails compassion for everybody. There prevails compassion for poor animals, there hospitals are built, not only for men, women and children, but also for lower animals, and there is to be found the desire to take care of the poor suffering brothers Therefore, a student of Vedanta does not unnecessarily kill any animal for food, because he says: "When I cannot give life to any living creature, what right have I to take it? Let it stay on and live; it has its purpose to fulfil; I must not interfere". And having this ideal in his mind he does good to all and would rather give his own life than take the life of others Such a soul is a great blessing to humanity, as also to all living creatures. The practice of this ideal will bring the most wonderful results which are morally and spiritually perfect. Therefore we should teach our children to love all creatures, for even the lower animals possess life and feelings. From our childhood, we have been taught that lower animals have been created for our food Now, we must change that idea and teach our children that the lower animals are also fulfilling certain principles of life and are on certain grades of evolution, and in course of time, they will rise to the plane of human beings and will reach perfection.

Therefore, we must be kind to them. Thus in practical life we should learn compassion and that compassion, when properly carried out, will lead to Divine love and realization of the Supreme.

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

Another great help in practical life which we get from Vedanta, is the knowledge of the divine Being. The divine Being is not far from us; He is the Soul of our souls; He is ever dwelling within us; He is both personal and impersonal and beyond both. He can be worshipped under any name, in any form, by anyone under any sect, creed or denomination. He is one and eternal. When we understand this, all religious animosities, quarrels and fights cease for ever. Then we consider all sectarians as our brothers and sisters; we embrace them as children of one God. What could be more practical than this! Can a sectarian do so? Can an orthodox Christian embrace a Mohammedan, or a Buddhist? Very few possess so broad and liberal a mind as to embrace another man belonging to another religion, but Christ himself would have embraced a Mohammedan, or Buddhist, or any heathen as the child of the Divinity. We should follow that example. We should try to live up to it, and then in our daily lives, we shall be able



to understand that secret by which we shall attain to the highest wisdom of spiritual oneness that will make us free. This is the meaning of salvation, which is emancipation from bondage of ignorance and selfishness. According to Vedanta, salvation does not begin in the grave, but it begins right here and now. Vedanta shows us the way to attain to that salvation or perfection in this life. And when that knowledge or Divine wisdom comes, all darkness of ignorance is dispelled and divine powers begin to flow through our souls. Then we rise above the animal and material plane and shine with the spiritual light of the eternal sun.

Now we can see how all these teachings of different branches of Vedanta fit into different departments of our lives and how practical Vedanta is. Not only this, but there is also another thing which we should not forget that Vedanta includes the truths that have been discovered by different branches of science and it shows how those truths can be applied to our daily lives and how we can mould our daily lives according to these ideals and direct our efforts towards the highest goal which is one. No other religion has done that. No other religion has ever been able to harmonize itself with different branches of science, or with different philosophies of the world. But Vedanta includes all sciences, all philosophies and all religions, and, therefore, it is universal. A student of Vedanta can be a Christian, a Mohammedan, a Buddhist, or a heathen, or an agnostic. Distinctions of caste, creed and nationality are never recognized in the light of Vedanta. Wherever the truths of Vedanta are preached, there prevail peace, tranquillity, self-control and spiritual illumination. If we understand the teachings of Vedanta and live up to the ideals, then we shall be able to say as Schopenhauer said: "Vedanta has been solace of my life, and it will be the solace of my death".

CHAPTER V

ETHICS OF VEDANTA

The ethics of Vedanta runs in harmony with the teachings of Buddha, Jesus the Christ, Mohammed, Confucius, Lao-Tze, Sri Ramakrishna and other Saviours as well as great moral and spiritual leaders of mankind. They are not based upon any particular book, or upon the authority of any particular personage, but are based upon the eternal laws that govern our moral and spiritual life. They are not founded upon any narrow doctrine which makes us more selfish at the expense of others, but upon the solid rock of what leads toward absolute unselfishness. From prehistoric times the great seers of Truth in India have tried their best to understand those ethical laws, observed them in their daily lives, and made the minds of their fellow-beings understand those laws and practise them. They explained those laws in the most rational way. Of course, some have preached those laws and their interpretations as the commandments of God. Those who believe in a personal God as the creator and ruler of the universe, gave those ethical laws in the terms of God's commands. Jesus the Christ, Moses, and Mohammed believed in a personal God and so they explained those ethical laws as the commandments of God. But there is a danger in believing them to be the commandments of God, because if you have the conception of a personal God as the ruler of the universe and giver of certain laws, anyone who would violate those laws, will be punished by Him. That idea naturally came out and that is the beginning of conception of punishment. Those who obey the commandments of God, will go to Him and will receive His grace, but those who disobey His commandments, will be punished and thrown into eternal fire. This idea prevails in all the dualistic religions of Semitic origin, as also in the dualistic religion of ancient Persia, Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity and Mohammedanism. They believe in the existence of a personal God, the creator of all good. They also believe in the existence of the creator of evil as distinct and separate from the creator of all good. They

say that those who are overpowered and tempted by the creator of evil, will suffer punishment in the end. Some of these dualists believe that punishment will continue for ever and there is no end to that punishment. But it can be asked as to why should God punish His own creatures for the faults for which they themselves are not responsible. Why should God be partial and unjust? The ideal of justice which we have, is of course very limited, but when that ideal of justice is mixed with the ideal of all-lovingness and all-mercifulness, we find that it is very difficult to reconcile those ideals. If God loves His creatures equally, then He ought not to punish anyone. That idea is very strong amongst the Hindus in India, and, therefore, they do not believe in the doctrines of hell-fire and eternal punishment, though these ideas are found in the Epics and other Scriptures.

Then, how do the Hindus explain the evil that exists in this world? They explain it by the law of cause and effect or action and reaction, and that law is called the law of *karma*. God never rewards the virtuous, nor punishes the wicked, but we reward ourselves and punish ourselves by our own good and bad thoughts and deeds. The good thoughts bring good reaction in the form of results, and the evil thoughts and evil deeds bring evil reactions in the form of punishment, suffering, misery, sorrow, diseases or death. That eternal law is the basis of all ethics, the law of *karma*. And here we find the rational foundation of reward and punishment. But if we take the commandments of God as revealed to Moses or other great prophets direct from the Heaven, then we are to encounter a great many difficulties. The Christian theologians have been trying for two thousand years to reconcile those difficulties and to explain them, but they have failed. They have not succeeded in discovering a rational foundation which makes God impartial and all-loving and all-merciful. Then, again, if we study the religion of Buddhism, we find the same ethical laws and ethical teachings, but they are not explained as the commandments of God, because Buddha himself did not believe in a personal God who dwells outside the nature and universe. His religion is extremely ethical. His religion is a religion of humanity and for humanity. It is a religion which upholds the highest ideals of ethics and spirituality in the world.

Ethics must be the foundation of religion. Perfect morality and highest standard of ethics must be at the root of a true religion. A religion without ethics as its foundation is of no use, and, therefore, Vedanta says that ethics are the gateway to spirituality, the gates which lead to the attainment of the Divinity, and, therefore, the ethical life must be the starting-point of spiritual life. Some people think that ethical life is the end of spirituality, or the highest end, and they also believe that there is no end higher than that; but they are mistaken. Ethical life is the beginning of man's spiritual venture and the end is the attainment to Divinity. And it is for this reason Vedanta upholds the universal ethical laws and builds the universal religion on their basis. Whether these laws are the commandments of God or not, Vedanta does not discuss. It leaves the problem to the dualistic religionists to discuss, but it takes in the ethical laws and enables us to see the light behind them.

The eternal ethical law is the law of mercy (*maitree*) i.e. mercy for all living creatures. "Hatred is never conquered by hatred but by love. This is an everlasting ethical law." If you wish to conquer hatred, do not hate the person who hates you, but love that person instead. This is one of the laws. Wrath is never stilled by wrath, but by reconciliation. This is another law. Subdue hatred by love, avaricious by generosity, evil by good, and falsehood by truth. This is an everlasting law. Conquer all evil, like envy, jealousy, hatred, malice. Subdue your passions, and control yourself. This is the path to perfection. Anyone who wishes to attain to perfection must have to practise these principles, because in the character of all those great beings, recognized as our ideals, great leaders of mankind and the saviours of the world, these ethical principles are exhibited in a most prominent manner. The cardinal virtues are purity, charity, compassion, forgiveness, disinterested love for others, and self-control. When we practise these virtues and live up to them, we become ethical and we enter the gate of spirituality, which is the gate of divine perfection.

The ethical law of all-mercifulness is the highest law. We must love our neighbours as ourselves. This is an old law, discovered by the ancient sages in the Vedic period, five thousand years before Christ. So this idea is not peculiar or novel to

modern thought. Christ was not the first man to preach this law, but it is an eternal law. Why should we love our neighbours as ourselves? We love them not because of their good qualities, not because of the help that we have received from them, but because of our unity in spirit. We must recognize that they are children of immortal Bliss. In spirit we are like brothers and sisters, because we ourselves are children of the immortal Bliss. When we have recognized that in ourselves first we cannot help recognizing it in others. Then we love them as we love our narrow and petty selves and will try to help them in distress, remove their grievances and bring them out of their misery and troubles. If they need anything that we have the power to give, we must give it.

A true follower of religion of Vedanta should practise this love for neighbours, and not only for neighbours, but also for all humanity, irrespective of their creed, caste, colour and nationality. We must not think that: "This is a black man and there is a white man". We should not believe that the white man is a child of God and the black man is a child of devil. No, they are all children of the same God. We should cultivate that loving feeling. We must shed that race prejudice which has made us so low. We must rise superior to the colour distinction. The practice of this principle will enable us to feel that the same divine thread runs through all of us. Divinity is manifesting through all human forms, whether black or white, yellow or red, wicked or virtuous. The souls are neither wicked nor virtuous. For the time being, the acts and thoughts make us wicked or virtuous, otherwise they are eternally pure and sublime.

In religion of Vedanta, you will notice that the souls are neither born in sin and iniquity, nor are we all children of sin. We are children of God. Sins are nothing but some of the conditions of the medium through which the soul is manifesting its powers. The medium may be imperfect, but what is behind the medium is perfect. The light may not pass through an unclean medium, or the medium may be coloured with some kind of taint, but when it is cleaned off or is removed; the manifestation is perfect. So sins are nothing but mistakes which we commit on account of our ignorance of the law, but every mistake is a great teacher in the long run. Mistakes have

their lessons for us. We grow wiser by experience How else can we learn? Suppose, you are thrown into a place where hundreds and thousands of machines are working and you know nothing about them You are a stranger, you try to touch one part and get your finger crushed and say, why, this is terrible, and then you do not touch it again You try another part and therefrom you receive a fresh shock, and so you do not go near it again. That is the way we are learning all through our life and gradually growing into fulness and perfection.

We have come to this world, not with our spiritual eyes open and not with that knowledge which makes us understand all these laws, but by experience we are gaining that knowledge and learning by committing mistakes. Due to ignorance we are all bound to commit mistakes, but we must know that they are mistakes and knowledge of laws will save us from committing them further. Ignorance is the greatest Satan that is described in religion of Vedanta- There is no other Satan outside of us dwelling in the internal regions and tempting us Ignorance is the mother of selfishness, and, therefore, we should bring that light of knowledge which will dispel the darkness of ignorance. As darkness of night vanishes away before the light of the rising sun, so darkness of ignorance also vanishes when light of the rising sun of knowledge dawns upon us That light we must get With that light we shall be able to understand all the laws which govern our lives, moral and spiritual Moral laws are higher than physical laws, because physical laws only affect the physical plane, while moral laws effect our soul plane This physical body may be dead and gone, but our individual egos will continue to exist after death being bound by those moral laws and receive reward or punishment according to acts and thoughts which we have performed or done here in this life

There is a saying in one of the oldest writings on Vedanta and it has been said by a great spiritual teacher. Once a disciple went to his spiritual master and asked the fundamental principles of universal ethics, and the master answered in three words He said. "My dear child, you learn the meaning of these three words and practise them in your daily life , then you will attain to perfction" Those three

words in Sanskrit were, *dharma*, *dana*, and *daya*. These three words begin with the letter 'D'. *Dharma* is the first and it teaches to subdue yourself, conquer passions, restrain your senses, and rise above all selfishness. *Dana* is the second and it teaches to give alms to the poor and to be charitable. *Daya* is the third and it teaches to be compassionate towards all, and to practise disinterested love for all. These three words are the sum up of the whole of Indian ethics and they are not given as the commandments of God, but are the words which refer to the eternal ethical laws that govern our moral lives. Why should we subdue ourselves and control our passions? Because otherwise we will suffer. We must conserve our energy and rise above the material and sense plane. Why should we be compassionate towards all? It is for the same reason, as I have already explained. Why should we love our neighbours as ourselves? Because the wise men treat others as they treat themselves, knowing that they are all children of the immortal Bliss.

Again, there is another ethical teaching which is very appropriate. The worldly-minded people think: "This is my relative and that is a stranger, and this is my own and that is not my own" But a wise man argues otherwise. A wise man thinks that all men and women are his friends and relatives. In the household of the Divinity, there is no one who is not a friend or a relative. In fact, there is no enemy on that plane. All enemies become so simple through self-interest. Go behind the self-interest and see the Divine spark within them. Then they would appear different. Remind them of their Divine nature and you will see that they will give up and renounce their self-interest immediately. And purity of heart should be practised, because it will help us in making our intellect bright and our heart free from selfish desires. Then our whole being will be peaceful and restful. In that calm state of mind, we see the flashes of the supreme Being. If our minds be dispersed or distracted by worries, anxieties, cares, and sufferings, we cannot behold that beatific vision, just as the reflection of the moon in disturbed water is not vivid and clear. Then it is all broken into pieces. But if you wish to see the full reflection of the moon, let the water be calm. Let the surface of the water be without any ripple, then you will see the perfect reflection. Do

charitable hospitals and dispensaries where the poor and the sick can receive help and can cure diseases from which they are suffering.

Charity involves an element of self-denial, and anything which makes us forget our petty selves and think in terms of the supreme Being, is conducive to our spiritual advance. Therefore, we should practise self-denial in order to rise above the laws which govern our lower selves.

Another law which all the students of Vedanta should observe, is that eternal law which is working against the law of the 'survival of the fittest'. The ethical law is not the survival of the fittest, but is to make others fit to survive and that is a law which we should practise. A student of Vedanta will first learn these universal ethical laws like non-killing or not to kill anyone, not to steal, not to tell a lie, not to commit unjust acts, and not to be drunken. These we should practise, not because they have been written in certain books, or have come from God, but because they are the eternal laws that govern our moral lives. We should not kill anyone, because we cannot give life to a dead being. Here you may ask the question: "Then should we not kill animals, such as, tigers and snakes?" Yes, we should. In order to preserve higher beings like human beings, we should get rid of others when they are trying to attack, but we should not kill any animal simply because they yield us pleasure.

We should not steal, because we have no right to enrich ourselves at the expense of others. What we have honestly earned, must content us and we must remember the rights of others. Now, we shall analyze all these ethical teachings which are commonly given as the commandments of God and through the writings of Vedanta you will find a rational foundation, and then you will be able to know the universal ethical laws upon which all the religions of the world are built. There is no harm in doing things which are not right, but there is great harm to ourselves. There is a statement in one of the Sanskrit writings: "There is no crime in eating animal flesh, in drinking wine, or in practising any unchaste action, because it is a natural tendency of an animal; but the restraint is great". He who can restrain animal tendencies, is morally entitled to Divine realization. He is entitled to become the ideal of nations. Others are living on the animal plane. If we look at these acts

from the standard of an animal, the doers are all right. Let those men go on like this, but some day or other they will wake up and see that this is not the highest ideal of life. The highest ideal is different.

It is the restraint which makes us perfectly contented and satisfied and makes us rise above the ordinary life and lend a helping hand to all those who are suffering. This is a lofty ideal. Non-resistance of evil is also a great ideal. That non-resistance is very difficult to practise under the present conditions, but it has been practised in India for centuries. Under the aggressive method of the Occidentals, they are suffering, but still they have not given up the practice of non-resistance of evil. The power of suffering is greater than that of oppressing. The oppressors will die out, but the sufferers will have their day. The Golden Rule—“Do unto others as you wish others to do unto you,” is considered to be the greatest ethical law. But there is something greater still, and that is to ‘recompense evil with good.’ If anyone has done wrong to you, return him good. That is greater than the Golden Rule and that is the ideal we should hold before our vision and practise in our daily life, so that in the end we shall be like the divine Being who sends everything that is good towards all, no matter how the people may think of Him. As the rays of the sun fall upon the wicked and the good alike, so let our feelings of love, goodness and good-will flow towards all, no matter whether they return evil or good. Let us practise disinterested love for all humanity and recompense evil with good.

CHAPTER VI

TRUE BASIS OF MORALITY

From ancient times various attempts have been made in Western world to explain the moral nature of man. A great majority of people refrain from violating 'God's commandments', because they think that eternal torment will be their inevitable doom for such disobedience. Consequently, fear of punishment is the stuff out of which their morality grows. They dare not ask questions regarding the validity of those commandments and feel compelled to accept them, because they find no alternative course left open to them. But men cannot for ever suppress their inner searching mood. So, they often bury certain reservations and doubts in their minds, being too timid for their loud thinking.

There are, again, others who try to interpret the moral law, not by an appeal to the scriptures, but by reason. Such persons are known in the West as 'philosophers' and 'great thinkers'. The oldest of these were the Greek philosophers that flourished before the dawn of the Christian era. In the fifth century before Christ, arose Socrates, who tried to establish virtue and moral conduct on a firm intellectual foundation. Thence-forward the basis of morality became the principal theme of the Greek philosophers. Socrates taught that all virtue is knowledge and justice being the surest guide for every moral action. "A virtuous or a moral act is one that proceeds from a clearly conscious perception of those things to which it relates, that is, of the end, means, and limitations by which it is conditioned. Good and evil are determined by the presence or absence of insight. Men act wrongly, only because they form erroneous judgments".

A similar explanation of the basis of morality was given by Plato, who based the whole of the moral fabric upon justice. But by justice he meant the State—the moral life in its complete totality. Plato believed that social ethics can alone govern the sensuous principle, which is so mighty in man. Social institutions, according to his conceptions, can suppress the 'lower' nature and make man moral. Virtue must begin in the State

and then manifest itself in the individual. Hence come the severity and rigour of the Platonic teachings regarding the State.

The ethics of Aristotle differs in many respects from those of his predecessors. Aristotle did not view the moral element in man as purely intellectual. He said it was the outcome of the physical nature. Socrates regarded moral and the natural laws as opposite and moral conduct as the result of rational enlightenment, while Aristotle held that one proceeds from the other. He said that the chief peculiarity of the human nature is rational activity. Man, being naturally intelligent, is bound to act rationally; hence morality arises from innate virtue. The Aristotelian basis of ethics, therefore, upset the Socratic basis of morality. According to Aristotle, ethical culture and moral activity are conditioned by a properly regulated social life. Man is a political animal and a truly human life is possible only in a society. Therefore, "the State is superior to the individual and even to the family; individuals are only accidental parts of the political whole."

Then came the Stoics. The ethics of the Stoics were most closely connected with their physics. The moral code of the Stoics was as follows. "Follow Nature, or live in harmony with Nature. Live in natural simplicity, and do not be corrupted by art. Be consciously and voluntarily what thou art by nature. Pleasure has no moral worth, and is not the end of Nature; it comes accidentally. Consequently, whatever action ends in pleasure cannot be morals. Everything personal must be cast aside. According to the Stoics, a perfect moral act is possible only when the actor has a thorough knowledge of the good and the complete power to realize it."

Then a reaction set in and the result was Epicurianism and scepticism. The moral nature was denied. "Seek pleasure and avoid pain as long as you live" became the highest ideal of the Epicurians. Thus ended the speculations of the Greek philosophers of the pre-Christian era.

Soon afterwards the Christian idea of morality entered into Europe. Starting from belief in the sayings of Jesus and the revelations of scripture, the moral precepts of Christianity slowly grew into the scholasticism, theology, and priesthood of the Middle Ages, which dominated the minds of Western people for centuries. Various objections to that belief were raised from

time to time, but they were promptly suppressed with dogmatic assertions, threats, and persecutions on the part of the ecclesiastical authorities.

Then came the Reformation in the sixteenth century. Philosophers arose in different parts of Europe to discuss afresh the various questions bearing upon the nature of the soul, God, and the moral law. But all these ended in the sceptical and nihilistic doctrines of David Hume. Ethical science gradually became identified with social and political laws as the science of human conduct in the secular state or community.

But the appearance of Immanuel Kant in Germany marked a new and important epoch in the history of philosophy in Europe. Kant tried to re-establish the rules of morality on an enduring basis. He taught that there is an innate moral law within each person that stands pre-eminent above all those that relate to the ends called pleasure and pain in daily life, and, consequently, by irresistible necessity each person is bound to follow that law, which is absolutely free from sensuous motives. The moral law according to Kant, is not a hypothetical imperative that promulgates that such and such means will end in such and such results, it is rather a categorical imperative, or, in other words, an absolute command. It does not originate in reason, motive, impulse, or desire, but in pure reason, which is autonomous, one, and universal.

The ideal of freedom also is determined by this moral law. The moral law says. 'Thou oughtest; therefore, thou canst'; and thus assures us of our freedom. It is not bound by the objects of desire. 'Utilitarian morality' is no morality at all because it is conditioned by the objects of desire. 'Theological morality' is likewise a misnomer, because it depends upon the punishment and rewards that proceed from a personal God. It does not proceed from freedom, but from the desire and hope of obtaining reward and avoiding punishment. According to Kant, we do not call that act, moral act which proceeds from the motive of obtaining happiness of sense enjoyment. When an act is performed solely for the sake of the law *per se*, it is moral. Moreover, Kant reduced religion to morality. Religion, said he, cannot be the basis of morality, it is itself based upon

¹ Kant has elaborately formulated the moral laws in this *Critique of Judgement*

morality. If religion be the foundation, then fear and hope will be the prime motive of all moral actions.

Belief in God does not necessarily make one moral ; the idea that 'I ought to believe' must precede such belief. Religion, when separated from morality, is nothing. The church is simply a moral community. A dogma has worth only so far as it has a moral content. We do not derive any benefit from mere believing in the Trinity. There is no moral difference between belief in a Godhead consisting of three persons and that in a Godhead consisting of ten.

According to Kant, reason is the highest interpreter of the Bible. If the records of revelation do not appeal to reason, they ought to be rejected. The German philosopher says that the foundation of a complete ethical religion originally lay in the human heart. This, according to the Kantian system, a religion beyond morality is unnecessary. It is a mere theory. We have obscure ideas of God and immorality. We cannot go further, *i.e.*, we cannot go beyond such theoretical ideas.

The post-Kantian philosophers, such as Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, starting from the conclusions of Kant, developed other systems, each having peculiarities of its own. Each of these thinkers brought forward his own speculation, but failed to give a better explanation of the basis of morality than that given by Kant. The result was considerable and heated discussion throughout Germany for years to come until a reaction set in as embodied by the appearance of Schopenhauer. This noted philosopher taught that all our actions proceed from certain motives, which can be divided into two classes—the first, desire to further well-being ; the second, desire to cause ill. These underlie all our actions ; hence every act that a man can possibly perform must have as its aim, either one's own well-being or another's ill, or *vice versa*.

Therefore each human action can be divided into four classes according to its relation to the four motives. First, an act intended for another's ill is called malice ; secondly, for one's own well-being, egoism ; thirdly, for another's well-being, compassion ; and fourthly, for one's own ill, asceticism. These four classes of motives determine the moral merit or demerit of human actions. The first two motives are called, by Schopenhauer, will to live, or the affirmation of will ; and

the last two, compassion and asceticism, are the denial of the Will.

This denial of the will-to-live is, according to Schopenhauer, the true basis of morality. Acts that are performed, not for the affirmation of the will-to-live, but for its denial, are moral and virtuous ; for, when it is denied, then come rest, happiness, and freedom. Thus the deficiencies of the Kantian system have been supplied by Schopenhauer. But the latter acknowledges allegiance to the wisdom of the *Upanishad* or Vedanta (the highest philosophy, according to many Western scholars, that the human mind has ever produced), which he calls sacred without the least hesitation. "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishad*". These are the words of the greatest of the post-Kantian philosophers.

Schopenhauer's great disciple, Dr. Paul Deussen, says, in his *Metaphysics*, that Christianity, like all other great religions of the world, inculcates the highest moral law: "Love thy neighbour as thyself". But why should we do so? The answer we do not find in the Bible, but in the *Upanishads*. The *Upanishads* say that the whole basis of morality cannot be any other than oneness. Love means the expression of oneness. This love, however, must not be confined to our neighbours only ; it must include all living creatures, because we are one in spirit with every other living creature. The Vedanta says: "Love every living creature as thyself"—because the same Self or Spirit, is there. First of all, "realize the Self or Spirit in thee ; then thou shalt be able to realize the Self, or Spirit everywhere". He that realizes that one universal Spirit everywhere cannot kill spirit by spirit. The moment we realize that we are Spirit, all selfishness vanishes. It is on account of selfishness, which proceeds from the idea of separateness, that we do not recognize the rights of others. Because of selfishness we try to enrich ourselves by injuring others and depriving them of their rights.

Selfishness is the cause of all evil and immorality ; and unselfishness is but another term for the recognition of oneness. That which proceeds from the idea of separateness ; i.e., from selfish motives, is immoral and sinful ; and that which leads towards unselfishness is moral, virtuous and good. That which prevents us from realizing our oneness with God and humanity, is wrong ; and that which helps us in loving every living creature

as ourselves is moral, godly and divine All the commandments. 'Thou shalt not' and 'Thou shalt', which we find in various scriptures, may be summed up in two simple sentences. "Do not be selfish ; be unselfish". Therefore, unselfishness, or the recognition of oneness, is the true basis of morality

CHAPTER VII

VEDANTA TOWARDS RELIGION

Hundreds of educated men and women have found in Vedanta the true foundation of universal religion. It has neither dogma, nor creed of any kind. It embraces all the special religions, such as Christianity, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Mohammedanism, Brahminism, and like a thread it weaves them together into a garland of flowers, variegated in their size and colour. Like an impartial judge, the religion of Vedanta gives the proper place to each of these sectarian religions in the grand evolution of the spiritual thoughts and systems of the world. Having no particular founder, it stands upon the eternal spiritual laws that have been discovered by various sages and seers of Truth of all countries and of all ages and which have been described in the different scriptures of the world. Those who have studied the religion of Vedanta in its various aspects, have found the spiritual laws which are given in all the different scriptures. For them it is not necessary to study the Vedas of the Hindus, the Tripitakas of the Buddhists, the Zend-Avesta of the Parsees, the Old Testament of the Jews, the Bible of the Christians and the Quran of the Mohammedans in order to understand those spiritual laws. Because they can find the essential points, the moral and spiritual laws that govern our lives, through the study of Vedanta. It is not necessary for them if they can only understand the central point that Truth is universal. If there be any spiritual law, that must be universal and must pervade all the scriptures of the world. Then there will be no difficulty; everything will appear to us as simple. Furthermore, the students of Vedanta find in this religion the ultimate conclusion of the greatest scientific thinkers of the world. It includes all scientific truths. The religion of Vedanta is, therefore, extremely comforting to those who have outgrown the doctrines and dogmas of special religions, and I can assure you that it has brought the greatest comfort and consolation to them who are earnest and sincere seekers after universal Truth.

Religion of Vedanta is like a huge structure, the foundation

of which is laid, not upon the quicksand of the authority of any particular book or personality, but upon the solid rock of logical and scientific reasoning and the wall which are not made up of the clay of superstitious dogmas, but are built with the stones of spiritual experiences, placed one upon another by the artistic hands of the great seers of Truth of ancient and modern times. The roof of this superb structure is not confined within the celestial domain of the anthropomorphic God of a personal religion, but it extends beyond all the heavens of different religions, and, rising above all the various planes of relativity, reaches that infinite and eternal abode of being, intelligence, love and everlasting bliss. The gates of this magnificent palace are guarded, not by zealots and fanatics who carry destructive weapons in their hands to prevent the entrance of other sectarians, but by sincerity and earnestness standing like sentinels to welcome with open arms all those who are sincere and earnest seekers after Truth, spiritual life and Godconsciousness, irrespective of their creed, nationality or religious conviction. There are many stories in that palatial building, three of which are of great importance. The first floor is for the monotheists, or those who believe in the existence of one personal God whom they worship under a particular name and a particular form. Here is the place for all the monotheistic believers and worshippers in Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, Lamaism, Brahminism and theistic Buddhism, with their various sects and denominations. Here are to be found all the doctrines, dogmas, rituals, ceremonials and symbols that are described in these particular religions.

The second story is for those who have outgrown all ritualism, ceremonialism, symbolism and the worship of a God with a particular name and form. It is for those who have understood that God is not far from us, dwelling in a heaven somewhere above the clouds, but that God dwells in nature, He is immanent and resident in nature, He is not far away, but He is here, He is the Soul of our souls, He is the Life of our lives; "in Him we live and move and have our beings". Those who feel this and those who realize that we are children of God, that our souls are inseparable parts of that one stupendous whole, the infinite Being, worshipped on the second floor of this superstructure of religions of Vedanta.

God of Vedanta is personal, yet He is not confined to any particular personality. He is again personal and impersonal, and beyond both. You cannot confine God by giving Him any particular personality. If you think that He is sitting on a throne somewhere with two hands, you will limit Him. In truth, God of Vedanta is beyond all limitations. He is the transcendental Reality which knows no division and duality.

God of Vedanta has again many names and many aspects, and these names and aspects are recognized by the different religions of the world. But He has no particular form, though He assumes many forms in order to satisfy the desires of earnest and sincere devotees ; and to fulfill the prayers of them. He manifests Himself in that particular form to which the heart and the soul of the devotee are devoted. His personal aspect is worshipped under different names by different religions. The Christians worship Him as the Father in heaven, the Mohammedans as Allah, the Zoroastrians call Him Ahura Mazda, the Hindus give Him various names, the Buddhists call Him Buddha, the worshippers of divine Mother call Him the Mother of the universe. But God is sexless, and the moment we rise above the ideas of any sex and personality we have become divine. God has no sex. Why should you call Him Father and give Him masculine sex? He may be called as masculin, or faminine, or neuter—it does not make any difference. In truth, there is no distinction of sex in God. He is above the category of sex, but yet He is imagined as possessed of these qualities. When you understand this central truth, there in no difference in the expression. But the personal God of the dualistic religions of Semitic origin is masculine, He is Jehovah ; the same Jehovah again is Father in Heaven, is Allah, is Ahura Mazda.

The third story of this structure is for those who have gone beyond all relativity, who have transcended phenomenal existence, and who have reached that state of divine communion which manifests the eternal, absolute oneness of the supreme Spirit. It is for those who realize the indivisible oneness of that Being. That Being cannot be divided into parts, but He is one stupendous whole and indivisible. He is finer than space, and as space cannot be divided, so God cannot be divided into parts. That is the absolute Spirit, the infinite Being.

But yet this infinite Being is called by various names. In Vedanta it is called the Brahman, *Paramatman* or Over-Soul ; but It is the same as the *Good* of Plato, the *Substantia* of Spinoza, the transcendental *thing-in-itself* (*Ding an Sich*) of Kant, the *Will* of Schopenhauer, the *Unknown and Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer, the *Substance* of Ernest Haeckel, the *Science of Matter* of the Materialists the *Real Entity* or *Spirit* of the Spiritualists. It is also the same as Christ He is also the same as Buddha and other prophets

All the different names are given to God the Absolute by different philosophers, as also by different worshippers Three phases of Vedanta, the dualistic, the qualified non-dualistic and the non-dualistic or monistic,—include all the sectarian religions of the world and impart the highest ideals given in all the scriptures. What is the highest ideal given in the scripture of the Christians or of the Mohammedans, or of the Parsees ? The worship of one God ; that is the highest ideal God may be personal ; He may have some form He may have a particular name, but still He is one. This is found in the dualistic phase of Vedanta. Vedanta accepts also that ideal, and, therefore, it embraces all the religions that I have just mentioned. As, on the one hand, religion of Vedanta embraces special religions of the world, and the highest ideals of all the scriptures of the world, so, on the other hand, the philosophy of Vedanta embraces the highest ideals and ultimate conclusions of the greatest scientists, the most eminent philosophers, the profoundest thinkers and the best metaphysicians of the world. Therefore, religion of Vedanta is truly universal Its scope is unlimited and there is no other religion in the world which can be compared to it in its universality and in its infinite scope. Religion of Vedanta is inseparable from true science and from true philosophy. Why? Because all sciences and all philosophies are nothing but so many attempts of human minds to grasp some particular phase of the eternal Truth, or the infinite Reality. As truth is the goal of all sciences and all philosophies, so it is the goal of Vedanta. As Vedanta attempts to lead all human minds to the realization of that absolute Truth of oneness so, it embraces all the philosophies of the world. In particular doctrines, in particular arguments, in particular discussions, and in particular points, there

may be diversity, but the ideal is one and hence Professor Max Muller said: "Vedanta is the most sublime of all philosophies and the most comforting of all religions". Because it embraces the highest truths given in the philosophy of Plato, Schopenhauer, Hegel, Kant, Berkeley, Hume, and others. For this reason, we should call the religion and philosophy of Vedanta absolutely unsectarian and universal. The follower of Vedantic religion is also a true Christian. He is a true Christian, but, in spirit, he is broader than a Christian. He is a true Mohammedan; he is also a true Buddhist, a true Brahmin, a true Hindu. He is a worshipper of Truth. He honours and reveres all the great prophets and seers of Truth of all countries, accepts their teachings, and never fails to separate the essentials of religion from the non-essentials, or the crystalized dogmas and doctrines of special religions. He does not belong to any sect or creed of any particular religion, yet in spirit he belongs to all creeds of all religions. Because he knows the spirit of all creeds, he understands the meaning of all sectarian doctrines and dogmas. He does not belong to any particular church or any particular temple, but he regards all churches, all places of worship, all temples and all mosques as equally sacred and equally holy. To his all-embracing soul they are all equally great, and so he is able to worship his ideal in a Catholic Church or in a Mohammedan mosque. Nowhere he is limited. When he sits under a tree, he worships. He may not go to Church on Sundays but he may sit in the park beneath a tree and worship God in spirit. He feels that each individual soul is the temple wherein dwells the eternal Being and He must be worshipped in spirit. That is a grand ideal.

Vedanta accepts the teachings of the great prophets like Moses, Zoroaster, Jesus the Christ, Buddha, Confucius, Laotze, and others who have arisen in India and in various other parts of the world. Rama, Krishna, Sankara, Ramakrishna and others are also recognized as the prophets or saviours. It recognizes Jesus the Christ as the Son of God, or as the Incarnation of Divinity, but not as the only one. For there have been many other Incarnations and will be many more in future. God is not limited to any particular tribe or particular nationality, or time, or place. Why should we limit Him? He is the infinite Being, the Father of all nations. Wherever His mani-

festation is necessary, He will appear. He loves all mankind equally. He does not think that the Jews are his chosen people, while others are heathens. No, they are all equal in His eyes. **All nations are great before Him.** Therefore, we must not have any national prejudice on account of colour or particular mode of living, we all are children of the same God.

Religion of Vedanta recognizes spiritual growth and evolution in the path of realization. As in our physical body there are different stages of growth, so there are different stages in the spiritual life. One leads to the other, one merges into the other and ultimately all the stages lead to God, to realization. Spiritual childhood begins with the worship of ancestors, or departed spirits and ends with the conception of one extra-cosmic personal God who dwells outside of nature. That is the limit of spiritual childhood. All primitive religions began with the ancestor-worship. The ancestor-worship, or the spirit-worship, was the foundation of all religions in primitive times. The modern spiritism, or the ancient ancestor-worship, is only the beginning of spiritual childhood. In ancient times, when the people came to believe in departed spirits and felt that they have control over certain conditions, they were frightened and they began to revere and honour those spirits. Gradually this gave rise to another conception, that of still higher and more powerful spirits who had greater control over the phenomena of nature, and they called these tribal gods. They became the nature-gods, and the belief in such tribal gods you will find amongst the different tribes of ancient India, China, Japan, and other countries. They are like the chiefs who have control over certain manifestations of nature or certain powers; and this may be called the second stage of spiritual childhood. Gradually this leads to another step, which is a little higher. In this stage there is one governor over all these tribal gods or chiefs, and this conception is the monotheistic conception of a personal God. He is the ruler of all, of the sun-god, of the moon-god, of departed spirits, of the ancestors and the bright spirits. This is the beginning of the dualistic conception of God, and there is the end of spiritual childhood. All those dualistic religions, which we call monotheistic religions, do not go beyond this. They lead our minds and souls to the worship of one personal God, who dwells outside of nature, and they

make us believe that this is the highest stage, and there can be nothing higher.

These dualistic religions like Zoroastrianism and Mohammedanism lead to the highest stage of spiritual childhood in the spiritual life. But the spiritual youth begins when we begin to realize that God is not outside of nature, but He is in nature. He is not outside of us, but He is in us. He is not extra-cosmic, but is intra-cosmic. He is immanent and resident in nature. He is the Soul of the universe. Just as the soul of our body is the internal ruler of our body, so the Soul of the universe is the internal ruler of the universe. He governs, not from outside, but from inside. He is the Creator, not in the sense that He sits somewhere and commands and creates the world out of the material which dwells outside of His own being, but He creates by pouring His spiritual influx in nature and starting the evolution of that cosmic energy which is called the *Prakriti* or Nature. The cosmic energy forms the body of the spiritual Being. God then appears to be both the efficient and material cause of the universe as well as the Father and the Mother in one. The individual souls come out of His own being like the sparks coming out of the huge bon-fire. The huge bon-fire is the Divinity, and our souls are like the sparks which have sprung out of that bon-fire of the Divinity. We are immortal by our birth-right, because we are the parts of that one stupendous whole.

This stage gradually leads to spiritual maturity where we do not think of the world, but rising above all phenomena, we realize the indivisible oneness and feel that we are not merely sparks, but are something closer to the Divinity. Then we feel that we are one with God. Then we say. "I and my Father are one". Not one in the sense that an earthly child is one with its father, but it is an undivided unity, because God is all in all, and all is God. There is nothing outside of God, everything has vanished, all phenomena have disappeared, all relative existences have been dissolved, and the whole universe appears to be like a solid mass of infinite and indivisible Reality. Then all phenomenal existences seem to be like dreams. But you cannot realize it, unless you rise on a higher plane. We are all playing parts on the stage of the world. I have taken some part and you have taken some other part. There is no

difference. You are playing the part of a listener, and I am playing the part of a speaker, but we are all on the same stage. You may help me and I may help you. Your desires seek satisfaction through your thoughts and deeds, so everybody else is doing the same. You may have certain dreams in your life, and you may think that if you can realize these, You have fulfilled your purpose in life, then, after fulfilling that, you think that there is another purpose. You must push on and reach that end. The process will recur many times until all purposes are fulfilled, all desires are satisfied and all aims are gratified. So, in reaching the maturity in spiritual life, we reach the absolutely monistic perception of spiritual oneness. It is not pantheism, but it is the absolute monism, or Advaitavada. There is no other word for it Pantheism means 'all is God': the chair is God, the sun is God, the moon is God, etc. But, in absolute monism, the chair does not exist The sun, the moon and the stars, nay, any particular phenomenon do not also exist, but we reach the background. God is like the eternal canvas upon which the beautiful picture of this phenomenal world is painted by the Divine hand. In absolute monism, we realize the canvas. At present we are fascinated and charmed by the colourings of the external and we have forgotten the canvas, the background of the universe. When we realize the background, we reach the highest, the Absolute.

Religion of Vedanta teaches that there is one God, but with many aspects From spiritual childhood we must rise to spiritual youth, and from spiritual youth to maturity, then we shall be one with the Infinite. The same God is worshipped under different names and different forms Religion of Vedanta is truly catholic and tolerant. It does not dispute It has neither particular form of worship, nor does it ask that you do this or that, but its main theme is that any form of worship which appeals to the sincerity and earnestness of the soul of the devotee, is right. If you think that worship of any particular ideal in a particular way will help you, go and do it, do not hesitate. If you think that it would not help you, do not do it The worship of God depends upon the attitude of the human mind and temper of the worshipper But God is above all conceptions of human mind. He is supramental and supra-mundane.

Try to understand the highest purpose of life and worship the ideal under any form or any name which appears to you. All rituals, all ceremonials, and all forms of worship, are only the means to the highest end, which is the realization of the Divinity. Therefore religion of Vedanta embraces all other special sectarian religions and all forms of worship under the different names. Some do not care to worship a personal God, but think of His impersonal nature. They are just as good ; they are not going astray. So long as there is sincerity and earnestness and love for the spiritual ideal, there is no going astray. We make our heaven and hell on this earth by our own thoughts and deeds. There is no other external hell, or eternal place of punishment. Our own minds dwell in hell when we have performed some wicked deeds, or some wrong. Our souls rebel at that time. But when we are in the path of righteousness, our souls are happy and there is peace, and there is the manifestation of the Divinity. Because God manifests when our minds are silent and that silence comes through peace. And when there is peace, there is happiness and eternal bliss.

CHAPTER VIII

RELIGION OF VEDANTA

The history of religions bears out that impulse to religion is deep-rooted in man. It has been an integral part of man's being from the very dawn of history. "All that we love, all that constitutes in our eyes the ornament of life, liberal cultivation of the mind, science, grand art may be destined to endure only for a time, but religion will never die. It is eternal protest of the soul against systematic or brutal materialism which would imprison man in the lower region of vulgar life. Civilization has its intermissions but religion has not" Further history tells us that different religions of the world are inter-related in a changing process and there is no religion without its roots in the past. Religions are never made, but they blossom spontaneously like a flower or plant, drawing its nourishment from the soil of its birth, and bearing the stamp of local names and forms, and beliefs and traditions

We know how Christianity and Mohammedanism grew from the soil of Judaism, which was in turn influenced by the atmosphere of Zoroastrianism of Persia. We also know how Judaism gradually developed from the polytheistic beliefs of the ancient tribes of the Israelites, Babylonians, Chaldeans and other nations of antiquity. Again, we are familiar with the fact that Buddhism sprang up from the soil of Hindusthan, but gradually spread all over the world. But it is wrong to assume that the historical successors destroy the predecessors. The birth of new religions furthers in a sense the cause of earlier ones by reinterpretation of ideas and concepts already familiar. Besides, they help the development of new conception about God, the universe and man's relation to it.

The later religions may introduce and often do introduce new creeds and concepts, codes and customs, and myths and rituals, but the central idea of the worship of God remains the same, although He is worshipped under different names. The Christian conception of God appears to be more developed than that of Judaism. They have followers of the two reli-

gions, indeed vast difference in their creeds and customs, rituals and mythologies exist. The same Yaveh of Judaism has been worshipped by the Christians as the Father in Heaven, and as Allah by the Mohammedans, only the different aspect of the Deity being emphasized in each of these religions. But tragically enough, the followers of each religion often miss the vital point and declare through sheer propagandistic zeal that their particular religion is the best of all and it alone is fitted to become the supreme universal religion for mankind. They proceed further and believe that the non-conformists are going astray. They require to be corrected and set on the right path, no matter whether they are willing or not. Some of the followers will not stop here ; they will even draw out the sword and compel others to embrace their particular faith. All these are not due to man's wickedness, but to what we may call fanaticism. Fanaticism rises from man's will to dominate others. Once it is born, it brings in its frame a lot of other evils. It blinds man's vision and stires up the animal in him. It hardens man's heart destroys all sublime sentiments that give sanctity to life and ultimately allows cruelty and intolerance to get the upperhand. Man then degenerates into the level of brute-creation and often becomes as ferocious as a wild tiger.

But religion brings out the most intense love for all humanity, nay, for all living creatures and establishes peace on earth, and its perversion brings out the most diabolical hatred and persecution ever known in the world. Religion makes one saintly and makes a living God on earth, but its perverted form has deluged the world with blood. The latter has forced the Mohammedans to hold the sword in one hand and the Quran on the other. It is also religion that has kindled the fires of Inquisition and has burnt alive hundreds and thousands of innocent persons whom we now call martyrs. Again, while the former has stopped the slaughter of animals and built hospitals for the poor and suffering people, not only for men and women, but also for animals, the latter makes one so cruel and heartless as nothing can possibly do.

The history of humanity stands like a living witness before us to enlighten our mind by describing in full details the deeds perpetrated by religion in different parts of the world. But each of these recognized religions of the world claims to have

been revealed by God. Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism—all these claim that they are revealed religions. If so, let us see what and where is the cause of discord and disharmony which we find in the religious world. A Mohammedan says that his religion is true, because it is direct revelation of God, and, consequently, he cannot believe that other religions are revealed in the same way. A Christian will say that his religion is true, because it was revealed by God, while others are not so. As the Quran is the revealed scripture of the Mohammedans, so is the Bible of the Christians, the Old Testament of the Jews, the Zend Avesta of the Parsees, and the Vedas of the Hindus. Each of these scriptures is held to be the sacred word of God and is considered to be true by its followers, and if one, for instance, be true then the Zend Avesta, or the Bible, cannot be true, because they contradict each other. How can all scriptures be true at the same time when they contradict one another? A Christian who believes in the Bible as true and revealed, does not recognize other scriptures and, therefore, feels it a bounden duty to save the souls of the non-Christians by adopting various means, fair or foul. They must save them from darkness and bring them to light. There are some sects amongst the Christians whose motto is: 'The end justifies the means', and they do not hesitate to tell a lie, or to commit any crime, if it is necessary for saving a soul who follows the teachings of the non-Christian scripture. This process of coercion among the followers of various religious creeds has been going on since the beginning of the religious history and will continue in future. If the Christian Bible be true and revealed, then the Mohammedan Quran cannot be true and revealed according to the Christian standard; both cannot be true at the same time for they are contradictory to each other. But the question is as to who will decide which of these scriptures is true and revealed? Neither a Christian nor a Mohammedan can decide it, for each holds his own scriptures as infallible and denounces that of others as false.

If you believe in your scriptures as true and revealed, then why should you not allow others to believe in their scriptures in the same manner? The validity for one belief is just as strong as that of any other. Again, the followers of Christia-

nity are always ready to denounce the scriptures and the prophets of other religions by giving all kinds of arguments, but they do not think for a moment that if the same arguments be applied against their prophets and scriptures, their whole religious structure will fall to pieces. Some say that the personality of Christ is historical, while those of Krishna and Buddha are not. Some scholars say that the legends about Krishna and Buddha were founded upon the life and works of Jesus the Christ. If any one asked them what proof is there that the legends concerning the life of Jesus the Christ were not founded upon the life and works of Buddha or Krishna, their answer is because 'Christ is historical'. But has any one succeeded in proving the historical personality of Christ? Many think that they have, but still it remains doubtful.

The advocates of each religion often say that there cannot be higher doctrines and ideals than what exist in their scriptures and the interpretation which they give to their scriptures is the true meaning while any other explanation is heretical. Consequently, they will not accept other explanations, but will take adequate measure against those heretics. There is no wicked act which such fanatics cannot do in the name of religion. Furthermore, these doctrines and ideals are most intimately connected with the lives of founders of these great religions, or imbedded in the mythological descriptions of a personal God with a particular name and form. The doctrines and ideals of Buddhism are most inseparably connected with the life and miraculous powers of Buddha. The ideal of Mohammedanism cannot be separated from the life and deeds of Mohammed. Christianity has been built around the personality of Jesus the Christ, its founder. If the life and miraculous works of Christ be taken away, the whole fabric of Christianity will fall to pieces. Take away the life of Buddha and his wonderful renunciation, struggle and spiritual illumination, and nothing will be left of Buddhism. As the Christians cannot think of their religion without Christ, so the Buddhists, or the Mohammedans, cannot think of their religion without Buddha or Mohammed. The events and incidents of the life of the founder of one religion differ from those of another and since the followers of every religion centre their whole thought upon the life and works of its founder, they

cannot think justly of the founders of other religions, so they always ignore their existence and their teachings. Moreover, the follower of every creed thinks: "My prophet is the best and greatest of all, all other prophets are neither genuine, nor historical".

The miraculous deeds and wonderful powers shown by the prophet of one particular sect, will be considered as true and perfect by its followers, while the accounts of similar powers and similar deeds, if found in any other religion, will be rejected as mere fiction. For instance, a Christian will believe the miraculous powers of Jesus the Christ as true and historical such as, when Jesus walked on the sea, or raised the dead, or fed the multitude with a small quantity of food. But if similar accounts are found in the life of Krishna and Buddha, a Christian will consider them as false stories. Thus each will stick to his own prophet and denounce the rest and this has been the cause of many quarrels and fights in the religious world.

Again, the followers of every religion will accept mythology and rituals of their own scripture as historical facts and reject those of others as unhistorical, superstitious and horrible. For instance, a Christian will believe that God came down in the form of a dove, and he would not consider it a mythology but history, but if a Hindu believe that his God came down in the form of an eagle, then our Christian brothers would laugh at him and denounce him to be a heathen, idolator, superstitious, etc. The rituals of sacrament are quite justifiable and sacred to a Christian, but the rituals of the Hindus are regarded by the Christians as pitifully horrible and barbarous. Similarly, to a Hindu or a Buddhist the Christian sacrament may appear to be horrible. He may say that the eating of the flesh and the drinking of the blood of one who was killed, are nothing but the lingering vestiges of the primitive customs of a cannibal.

Thus we see that one religion differs from another in doctrines, mythologies, and rituals. Therefore, the followers of each sect will naturally disagree with those of another and will continue to quarrel and fight against one another. How can there be peace and harmony in the religious world when one sect is trying to force upon others its doctrines and rituals, dogmas and mythologies, however imperfect and superstitious

they might be. The Christian missionaries go to India and try to introduce their rituals and ceremonials in the place of the Hindu rituals and ceremonials. The Roman Catholic ceremonies are not different from those of the Hindus except that they have put Christ in the place of Krishna or Buddha.

Therefore, so long as these sectarian religions will continue to exist, there shall be no crying halt to discord and disharmony. Although each sectarian religion professes to bring eternal peace on earth and pretends to lead men and women to God and to do good to humanity, still it has, as a matter of fact, brought discord and evil and has driven many to destruction. Some people think if there were one religion in the whole world, there would have been peace and harmony. The Christians have tried their best to Christianize the whole world and bring all men and women of all nations under the banner of Jesus the Christ. The Mohammedans also in the same way tried to convert the whole world into their faith, but have they succeeded? No, they will not certainly be successful. No sooner had they started than they began to split into different sects and each sect commenced to fight against the other. Think of the sects into which Mohammedanism and Christianity have already been divided. There are about seventy-five sects amongst the Mohammedans and two hundred and fifty amongst the Christians, each trying to subdue others.

Many reformers have risen in various parts of the world and have tried their utmost to bring all humanity under one religion. All of them have failed, and no good has ever been produced by such a method. All such attempts will end in absolute failure. Shall we then try to drive away all religions from the face of the earth in order to bring peace and harmony amongst ourselves? No, that is also impossible, because without some kind of religion man would be no better than a brute.

Religion is a spontaneous outgrowth of the spiritual nature of a human being. Our higher aspirations would be killed if there were no religion to animate our vital self. Is there then no hope for finding peace and harmony among the different religions? If we can find a religion which shall embrace all religions of the world, shall accept all the existing and future sects and creeds with their peculiarities, which shall give them full scope for future growth and progress to play their full

parts, and which shall recognize them all as true and revealed, then there is hope of finding peace and harmony in the religious world

Do we mean that we shall create a new religion in order to bring peace and happiness upon this earth? No, we cannot create a religion, as it already exists in the universe, and those only, who have eyes to see can see this. As in the physical world we find unity in variety, so in the spiritual world the plan of nature is unity in variety. As it will be destructive method to make all human beings look alike or act alike, so it will be to make every individual follow one religion. The spiritual life of every individual will be destroyed if we try to force one particular creed, doctrine or dogma upon one and all. But if, on the contrary, we discover unity in variety and variety in unity in the spiritual life of individuals and if we do not denounce any particular sect, but recognize the rights of all, then there will be peace and harmony. A religion which shows the underlying unity in variety of religious creeds, doctrines, dogmas, rituals and ceremonials without denouncing any sect or creed and which accepts all with equal reverence to all the prophets like Moses, Christ, Krishna, Mohammed, Zoroaster, Confucius, Buddha and others who appeared at different times in different countries and all those who will come in future, and accept the teachings of each as equally true and leading to the same goal—will be known as universal religion. That religion should be based upon the common principle of all existing religions, and should give infinite-scope for the growth to all the various branches of dualistic, qualified non-dualistic and monistic systems and to their followers. It will pass through all sects and creeds of different religions as a piece of golden thread passes through the beads of variegated sizes and colours, and will combine them into one harmonious unity

That unity in variety was discovered by the Vedantic sages in ancient India. The expression of this great Truth we find in the Rig Veda, the most ancient scriptures of the world: "That which exists is one, men call it by various names and worship it under different forms". The same infinite Being is called Jehovah by the Jews; Father in heaven by the Christians, Allah by the Mohammedans, Buddha by the

Buddhists, and Ahura Mazda by the Zoroastrians and Brahman by the Hindus. Thus unity in variety is the foundation of religion of Vedanta. Standing upon this universal Truth Vedanta declares that the central truth of all religions is one but the paths by which it can be reached may vary. Each special religion shows a path for attaining that one goal. The religion of Vedanta is universal, because it is not built around any particular personality. Any religion or philosophy that depends for its vitality and continuity upon a specific book or person, cannot be universal. The universal religion must be absolutely impersonal. So long as there is a founder of a religion, so long as it is limited by the personality of the founder, it can never be universal, as we find in Christianity, Buddhism, Mohammedanism and such other kindred faiths. Religion of Vedanta embraces all the scriptures of the world and accepts all the prophets and saviours of the past ages and will accept all those who may come in future. Therefore, it is universal. Professor Max Muller says: "Vedanta has room for almost every religion, nay, it embraces them all".

As we see today, the universal religion of Vedanta has existed from very ancient times but it has never persecuted any sect or creed, and has always shown the universal toleration as its principle. The Christians have taken shelter in India, the Mohammedans came and persecuted the Hindus, the Parsees came to India and took shelter and they have lived there unoppressed. Today you do not find the Parsees in Persia; their religion does not exist in Persia but in India. They have been living in India since the fourth century after Christ.

The universal religion of Vedanta has many phases: the dualistic phase (*dvaitavada*) includes all the dualistic systems of the world. It teaches the worship of a personal God, or, the worship of a spiritual or divine ideal. It does not denounce the worship of a God with form and name, but, at the same time, it describes that God is one with many aspects and forms, He can take any form that He wishes.

The qualified non-dualistic (*vishistadvaitavada*) system of Vedanta include all other sectarian systems which preach the immanency and transcendency of God. It says that He is dwel-

ing in the universe as well as outside, that He is the Soul of our souls. We live, move and have our beings in God, we are all children of immortal Bliss, and we are all sons of the same universal Father. That God is the one stupendous whole and we are His parts. All these are embraced under the system of Vedanta.

The non-dualistic (*advaitavada*) phase embraces the highest philosophical religion which the human soul can attain. It is that which brings us to the plane of the Absolute where all divisions and dualities are dissolved into an eternal unity, and from where we can understand who we are, and can say: 'I and my Father are one (*aham-brahmasmi*)'. What is the meaning of the statement: "The essence of the Creator and the essence of the individual soul can be united in the non-dualistic (*advaita*) phase of Vedanta philosophy?" It is nothing but the recognition of the already accomplished Brahman-knowledge which forms the background of all the world-appearance.

The universal religion of Vedanta is both a religion and a philosophy. There have been in existence many philosophical systems in Europe amongst the Greeks and Romans, but none of those systems has ever succeeded in harmonizing the religious ideals with philosophy; none of them has answered the questions which trouble the religious minds; none of them has fulfilled the aspirations of the human soul; none of them has shown the way out of selfishness, out of this self-delusion, out of *maya*, as Vedanta calls it. But, in Vedanta, we find the solution of all the problems and the answer to all questions which rise in the human mind, and at the same time these answers are not antagonistic. That which is unscientific or unphilosophical cannot be religious. It teaches the evolution of the world and at the same time it has kept the door open to receive all the solutions that have been discovered by modern science, or will be discovered in future.

There is another reason, why universal religion of Vedanta can be called universal? Because Vedanta does not prescribe any particular method of worship for all individuals. On the contrary, it classifies human minds according to the variety of their tendencies, and these are divided in four divisions. These again into other sub-divisions which include all classes of

religious inquirers. These are called 'Yoga' which means the 'path by which one can attain to the goal'.

First is the Karma Yoga. It means the path attaining God through work' It teaches us how we can transform the ordinary works of our everyday life into acts of worship and how we can direct all these actions towards the service of God. It teaches the secret of work. It is for those actively engaged in a worldly life and in business, but, at the same time, it tells us how we should work for works' sake, recognizing that which is beyond all activity and dwells in our souls. If we can see that which is beyond all activity in the midst of action, we have seen the Divinity That may not seem to be any kind of worship, but all the actions of this daily life, if performed properly, understanding the secret of work, will lead to the highest goal.

The next is the Bhakti Yoga. It is the path of reaching God through the practice of devotion or love. It teaches how all the emotions of the heart can be directed towards God, how human love can be transformed into Divine love, and how we can feel the presence of Divinity in the emotions When the mother caresses the child, the mother will be able to feel the presence of Divinity in that child if the mother be a follower of this path called the Bhakti Yoga It is for the emotional who cannot comprehend the clear truths but who wish to exercise the feelings and direct the emotions to God.

The Raja Yoga comes as the third stage. It is the path of concentration and meditation Through this path one can attain to the same goal, or the same ideal The practice of this Yoga enables one to conquer the vast psychic plane It teaches how to develop the psychic powers, through transference and other psychic powers, shown by Jesus the Christ, or by the Christian Scientists of today. These are described in the Raja Yoga. All the psychic phenomena have been taken up under this branch of the Vedanta philosophy and have also been brought into a science. Those who have read the *Patanjala—Darshana*, can understand how wonderfully scientific every word of it is The Raja Yoga teaches the wonderful powers of breathing exercises. This is not unknown to the American mental healers and others They all are beginning to recognize the power of breathing exercises and many doctors and physi-

cians are giving these to their patients. It teaches that through the breathing exercises one can gain self-control and can gain mental power as well as spiritual poise.

The last method is the path of the Jnana Yoga. It is the path of discrimination, right reasoning and proper analysis. Those who can discriminate the real from the unreal, matter from spirit and spirit from matter, know that the highest goal of religion can be reached through discrimination. It is meant for those who are intellectual and who do not care for concentration or devotion or any psychic powers and who do not believe in a personal God. Those who are agnostic and atheistic, can here find consolation and happiness.

Besides these, universal religion of Vedanta explains the fundamental principles of that which we call spiritualistic belief. But spiritualism explains how one can communicate with the departed spirits. The departed spirits do communicate with the persons being bound by the law of action and reaction, they remain earth-bound and continue to exist. It also admits the Swedenborgianism and explains how the correspondences were discovered ages before Swedenborg was born.

The Vedanta philosophy embraces the teachings of all the great prophets of different nations and different countries. It quarrels with none, neither with science nor with philosophy, nor with the sectarian religions of the world. It accepts the teachings of Buddha and Christ, of Krishna and Mohammed, of Moses and others, only giving the most generalized explanations to all these principal descriptions of the same Truth.

Universal religion of Vedanta has neither a sect, nor a creed, as some erroneously think. The Christian can join, or become a student of Vedanta, even with a loyalty to Christianity. He may go to church and follow his creed, but still he will be a follower of Vedanta ; his spiritual eye will be opened and his soul will be directed to the Truth universal.

CHAPTER IX

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF VEDANTIC RELIGION

Universal religion of Vedanta, like other great religions of the world, includes both theory and practice. The theoretical part of Vedanta is known as philosophy, but when this philosophy is put into practice, it becomes religion of Vedanta, because religion by its very nature is practical. A set of impracticable theories cannot be called religion. Where theory ends, there is the beginning of true religion. Of the tree of knowledge ; philosophy is the flower and religion is the fruit. In studying Vedanta one finds philosophy and religion i.e., theory and practice going hand in hand. They are inseparable. We cannot divorce philosophy from religion, nor religion from philosophy.

At the same time, Vedanta does not contribute any irrational or unscientific theory, but its theories are based upon the scientific truths and spiritual laws discovered by the seers of all ages. Its theories are not like absurd dogmas founded upon tradition and superstition which fade away under the shining light of science, but, on the contrary, they are in perfect harmony with the well-established theories of ancient and modern times. And those universally accepted truths, find room in philosophy and religion of Vedanta. Take, for instance, the theory of evolution. It is now an accepted truth of science. By this theory of evolution Vedanta explains the processes and modes in which the forces of nature operate and also explains the origin of the diverse phenomena of the cosmos. The rational explanation of the universe must rest upon this theory of cosmic evolution and involution and not upon the theory of special creation. Although Vedanta, like modern science, asserts that the special creation is not the proper explanation of the universe, yet it is wrong to think that Vedanta has received the idea of evolution from modern science ; on the contrary, it has always upheld and taught this theory from very ancient times. In fact, the earliest writings on Vedanta describe cosmic evolution also. In the *Upanishads*

and in the *Samkhya* system of philosophy we find the explanation of the gradual evolution of the universe from one eternal energy which is known as Prakrity.

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

Vedanta teaches that there is one substance, one existence, one life, one truth, and one spirit or God. You may call that absolute One by any name you like. Vedanta says that it is not many, but is one without the second. All the arbitrary distinctions and ideas of separation, although are relatively true on the surface, will appear to be unreal from the standpoint of that one absolute substance. The higher we rise towards the realization of the absolute oneness, the less we become conscious of the divisions and distinctions that exist only on the material plane and the plane of the senses. Vedanta tells us that we must realize that one absolute Being even in this life. To this it may be asked as to what shall we obtain by realizing that absolute Being? Why should we try to realize it? What good will it bring to us? These questions have been answered by Vedanta, that by knowing this one absolute Being, nothing will remain unknown, and by attaining to it, all the cravings for knowledge will cease, and we shall be able to know the real nature of everything. By dwelling in it, we shall not be affected by misery, sorrow or suffering of any kind, but shall enjoy unbounded peace and happiness in our life under all circumstances. Furthermore, when we have realized this infinite One, all doubts will be removed, all the questions which trouble our minds will be answered, and all the difficulties in understanding the Reality of the universe will be solved. Then we shall see what this universe is made of, why we have come to this world, what is the purpose of our life, and where we shall

go after death. All these problems are vital problems. No other science or philosophy, not even the scriptures, can explain them. The true explanations of these problems come in the state of realization of the Absolute. Therefore, we must strive our best to realize it, to know it, and to become one with it even in this life. In this absolute oneness, lies the solution of all problems. All sciences, all philosophies, and all religions meet here, and herein we find the deep harmony that exists among science, philosophy, and religion. All ethical questions, all questions concerning our spiritual life, as well as all social and political problems will be solved by this eternal standard of oneness. So long as we are on the plane of relativity, our minds are limited, our intellects are imperfect, and our understanding is deluded. We may understand a certain portion of Truth, but the other portions we overlook, and, consequently, our solution is not perfect. But when that absolute One, or the infinite Substance is known, all these problems become clear. And it should be remembered that the knowledge of the absolute one is the goal of all human beings.

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

This same absolute substance, or the Brahman, is the Soul of all souls, the Life of all lives, and in and through it we live, move and have our existence. It does not matter whether we are conscious of it or not. It is there, we cannot deny it. But when we have become conscious of it, we become masters of all wonderful powers. Therefore, Vedanta holds this ideal of oneness before the minds of all.

The master-brains, logicians, great philosophers, the metaphysicians, have written volumes to describe this universal oneness. Starting from different standpoints and crossing the ocean of doubt, they have arrived at the same conclusion of this absolute oneness in the end. All questions that can possibly arise in human minds, all arguments both for and against this

unity have been brought forward and discussed in Vedanta in order to prove the truth of absolute unity, the oneness of existence.

The theoretical side of Vedanta explains this absolute oneness through logic, reason, and science, while the practical side of Vedanta shows us the various methods by which the realization of the Absolute can be obtained. The practical side of Vedanta also claims to solve the problem concerning life and death. One who has understood the theories of Vedanta intellectually and has practised the various methods which lead to the realization of that One, knows what the soul is, where it is, what becomes of it after the death of the body, how it comes to this world, and where it was before we were born. Such a one also understands the value and purpose of the human life. Neither making money, nor merely acquiring wealth and enjoying luxuries, enables us to unveil the mystery of the soul. They are of no use to serve this highest purpose of life. The possession of external objects cannot enrich the soul. A millionaire's soul is not richer than the soul of a man who is outwardly the poorest, but who is most spiritual, has attained to spiritual communion with the Supreme.

Practical Vedanta also tells us that the individual will is a part and parcel of the universal will; nay, it is one with it. That universal will which is working through nature and producing the diversity of phenomena, is manifesting itself through every individual. After describing the unity of the individual will with the universal will, it tells us how we can harmonize our will with the universal will, so that we can achieve greater results in our daily life. The individual will, when separated from the universal will, cannot produce striking results, because it is limited, it is imperfect; but when connected with the universal will, which is perfect and unlimited, we can accomplish everything, we become masters of nature. The body and sense-pleasures, according to Vedanta, are not the *summum bonum* of our earthly life. At present, we are slaves to nature and to our senses; we have forgotten the divine glory of our true Self, and we have become enchained and bound hand and foot, and tied down by the fetters of worldliness. By studying Vedanta, we understand this bondage and then we can seek the emancipation of our soul and are freed.

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

Above all, practical Vedanta tells us how to live in this world an absolutely unselfish and pure life, doing good to humanity and at the same time realizing that all individual souls are children of immortal Bliss. They are not children of human mortals, but are the children of immortal Bliss (*'amritasya putrah'*). Of course, this realization is bound to come to every individual soul sooner or later through the natural process of evolution. We may not accomplish that realization in one life, so if hundreds of thousands of individual lives are necessary to attain to it, we shall never regret, because that is the ultimate goal of human existence. We are marching towards the goal, the realization of the Absolute, and we cannot stop. Although by the natural process of evolution each individual soul will become perfect after going through all the stages of that chain of evolution and gaining experience after experience at each step, still it is a long and tiresome journey, not to be desired by such who understand that process. Therefore, religion of Vedanta tells us that there is a way by which we can escape that chain of evolution and reach the result in one life, and that is by intensifying the desire to know the Truth and by struggling hard to attain to it before the body is separated from our soul and the earthly career is closed. If we earnestly struggle in this life to know the Truth, we shall gain it even in one incarnation, otherwise we may have to go through many births and rebirths on this plane of imperfection. But he who sincerely tries to realize that absolute One and struggles hard to attain to it in one life, easily tran-

scends those laws which constantly enchain the soul and bring it back again on the mortal plane.

The ideal of practical Vedanta is to make us realize the untold grandeur and majesty of the individual soul and the powers it already possesses. Its aim is to establish true universal brotherhood I do not mean that kind of brotherhood which we so often hear about, and which, when properly examined, appears to be like a garb, under which are kept hidden our selfishness, animosity, hatred, jealousy, ambition for petty earthly objects, quarrelling and fighting for fame and powers, but I mean that real brotherly feeling which proceeds from disinterested love without seeking any return whatever True love means the expression of oneness It is, as we may say, that feeling which is the outcome of the realization of oneness on the highest spiritual plane Divine love begins to flow in that soul which has realized that oneness He then loves all human beings, nay, all living creatures, equally irrespective of their class, caste, colour, race or nationality He becomes a living God on earth. God loves all human beings equally. He is impartial, His love is not directed to one particular soul or to a particular class of people but His love is universal and when we possess that Divine love, we cannot help loving all human beings and all living creatures We do not ill-treat the lower animals then, rather we are kind to them, we help them, and try to relieve them in time of distress as we would relieve our own brothers That is the real brotherly feeling. It is more than the so-called brotherhood and it is the spiritual *oneness* which is the ideal of all

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

You will notice how broad and universal are these ideals of Vedanta They are not confirmed to any particular time, or place, or nationality They can be applied in any country, at any time, under any circumstances ; for these ideas are many-

sided and all embracing. They are universal in their aspects and as wide as the heavens overhead. Having given the theoretical and practical sides, the religion of Vedanta describes the means by which these ideals can be realized and the methods by which we can live up to them in our everyday life. These methods of Yoga are different paths by which absolute, oneness can be reached. But, in order to live up to these ideals, the first necessary precondition is to grasp the central truth of oneness that we are all spiritually one and the same. Do not forget it. We are also one with the Supreme Spirit. The constant hearing of this central truth will enable us to understand the meaning and this is the first step of spiritual practice. Then we should concentrate our mind and meditate upon that oneness, the absolute one existence, all-pervading and dwelling everywhere, manifesting itself in various forms and the source of all intelligence, consciousness, powers and forces. We should read such books as will describe that eternal One. We should associate with such people as are struggling to rise from the perception of multiplicity to the realization of the internal unity and we should perform such acts as will remind us of that absolute oneness in our daily lives, as will make us feel that we are one with all and that all souls are children of one immortal and Eternal Being. In our everyday life, we should watch whether our acts tend to diversity or to unity. If they are going to diversity, then we should abandon such works for the sake of that absolute oneness. We should sacrifice all works that lead to diversity of feeling, for the sake of oneness. All those feelings which we call wicked, lead us away from that central truth of oneness. Fellow-feeling and sympathy, all these tend towards that oneness. We should follow those acts which unite us with the one infinite Being and we should give up the rest.

Practice means a striving with one's whole mind and energy, senses and sensibility and to realize the ideal in question. Material prosperity and worldly name and fame are not highest aim of life. To cure a disease of the body, is not also the highest type of the ideal. But to know that we are not different from the Infinite, that we are immortal and eternal by nature, and that realization will inevitably come as it embodies the highest goal for human endeavour. The various methods,

Raja Yoga, Karma Yoga, Bhakti Yoga, and others, are described in Vedanta. The practice of Raja Yoga will lead us to that realization. Then all disease, suffering, and sorrow will vanish. If you cure one disease of the body, another disease will come, and you may go on curing for ever. But when you have known that you are a part of the Infinite, you can have no disease at all, since you are a soul, then you are free from disease forever. That is higher than merely curing a particular ailment. The practice of Raja Yoga i.e. the practice of breathing exercises will help in gaining Godconsciousness which is consciousness of the universal unity. Through this constant practice, will come the realization. Breathing exercises will purify our body and our nervous system. They are imperfect and impure at present. Our system is full of impurities which we have gathered through our imperfect mode of living. We must regulate our food and drink, and then through the breathing exercises, we should first remove all physical obstacles, and purify the body. Then concentration and practice of self-control will help us in removing the mental and intellectual obstacles and ultimately, when these are removed, our hearts are purified. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God".

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

The practice of Raja Yoga, or the breathing exercises, will help us in knowing the grandeur of the soul and its immortal nature which will continue to exist even when everything is dead and gone. What have we done for our soul? It should be remembered that mere intellectual apprehension will not make us perfect. So practice is necessary. It is practice that makes one perfect. Godconsciousness, absolute freedom, and perfection come simultaneously. At that time, when we have gained Godconsciousness, we will live in this world as a perfected soul, and after the death of the body, we will be free from the chains of birth and death and all imperfections. We will

then transcend all laws that govern the phenomenal plane of existence. Then we cannot injure anyone, and cannot hurt anybody ; and, therefore, it is said in Vedanta: "He who sees the same Divinity as dwelling in all living creatures, cannot hurt or injure anyone mentally or physically, and, therefore, he has attained to the highest goal, the Supreme Being."¹

1 समं पश्यन् हि सर्वत्र समवस्थितमीश्वरम् ।

हिनस्यात्मनात्मनं ततो याति परा गतिम् ॥

—*Bhagavad Gita, XIII, 29.*

the same questions torment us today? Is it not true that all scientists, thinkers, and philosophers, of the world, have been asking similar questions through the ages? The human mind has a tendency to unveil the mystery of things and to penetrate into their deepest core. It cannot rest satisfied with simple perception of the surrounding objects, and it must ask: "From whence do they come?" "Whither do they go?"

Various answers have been given to these questions by different thinkers and inspired seers of Truth. Some of these answers were merely grand imageries, some were mixed up with poetical fancies, while others were mythological allegories. Certain thinkers said that water was the cause of the phenomenal universe, and others attributed the cause to the fire from which had sprung the sun, the moon, etc¹ Others again fancied that there must be a maker of the heavens and the earth,—a maker who had fashioned out the world like a carpenter who shapes a chair or a table or a potter who makes a jar. Again, that maker must be like a human being with human qualities or attributes, only infinitely bigger in size and more powerful than any ordinary mortal. From this anthropomorphic conception of an invisible maker grew their peculiar theory of creation

The ancient Semitic tribes had a particular theory of creation by which they explained the origin of the phenomenal world and it has been accepted for two thousand years by millions of Jews, Christians and Mohammedans of different countries. This theory was based upon the belief that a Divine maker by his supernatural powers produced this world out of nothing at a particular time and it was held to be a striking miracle. The same Creator was supposed to have lived for an eternity before he made up his mind to fashion out the world and ever since the six days of creation he had been resting. He created not only the worlds, the planets, and everything of the universe, but also their contents, those of the inorganic world first and next the organic world. A similar description of creation of the world we meet in the Zend Avesta, the Scriptures of the Parsees, but the errors of this theory are too apparent to many thinking minds. In the Middle Ages, men could

¹ Specially in the Greek philosophy as well as in the Indian Epics, you will find these theories

not freely express their opinions, nor could they record their deep convictions in scientific terms. In fact, the Catholic clergy and Scholastic philosophers fettered men's minds, and scientific investigation was yet in its infancy. Science made its bold strides only in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The nineteenth century gave birth to the science of evolution in Europe. Although in the eighteenth century Kant and Laplace attempted for the first time to intrude into the mystery of creation in the light of Newtonian laws and sought to trace out the beginning of the world from the vast mass of nebulous matter, although Laplace tried by his nebular hypothesis to explain the mechanical formation and the separation of the different planets, yet the theory of evolution hardly received any comprehensive scientific treatment before Darwin and Haeckel. The latter were the real pioneers to advance this theory which has ever since become an essential element in the modern scientific attitude. They also tried their best by means of observation and experiment to discover the laws that govern the universe and they succeeded to a very large extent.

The new theory of evolution went into the foundations of the belief in supernaturalism and miracles. It has established the unity of nature and proved beyond dispute the uniformity of all natural laws. We are aware today that this universe is infinite and limitless in extent, and it has no emptiness in it, but everywhere it is filled with substance, crude or fine. This theory of evolution has opened our eyes to the truth that this world was not created six thousand years ago, but that it is beginningless and endless, and is eternal.

The basic material of the world goes through various phases of transformation such as liquid, gaseous, and solid before a planet or a cosmic body becomes inhabitable, either for vegetables, or for animals. A large mass of vegetable substance, or whatever it may be called, passes through the gaseous state, liquid state, solid state, and when it is cooled, it becomes the home of various plants and animals of different kinds. This process may take millions of years and then, in course of time, the solid body begins to dissolve and gradually involves into its original nebulous material, or ethereal substance. Ascending through the process of evolution, matter gradually passes from one form to another until organic life is possible. Every

period of evolution is followed by a cycle of involution or dissolution, as it is called by some of the scientists. Dissolution means disintegration of the solid mass and the reversion to the primordial condition.

The planetary systems, the suns, moons, and stars together with other cosmic bodies, are subject to evolution and involution. Our mother earth was formed out of a portion of the substance of the solar system millions and millions of years ago and now it is inhabitable. We find here now many plants and flowers, but the time will come when she will grow again cold and lifeless and will eventually fall back into the sun. But do you think the basic material, the substance of this earth will be destroyed or annihilated? No, it will remain in its primordial condition and in course of time a new form will emerge.

By this theory of evolution we can also explain origin and growth of all human beings step by step. We know that human beings are not the effects of special creation by some supernatural being, or by extra-mundane God, but are the resulting expressions of evolution of the germs of life which existed from the beginningless past, either as animals or vegetables. So we have not come into existence out of nothing, but in some form or other we existed before this present body was formed. Now we are living. After death which means disintegration of the body or individual involution, we continue to exist, taking fresh forms again and again. The difference between lower animals and human beings is not of kind, but is of degree.

Such being the conclusion of modern science we find ourselves utterly helpless when we try to harmonize these conclusions with the traditional ideas of creation as envisaged by Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Zoroasterianism. Attempts have also been made by various thinkers in different countries to show an alleged harmony between theology and science, but only to court disappointment. No religion can stand unsupported by logic or science. The theories of special creation that had been once given by religious teachers, were supposed to be revealed truths. But now they appear in the light of modern science to be wholly irrational and dogmatic.

The result of all this is: "How shall we think?" This is the most difficult thing to do. Some thinking minds have lost their way. They study science and ask: "What is the

use of studying religion? Let us be contended with the study of science. We do not know whether there is an eternal energy out of which matter, mind and everything have come into existence, but we simply know that matter is indestructible, energy is indestructible."

Now the question arises, is it possible for a religion to have its foundations upon this theory of evolution as well as upon the truths discovered by modern science? Has there ever been any such religion which does not teach special creation, but existence through the doctrine of evolution, or origin, growth, and dissolution of the universe in the same way as modern science does? The answer to this question is in the emphatic affirmative. The object of religion is to discover the truth. Science also tries to discover the same truth though approaching it in a somewhat different manner. And it is also true that there has been such a religion as does not advocate any theory of special creation out of nothing but the doctrine of evolution. Our position needs clarification.

India has given to the world a religion which explains evolution which is the source of the phenomenal universe. This religion has not its roots in creed or dogma, but in reason and passion for truth. It is a religion which has existed through the ages and has withstood the ravages of time, bringing consolation to the soul of disturbed millions and answering all questions to their profoundest satisfaction. There appeared in India scientists and philosophers to study nature even as early as seven hundred years before the birth of Christ. They conducted their investigations through repeated observations and experiments and discovered the laws of nature and, for the first time, logically established the theory of evolution. The earliest of these scientists and philosophers was Kapila, who is called as the father of the evolution theory in India. His theories spread all over India and even outside of India. All neighbouring peoples who came in contact with India, were influenced more or less by Kapila's system of philosophy. His system was known as the *Sankhya* system. The idea of religion found amongst the Greek philosophers and the neo-Platonists has often been traced back to the influence of the *Sankhya* school. They came in contact with India and India also had communications with them. It is also a fact that in ancient times the Hindu philosophers

came to the school of Socrates Plato knew some of these Indian philosophers Alexander the Great brought many of these great thinkers with him. Well has it been said by Sir Monier Monier Williams in his *Hinduism and Brahmanism* that the Hindus were Spinozites more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza, and the Darwinians many centuries before Darwin, and the evolutionists many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time and before any word like evolution existed in any language of the world.¹ Huxley also unhesitatingly admits this fact when he says that doctrine of evolution was familiar to the Indian sages and philosophers ages before Paul of Tarsus was born.

In ancient times, long before this theory of evolution was known to any other country, Kapila denied the existence of a personal creator. He denied the existence of God as a creator who sits outside the universe and fashions the universe as a potter fashions a jar. He declared that something cannot come out of nothing. It is today a well-known scientific fact. Kapila also explained the building up of the cosmos by the gradual evolution of one eternal energy, called in Sanskrit *Prakriti*. He discovered the unity and eternity of nature as well as the uniformity of her laws. These laws operate universally wherever there are light and heat. If you can discover any law that governs your body, that law must be operative everywhere under similar conditions. Kapila also proved that dissolution or destruction of a thing means nothing but the reversion of an effect to its original causal state.

These truths which were discovered in India centuries before the birth of Christ, have now become a well-established fact. They are also the startling achievements of modern science. The ancient seers of Truth preached a religion which explain rationally the origin, growth, and dissolution of the universe, not by presupposing any particular supernatural being, but by discovering the law of evolution that exists in nature from eternity to eternity. This religion is known as the vedantic religion. It teaches that before the beginning of the manifestation of this phenomenal world there existed one infinite.

¹ Vide Sir Monier Williams, *Hinduism and Brahminism*, p 12

absolute and universal Being, upon whose bosom rested the whole phenomenal universe in the germ state, or in the form of potential energy. We know the laws of correlation of forces and persistence of energy which have shown us that the various forces like heat, light, electricity, magnetism, attraction, repulsion and all others are nothing but so many manifestations or expressions of the universal energy. This energy can neither be increased, nor be diminished and the sum total of energy is always the same. It is the source of all forms existing in the universe, and the innumerable suns, moons, stars, and planetary systems have come out of this one eternal energy through the process of evolution.

Again we find in Vedanta that from this undifferentiated energy has come the vital force, mind, all the sense powers, powers of perception, intellect as well as ether, heat, light, water and all that is liquid, gaseous, and solid. In the *Sankhya*, this energy is described as insentient (*jada*), and so it is not intelligent energy. The Supreme Being, or the Absolute Brahman, is the source of intelligence, consciousness, and knowledge. That energy lies dormant in the original source which is the Brahman. Having received the spiritual influx of that Supreme Being, this universal energy begins to evolve and manifest itself in various forms of force and matter. It went through different stages of evolution. It is sometimes latent and sometimes potent. At first it was undifferentiated and now it is differentiated. After dissolution of the entire universe, if we can imagine such a state as darkness existing in heat and light, so there will not be any darkness.

In order to fulfil the desires of the individual souls which lie latent in the cosmic mind at the time of the dissolution, the mother energy produces this phenomenal world, clothes these souls with various forms, whether animal or human and makes them go onward from stage to stage in the wheel of evolution. This wheel of evolution is rotating from the beginningless past and will continue through the endless eternity and there is no rest. How many times have we taken bodies and how many times shall we do the same, who can tell? Do you know how many times you have come into existence on this earth, or on some other planet? You may point to some scriptures which have said that you did not exist before. But what proof is

there that you did not exist before? When everything is indestructible and uncreated, the human souls must have existed. If matter be uncreatable and force or energy be uncreatable, do you think that human souls will only be creatable? No, the souls are uncreatable, and immortal.

It has been said in the Hindu scriptures that some souls go to heaven and after reaping the results for a certain length of time and enjoying the pleasures of the celestial abode, then come back perhaps to this earth to fulfil other desires which existed in a seed-form in them. All of them are subject to the law of evolution. Now, it should be remembered that heavens are within the domain of the phenomenal universe, and so Vedanta teaches that heaven is also subject to change and so the human minds should go beyond heavens. Some people pass through different sufferings, both here and hereafter and all these sufferings are the results of acts, either vicious or sinful. But the ultimate aim of religion of Vedanta is to have perfect liberation of the individual soul from this wheel of evolution and to be free from the causes that compel men to go through the different stages of evolution. As long as man has desires he cherishes them at present and he will see how strong these desires are. If he can draw a line and says, 'I have so many desires' then he will find in three days that he has many other desires.

According to Vedanta, each soul must struggle for liberation i.e. freedom from the wheel of repeated births and deaths. The aim is to get out of these processes of involution and evolution as quickly as possible. Of course, you do not lose your individuality and identity even when you have passed out of this wheel of births and rebirths. It also tells us that when you have attained to that liberation or freedom, you have attained to perfection with eternal rest, peace, and unbounded happiness. Freedom from sickness, sorrow, birth and death when reached, the soul is absolutely free. Now, this being the ideal, we must try to realize it. As it is said in Vedanta. "This world can be realized by knowing the Supreme which is called the Brahman, the infinite source of intelligence, consciousness, and bliss, and by knowing that we can be free from the wheel of evolution and involution, because that Infinite Being remains always unaffected by it."

Vedanta says the Supreme Being is free from the wheel of evolution and gives us freedom. We can attain to that liberation through the realization of the Supreme Being. Modern science cannot be called religion, although it explains the theory of evolution or the process of formation of this world by discovering the laws of nature. And we must not forget the true meaning of religion, which is the perception of the Infinite under such conditions as are able to influence the moral character, and it is the ideal of religion. Viewed in this light, the difference between science and religion becomes obvious. Then we shall be able to know how a religion can be based upon scientific truths and how the religion of Vedanta meets all the intellectual, moral and spiritual demands of the human souls. In the first place, as we have already seen, the ideal of Vedanta is the perception of the Infinite, or the realization of that supreme source of intelligence, consciousness, and bliss, being and becoming conscious of the Infinite and of ourselves and perceiving the finite within the Infinite and the temporal within the eternal. Secondly, the task of religion is to teach us how to outgrow the dictates of our animal or selfish nature. Vedanta also asks us to renounce our attachment to sense-pleasures and comforts of the body. We must curb our desires and sublimate them towards the realization of the Supreme Being and develop an extreme longing for freedom or liberation of the soul. Science, in its pure form whether ancient or modern, is destitute of values. By nature science is positive and not normative as religion is. So science cannot be called religion. But Vedanta is at once a science and a religion. Vedanta is science, because it accepts all the truth discovered by modern science and explains through logic and reason, how the evolution of the universe has come and is going on, and it is religion, because it directs our energy towards the realization of absolute freedom. Therefore Vedanta fulfils all conditions of science and religion. The condition of science is that there must be supremacy of reason over belief, and that is fulfilled by Vedanta, because it tells us not to accept anything upon hearsay or the decisions of others and not to believe in anything which does not harmonize with reason. The function of religion also is to explain the origin and the future of the individual souls, which science cannot do, because science is based upon sense-

perception. It cannot go beyond that limit and when it tries to do so, it is no longer a science, and it then steps into the realm of metaphysics, or of philosophy. Vedanta also explains the relation of the finite to the Infinite, that of the temporal to the Eternal, and also explains why should we seek the finite in the Infinite and the Infinite in the finite. Infinite cannot be limited by finite, but is pervading and existing in and outside of it.

It is said that the supreme source of existence, intelligence, and bliss which is known as the Brahman, is worshipped by all nations under different names and forms, such as Jehovah or Jehveh, or Father in heaven, or Allah, or Ahura Mazda, or Christ, or Buddha. It does not matter what name we give or what attributes we ascribe to it, but it is beyond human conception and beyond the reach of our thoughts, our mind and intellect, and at the same time it is nearest of near our bodies, minds, and souls. The Brahman is the Soul of our souls, the Life of our lives, the ultimate basis and foundation. In it we live, through it we exist and without it there can be nothing. Therefore, it is said: "Thou shalt realize that supreme Infinite Being in every form, whence all the animate and inanimate objects of the world have proceeded, by which they live and into which they return at the time of dissolution; knowing that alone thou shalt attain to perfect freedom and liberation from the wheel of evolution and enjoy everlasting happiness, eternal peace, even in this life". -

CHAPTER XI

NECESSITY OF RELIGION

Never before the necessity of religion was felt so strongly by man as it is today. In this age of materialism and commercialism, the ideals of nations have become dominantly materialistic. Material prosperity is the cry of the day and commercial motive moves mankind. Individuals are being sacrificed to the material needs of the nation to which they belong. Wars and intrigues everywhere rage to protect the commercial interests of individual nations and they are massacring thousands of lives simply to advance their material prosperity at the expense of others. Such wars and conflicts as are going on today, were never seen before in man's recorded history. We are familiar how one Christian nation warring against the other of the same faith. We have also seen how the non-Christian nations, even when they were living in peace, were drawn into the international conflicts, and how their territories fell repeated victims to white aggression, and innocent people were cruelly massacred, because they were unwilling to sell themselves off to foreign powers or to satisfy their most exorbitant commercial demands or territorial possessions.

In these days of materialism, the moral and spiritual elements of human nature are submerged and the brute force seems to have got the upperhand. Religion seems defenceless to check the materialistic onrush of the age. Mankind is wandering through a world without spiritual meaning. Each individual nation is struggling hard to gain more power and to acquire more wealth and seize more territorial possessions. The spirit of self-sacrifice which is the essence of all ethics and religion, has receded into the background, yielding place to the spirit of material power and possession. The world has not yet been able to cast off the lingering vestiges of the Roman gladiatorial system and the animal doctrine of the survival of the fittest. We are still witnessing their agonising consequences.

Religion has now-a-days lost also its hold on the psychology of the people. The worship of the Supreme Being is flouted

by our generation. The true spirit of religion is lost and only the barren codes and customs hold their predominant sway. New creeds out of the husks of non-essential ritualistic rites, ceremonial and symbolistic formalities, have almost smothered the grain of truth that forms the essential part of religion. People even when frequenting the places of devotion and worship, do not grasp the true import of religion. They blindly lend their loyalty to such ritualistic dogmas, doctrines and codes, and ceremonials as prescribed by the clergy. The world needs once more a great tidal wave of a just upheaval that will sweep away all these flimsy creeds and barren ceremonies that fettered our minds and restore to us the religious inspiration which we have lost. We require that spiritual force which will urge every man to discover truth and hold communion with it in silence, leaving aside all non-essential forms and ceremonies, rituals and doctrines. The time has come when we should clearly grasp the true meaning of religion and its ultimate aim instead of blind submission to the tyranny of doctrines and dogmas. We should, on the contrary, examine their validity and may accept them if they harmonize with our reason and coincide with the ultimate conclusion of science. We must not accept a religion, not because we are born in it, not because our forefathers bore its label and professed its creed, not because it commands a large following, and not because it makes pompous display of ceremonies, but because it satisfies our deeply-cherished spiritual cravings.

There are in the world today a variety of religions, great and small. Each of the doctrine and dogmas, rituals and ceremonies is peculiar to itself. There are as many sets of rituals and dogmas as there are religions to follow. In each religion, you will find some peculiar doctries, ideas, etc. Mohammedanism, for instance, teaches many things that are diametrically opposed to Christianity, yet their claims to the religious character are equally valid. Mohammedanism is as much a religion as Christianity is. Likewise, Buddhism is again different from Christianity in its rituals and even in its doctrines, yet both are held as religions by their respective followers. Each of these great religions has a large following and certain characteristic forms of worship of its own. If by religion is meant certain sets of dogmas, doctrines, and ceremonies, obviously it is hope-

lessly difficult for us to establish a religion common to all mankind. If doctrines and dogmas of Christianity are held to be the index to a true religion, then Mohammedanism cannot be properly called so, because doctrines and dogmas of the latter are entirely different from the former. In that case, we ought to call Mohammedanism by some other name. Likewise, if the rituals of Judaism be the standard of a religion, then Buddhism is hardly a religion, because the latter has a different set of doctrines and dogmas as well as different criterion.

In this analysis of religion, certain set of doctrines, dogmas, rituals, and ceremonies are confused with its deeper spirit, and this confusion has been a primary cause of all religious conflicts and has led to the endless persecutions of the non-conformists. Such attitude to religion, if consistently worked out to the logical extreme, inevitably brings religious antagonism which has more than once disfigured man's history. It has forced the followers of certain sects to kindle the fire of the Inquisition and burn alive countless men, women, and children simply on account of their difference in religious beliefs. We have already witnessed its many other tragic consequences. Therefore, we should discard the old view of religion and give a new orientation to it. We must try to find out the universal character of religion which will be acceptable to all mankind.

If we define religion as obedience to dogmas, as described in the scriptures and other works of meditation, or if we define it as reverence for a personal God as said in the scriptures, apparently these two definitions sound satisfactory. But here again new difficulties will arise. The personal gods, as conceived by different religions, are not one, but many. The followers of Judaism, for instance, revere, fear, and obey the commands of the prophets as described in their scriptures, observe the ceremonies with offerings and prayers and follow the path of Moses and this is what they understand by religion.

We know also the Christians' ideals. The Christians have also their scriptures and a set of dogmas as upheld by them. The Christian religion believes that Jesus is the Saviour of the world and the Only Begotten Son of God. It also believes that Jesus the Christ came down to save mankind and that none can enter into heaven except through him. This is the popular meaning of the word 'Christianity'. Of course, we may read'

in it the deeper spiritual meaning which is however hardly done by the common followers of Christianity

Now let us take the case of the Mohammedans. They have their own scriptures and they understand by religion obedience to those dogmas as set forth in their holy scriptures, the Quran. They also accept Mohammed as the only true Prophet of the true God, Allah, the all-pervading and infinite Being, and that no one will be able to enter into heaven except through the teachings of Mohammed. According to the Mohammedans, the Christians will not be able to enter into heaven, because they do not accept Mohammed as the true Prophet.

Thus we have considered the peculiar dogmas and rites of three religions, *viz.*, Judaism, Mohammedanism and Christianity. If dogmas embody religion, the world has no chance of living in religious unity and peace and moral laws. They will always divide humanity into warring sects. These divisions and conflicts can be drowned in a larger unity of ideal. All religions enjoin their followers to be loyal to the eternal moral laws. This loyalty to the moral nature of man is the central element common to all. We can transcend divisions and oppositions of sections if we simply hold this grand ideal before our vision. Besides these three, there are many other religions like Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Parsees. It has its own scriptures which are much older than the New Testament. This religion is founded upon moral laws given by Zoroaster. Zoroaster was a Prophet and he communicated with the Divinity. He is regarded by his followers as the Son of God and their religion was built around the personality of Zoroaster.

Then again there is Hinduism. It has its own scriptures which are known as the Vedas, the oldest scriptures in the world. The Hindus obey the moral laws as described in the Vedas. They worship one God under different names. They have given birth to a large number of saints and sages who are worshipped today as the saviours of mankind. They have their rituals and ceremonies almost like those of the Christians, but much older. They have baptism, they have the communion service; they have the cross as a symbol. Perhaps, many of you know that this symbol existed many centuries before Christ. It was prevalent in Egypt, in China, even among the American Indians of very ancient times. The cross existed also in the

Islands of the East Indian Archipelago, Borneo, Sumatra, Java and the interiors. The cross has been a religious symbol.¹

Budhism has its own Scriptures which contain the moral laws given by Buddha. Although this religion does not believe in a personal God nor does it teach its followers to worship and revere a personal God, yet Buddha is considered by millions as the greatest spiritual leader of mankind. Now, if we think that belief in a personal God is an index to religion, then Buddhism cannot properly be called a religion for it does not believe in the worship of a personal God. Thus the conventional definition of religion proves inadequate on critical analysis.

Then what is the true meaning of religion? True religion does not consist in the belief in a personal God with a particular name and form. It does not consist in doctrines and dogmas which vary in each religion, nor does it consist in rituals and obedience to the moral laws, but it consists, as Professor Max Muller has described, "in the perception of the Infinite to such manifestations as enable us to be moral, as helps us to become moral and spiritual; the perception of the Infinite to such manifestations as are able to influence our moral character; the perception of the infinite Being as nameless and formless that are able to influence our moral character". This definition is strikingly adequate and it can be applied to all the existing religions of the world, whether great or small. It can be applied to Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, and all other religions. The God of all these religions, is an infinite Being. There is nowhere any difference in that central idea. The Christians worship this God as an infinite Being; in the Quran it is also the same. In the *Upanishads* God is described as the infinite Being, in Buddhism, Buddha occupies a similar position. In the Scriptures of the Zoroastrians also, He is the same. The central aim of each of these religions is to lead our minds to the immediate and intimate perception of the Infinite Being.

The world needs today a religion which will make us forgetful of the fighting ages that are gone by and also our narrow individuality and interests and which will help us to perceive

¹ Cf. Swami Abhedananda *Path of Realization* (1939), pp. 81—113 and *The Words and Cross in Ancient India*

the Infinite Being. Such redefinition of religion is the vital need of the day, if our generation is to live in peace and co-operation, though not in belief and agreement. We can sink our differences only when there is a large ideal to guide our vision. If we be deeply loyal to the perception of the Infinite Being, the central ideal of all religions, then we can rise above the sharp oppositions and conflicts of creeds and fighting formulas. Of course, we have to overcome a number of difficulties before that perception comes.

In search after the Infinite all fleeting objects have to be put aside and ignored. We may ask the reason and answer can be given as that which is contingent, cannot bring eternal happiness. No fighting object can bring freedom to the soul and to the infinite wisdom. But that which is Infinite, is the source of eternal happiness. Fleeting objects are changeable and mortal, and it is the Infinite Being alone that is unchangeable and immortal. No individual soul can remain happy and be contented with a changing object. However, if we study our own nature, we shall find that no fleeting object can make us happy. It is true that contingent objects may bring happiness to us for the time being when we are enjoying the presence of sense object. Can you realize how long that happiness lasts? It lasts only for a second. It comes like a flash of lightning and stays for a second and leaves us unhappy once more and we try to catch it again and this is the passage through which each individual soul is trying to reach happiness. Examine yourself, and you will find that each individual soul is striving to get more power and more happiness. It is a fact as well as a truth with us that we need more power, happiness and pleasure. Those who are in power, want more power, and those are happy, want more happiness. Those who are not happy, are seeking happiness. Love of power and cry for happiness are innate in each individual soul. In truth, they are inseparable. You cannot separate love from power, nor love from happiness. Try to do it and you cannot. We may not regard it in that light, but when you examine your own soul, you will find that you want more happiness and more power. Love for the absolute Truth leads us to the freedom of the soul as well as the freedom from all bondages. The longing for happiness directly or indirectly forces each soul to gain power over the environment of condi-

tions, to be freed from all bondages and to enjoy freedom. If we have power over environments, we love to be happy. What is struggling for existence? It is nothing but to gain power over environment. If we are weak, we are crushed under the sledge hammer of these conditions. If we have no power to resist all the influences that are trying to kill us, we will go down. Therefore, we need power and in that state we are free. So we must break down all limitations. We must be free. Have you found any one happy in bondage or slavery? No, it is impossible. It is freedom that makes us happy, and the more the individual soul becomes free from the environment of conditions, the nearer it approaches the Infinite Being, and the more it realizes the Infinite, the more perfectly it is located, because it is happiness.

The perception of the Infinite leads to absolute freedom and happiness. Then only the thirst for power, which is so strong in the individual soul, will be conquered. The desire to be free will be fulfilled and true happiness will come to the soul. Therefore, instead of religion, the necessity of the perception of the Infinite will bring happiness to the soul.

Here it may be asked. Do not the existing religions help us in getting the perception of the Infinite? The answer is in the bold negative, because the finite objects and material results are holding more important sway than the perception of the Infinite in the conventional religious organization of the day. Material gains have got their support and the perception of the Infinite has become just secondary. We think of finite objects, whether we can gain a good position and retain our religion as well. We do not want to know it if it does not bring something tangible.

Now that these doctrines and dogmas and rituals and ceremonies have absorbed the whole of the churches and their followers. Material prosperity has been the aim of the present conditions that we see today. But true spirituality begins with the perception of the Infinite Being and if the existing religions of today hold this ideal before the masses and preach it with zeal, then peace and good will must reign in this world instead of wars and disasters. If this ideal be preached, the nations will stop fightings for purpose of killing each other. The time has come when we should hold up this ideal before

our masses, speak of it amongst our friends and neighbours, preach it wherever we find time and we hope that the time has come when each one of us must concentrate our mind upon the Infinite, meditate upon it, and think of it during the ordinary moments of our daily life. We must think of it until we feel it in our pulses, and our heart is in tune with the Infinite. The time has come when we must give nothing else but a higher place in our scale of values. If we recognize that each individual soul is the child of the Infinite and we are one with our brothers in spirit, then we shall understand the true significance of religion.

CHAPTER XII

AIM OF TRUE RELIGION

If we examine the religious ideals of different people belonging to the various sects of different religions, we find that the majority of them blindly follow some creed, or believe in certain doctrines or dogmas and mistake them as the aim of true religion. Some consider rituals and ceremonies to be the essentials of religion and the priests encourage these erroneous ideas by impressing upon the mind of the masses that the performances of special rituals and ceremonies the highest aim of true religion. Quarrels and discussions have, indeed, been going on for ages among the priests of Christendom regarding the time and manner in which these non-essential forms of religion should be observed. In English churches at the present moment the main point of discussion is whether one or many candles shall be lighted on the altar, as if the number of lighted candles would save the souls of the congregation. The pages of religious history are likewise filled with horror of persecutions, massacres, and all sorts of diabolical crimes committed by the priests and the fanatics in the name of religion in order to establish the creeds, the rituals, and the ceremonials of their own religion, and for that reason hundreds and thousands of innocent souls were burned by the fire of the Inquisition kindled by the professed custodians of the Christian religion.

As in the Middle Ages the aim of Catholic clergy was to convert the heathens into the Christian faith and to punish the heretics by torture and persecution, so even today we find the same spirit of fanaticism goading on many of the missionaries who do not hesitate to commit similar inhuman crimes in non-Christian lands in the name of their religion. To save the souls of the socalled heathens from eternal damnation is still the professed aim of the Christian missionaries. We have not yet forgotten all the outrageous deeds lately perpetrated in the Far East, specially in China. Not very long ago, an Anglican bishop, addressing an English congregation, drew a vivid picture of the disasters which had befallen the Chinese capital and

provinces,—wholesale massacres, burning houses, destruction of art treasures, terrible loss of life and wealth,—and, admitting that all this was the work of the missionaries, he gloried in the fact by saying: “Yes, the missionaries were the cause of all these troubles, but was it not worth while to cause such trouble, to sacrifice thousands of lives and to bring the enlightenment of Christianity to the countless heathens, to save their souls from eternal damnation? And was it not every true Christian’s duty to help each in his way in the holy warfare initiated by the Christian missionary martyrs?” Such was the appeal of the noted Bishop to his congregation. Shall we join him in calling the aim of true religion? Obviously not.

As the Christian missionaries have been preaching for centuries with the Bible in one hand and a gun in the other, so the Mohammedans have done the same. Holding the Quran in one hand and a sword in the other, they have massacred thousands in their attempt to save the souls of the Kafirs. Like the Christians, the Mohammedans believed that they were fulfilling the purpose of their religion, knowing theirs was the only true religion. But as on the one side, treachery, lying, hypocrisy, persecution and the most inhuman crimes have been committed in the name of religion, so, on the other, all the good works that have helped humanity, have been inspired by religion. As monuments to this fact stand countless hospitals and institutions for the poor and needy and schools, colleges, and asylums. Shall we, therefore, say that the performance of philanthropic works is the aim of true religion? No; the ideal of true religion is still grander and more vital than the simple dispensing of charity.

There are people who think that material prosperity is the aim of true religion. But how can that be when we know that all the great religious leaders of mankind whom we worship today as the Incarnations of God, like Buddha, Christ, Ramakrishna and others, were the poorest men and did not care for material prosperity? On the contrary, they renounced all desires for earthly pleasures, sacrificed social position and power, voluntarily adopted the life of poverty, depending entirely upon the almighty will and lastly asked their disciples to follow their example. We all know what Jesus the Christ said to his disciples: “Provide neither gold, nor silver,

nor brass in your purses, nor script for your journey neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves."¹ Yet nowadays we hear from the apostles of the new religious sects like the Christian Scientists that the highest aim of true religion is good health, success in business, acquisition of wealth and property which go under the name of material prosperity. The aim of true religion is neither a healthy body, nor the acquisition of wealth. If a strong body or good health were the aim of true religion, all savages who eat raw food, sleep in the open air and live like animals enjoying perfect health, would have attained to that ideal. If success in business and acquisition of wealth were the signs of true religion, all the wealthy merchants millionaires and multi-millionaires would have realized it long ago, but we are quite sure that they have not yet attained to it. On the contrary, most of them live lives that can hardly be called religious in the ordinary sense of the term. The fire of greed for wealth and for the possession of social and political power has burnt the seeds of noble aspirations that are to be found in the field of the human soul. The majority of the wealthy classes live exceedingly selfish lives, being slaves to passions and desires, seeking nothing but sense-pleasures, worldly power, and amusement. Moral and spiritual standards have been pushed behind the scenes of the practical affairs of everyday existence. The rich are trying to squeeze the last drop of blood out of the poor and the cry of despair rising everywhere from the bottom of the souls of suffering humanity fills the space between the earth and the heavens. Again when we know that social and political progress depends primarily upon commercial principles and are often guided by narrowly personal motives, how can we say that material prosperity is the aim of true religion material prosperity however necessary for material ends, is utterly inadequate for meeting the demands of the human spirit.

What is then the aim of true religion? Before we discuss this point we must understand very clearly the meaning of the word 'religion'. The question about religion has been asked again and again by the great thinkers of the world, and various answers have been given to it, but still it is vital today in thinking minds. Most people think that true religion means certain

¹ St Matthew X, 9-10

forms of creed or dogma, or rituals and ceremonies. Some say that it is obedience to the moral laws given in the scriptures of different nations ; others believe that religion means a reverence for God as He is described under some particular name and form in each of the revealed scriptures of the world. The Jew, for instance, must propitiate Him by offerings and prayers and must follow the path of Moses. This is all that he understands by the word 'religion'. The Christian's idea of religion consists principally in the belief that Jesus the Christ was the Only-Begotten Son of God or Jehovah, that he came to save the world and sinners from eternal perdition by his blood and that no one can enter heaven except through Christ. Such is the popular meaning of religion among the Christians. The Mohammedans believe that true religion means absolute obedience to the moral laws revealed in their holy scriptures, the Quran as well as the acceptance of Mohammed as the only Prophet of Allah. According to Mohammedans, the Christians, will not enter heaven, because they do not believe in the teachings of the Quran, do not follow Mohammed and do not worship and fear Allah, the only true God.

Here we have three great religions, each one of which claims to be true and denounces the others as untrue. But who is going to decide which one of them is actually true? Then, again, outside of these three, there is Zoroastrianism, the religion of the Parsees. It is also a revealed religion founded upon the Zend Avesta and built around the personality of the great Prophet Zarathustra of Zoroaster. Hinduism is another great religion which is based upon the Vedas. It has produced many Prophets and Incarnations of God. It has rituals and ceremonies similar to those of Christianity. The Hindus generally think that theirs is the true religion neglecting the importance of religion of other nation. Buddhism, the child of Hinduism, has again the largest following and is the greatest of all ethical religions. Although it was not founded upon any book or upon a belief in God, although it does not teach to fear, revere or worship a personal God, still it is considered by many to be the greatest religion of Aryan origin. A tremendous task and responsibility for the student of religions lie in the fact to find out which of these great religions of the world with their innumerable followers and inexhaustible stock of rituals doctrines and creeds is true.

In trying to solve the problem, the question naturally arises, is there any common platform on which all these revealed and unrevealed religions can meet and unite? The answer is to be found nowhere except in Vedanta. Like an impartial judge, Vedanta standing on the firm ground of reason, science, and philosophy and remaining absolutely independent of all sectarian scriptures, creeds and dogmas, is ever ready to describe the common background of all special religions and to show to the world what true religion is and what is its aim. The aim of true religion we shall know when we find that common platform. In order to discover the universal standard we must go to the bottom of each special religion, dive deep into the sea of rituals and ceremonies, until we reach the immovable bed which holds all sectarian religions at its bosom. First we must understand that all these different creeds, doctrines and ceremonies, rituals and beliefs in some particular form or name of the Divinity, in a revealed book, or in any great personality, are like the husks of a grain which hide the kernal. They are the non-essentials of religion and if we examine properly we shall find that they vary in different countries according to ideals, culture, and superstitions of the soil from which the plant of religion draws its nourishment. If we can put aside all these non-essential husks, we shall be able to discover the kernel of truth which forms the essential part of all religions. There we shall find the common platform upon which all these sectarian creeds amiably meet and shall perceive what perfect harmony underlies all the conflicting non-essentials of different religions. We shall then understand what true religion means.

In fact, true religion does not consist in following a creed, or in believing in dogmas, doctrines, or scriptural writings, nor does it consist in holding aloft the banner of some particular prophet, by joining a sect or denomination, but its aim is to lift the individual soul above the limitations of senses and bring it in close communion with the Infinite and to make it realize the absolute freedom from the bondage of ignorance, delusion, egotism, pride, ambition and all other imperfections which characterize human nature and hold us down on this plane of mundane existence. In short, true religion is not merely a belief in a set of doctrines or dogmas, or in personal God. It is not a mere worship of some form of the Divinity and it is not merely fear of,

or reverence for God It does not depend upon absolute obedience to the Divine commands, but it consists, as Professor Max Muller has said, in the perception of the Infinite through all such manifestations as are able to influence the moral character of man. Now the perception of the Infinite or the realization of the absolute Being, which is conceived and worshipped under various names and forms, is the essential point of every religion. All dualistic and monotheistic religions like Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Zoroastrianism, Brahmanism, agree on this common ground, because God of each of these great religions is one and the same infinite and absolute Being, no matter what name or form may be given to Him by His worshippers. If we read of the attributes of Jehovah, we shall find that He is infinite. One of the attributes of Allah in the Quran is that He is infinite. In the Vedas we read the absolute Being, who is one and all-pervading is infinite. In modern Buddhism the same infinite and absolute Being is worshipped as Buddha. When we have succeeded in feeling the presence of that infinite One in the midst of manifold finite things, we have perceived it and have discovered the universal meaning of religion.

The aim of true religion, therefore, is the realization of the absolute Being, the realization of the Infinite and that realization may come either through knowledge, or through love and devotion and constant contemplation. By 'knowledge' we mean the immediate consciousness of all that is finite within the Infinite, of all that is temporal within the Eternal. It gives a man a clear insight into himself and answers the highest questions regarding the nature, origin, and future of the human soul and of the phenomenal world. The moment that knowledge, or *Jnana*, as it is called in Vedanta, comes within us, the finite spirit or individual soul becomes conscious of its relation to the Infinite, or the Absolute Spirit and transcending all limitations of sense-perceptions, it realizes its Divine and immortal nature. Then and then alone the individual soul enjoys perfect freedom from sin, he is free from selfishness and every other imperfection and all the thoughts and deeds which proceed from such a soul, harmonize with the highest moral laws that are supposed to be revealed in the scriptures of the world. This absolute freedom of the soul was meant by Jesus the Christ when he said: "And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free".

The same freedom was also the ideal of Gautama Buddha, and it was the true meaning of the word Nirvana. It is the goal of the religion of Vedanta. Salvation, according to Vedanta, does not mean the continuance of a certain kind of enjoyment for any length of time in heaven, but it is the absolute freedom of the individual soul, which is the aim of true religion. It does not begin after death, in the grave, but it begins here in this life, in this very lifetime and brings to the soul eternal rest from earthly anxieties, sufferings and unbounded peace and ever lasting happiness, and then all attachment to things that exist in the realm of the finite or within the limits of time and space drops off the spiritual body like the dead skin of a snake. Similarly Nirvana (Nibbana), as attained by Gautama Buddha, is a positive state of peace and supreme tranquility. Nirvana is generally believed as a negative state which is no other than a complete extinction of existence and consciousness of the *Atta* or *Atman*, and it is, therefore, the nothingness or void (*sunyata*). But that is not correct, as Nirvana or Nibbana is a positive state of suchness or thatness (*tathata*), which can be compared to the ever-existent absolute knowledge of the Brahman of Advaita Vedanta. It is said that when a man completely overcomes all desires (*tanhas* or *trishnas*) of the material objects of the universe, he realizes the supreme peacefull state of Nirvana. Therefore as long as a man is attached to the gross finite body and senses and also to the pleasures and comforts of the flesh and as long as he remains as a slave to his earthly desires, so long there is neither freedom, nor peace and permanent happiness, and he remains under the bondage of sorrows and miseries.

A free soul, on the contrary, does not care for anything that concerns the material body. It stands as a shining example of the absolute renunciation of lust and gold. The constant effort of such a soul is to rise above the material and to be free from the limitations of physical conditions. Therefore it is said in Vedanta: "That absolute freedom, that immortal freedom which is the ideal of true religion cannot be obtained by philanthropic or charitable works, or by wealth, but by renunciation". Blessed is he who has overcome attachment to everything that is worldly and who has severed all ties that are enchainning the soul, keep it bound on this plane of worldliness and prevent it from breathing the air of perfect freedom which is constantly blowing

in the realm of the Infinite. And it should be remembered that freedom and renunciation always go hand in hand. One cannot come without the other. Without renunciation, there cannot be freedom. How can we be free so long as we are attached to the things of this material plane that will keep us here. Where there is no renunciation, there is slavery with its evil attendants, worry, anxiety, fear, and suffering. There is nothing in the world that can make us fearless except renunciation, and the only thing that will make a man fearless, is renunciation of attachment to the things of the world.

True religion has neither quarrel nor fight with any special sect or creed, whether revealed or unrevealed. Because it deals entirely with the kernel or essential part of the grain of all sectarian religions and leaves out the husk, or the non-essential forms, creeds, rituals and ceremonials which have always been the hotbed of dissensions and persecutions among the followers of the various religious sects and creeds. True religion does not condemn the believers in creeds and ceremonies, rather it gives to these things their proper place and recognizes their usefulness for beginners in the path of spiritual progress toward the goal of true religion. As in ordinary life there are three principal stages of growth, childhood, youth and maturity, so in the spiritual life there are corresponding stages of development, the spiritual childhood, spiritual youth, and spiritual maturity. So long as we are in the stages of spiritual childhood and youth, we need doctrines, dogmas, rituals, ceremonials, scriptures, and all the paraphernalia of worship which we find in a Hindu temple, or in a Buddhist monastery, or in a Roman Catholic church, or in a Jewish synagogue, and so long we must obey the commands of priests and of scriptural books. True religion does not begin until we have attained to spiritual maturity, until we have begun to perceive the Infinite in the midst of finite objects, the eternal in the midst of the temporal phenomena of the universe. The moment we get a glimpse of the Infinite either through knowledge, devotion, or contemplation, that very moment the soul becomes conscious of its immortal nature, begins to feel itself a part of, and inseparable from, the Infinite and endeavours constantly to be in close touch with that Infinite. This is what is meant by Divine Communion. The individual soul then crosses the threshold of true religion and enters into

the realm where the quarrel or noise of doctrines, dogmas, sects, and creeds dose not reach the ears, where rituals and ceremonies are of no further value and where the soul, rising above all temptation and transcending all limitations, realizes that peace, happiness, and divine wisdom which enlightens the mind makes the mind peaceful and happy. It breathes then the air of freedom and enjoys unending rest and peace Even when he comes down to the plane of the earth, he brings with him that joyous spirit. Such a soul, enjoying perfect freedom, declares to the world with a trumpet voice. "I have realized that infinite Supreme Being whose self-effulgent light of wisdom dispels the darkness of ignorance. Whosoever hath attained such realization hath crossed the ocean of death and reached immortality ; there is no other way, there is no other way"

CHAPTER XIII

UNITY IN VARIETY OF RELIGION

In a series of lectures on the great religions of the world I have described the glorious and eventful lives of their founders, as also their teachings. My main object is to make the students of Vedanta understand the ideals of all great religions of the world and to let them know that those ideals are not confined to any particular religion, but they are universal. I have also tried to make them understand that religion of their forefathers, in which they were born and brought up, is not the only religion in the world, but it is also one among a variety of others that the founder of their forefathers' religion was not the only Prophet, but also one among many such Prophets who are revered and worshipped in the world as Saviours of mankind, or as the Messengers of God. I have also shown that the fundamental principles of Judaism, Christianity, Mohammedanism, and Zoroastrianism are one and the same.

Now each of these religions teaches the worship of one God who is the creator and sustainer of the universe. Each of them is absolutely monotheistic and believes in heaven and hell, reward and punishment, angels and archangels and in the resurrection on the last day of Judgment and the immortality of the soul. Furthermore, I have shown that in the highest ethical contents, these religions not only agree among themselves, but also agree with other religions of Aryan and Mongolian origin, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Lamaism, Confucianism, and modern Shintonism. Each of these religions teaches the Golden Rule and the ethical doctrine of returning good for evil. Each of these religions teaches disinterested love for our neighbours and humanity and asks its votaries to be loyal to this ideal. Notwithstanding all these points of agreement, there are, however, certain points on which these religions disagree and these are the rituals, doctrines, dogmas, mythologies, and ceremonies. These doctrines, dogmas and creeds are more or less derived from local traditions and mythologies, bearing as

they do the inevitable stamp of local forms and names. History tells us that existing religions are an inter-related process and there is no religion without a past history of its own. Religions are never made, but they grow like plants, drawing nourishment from the soil of their birth, from the local beliefs and traditions which vary from place to place. You have already seen how Christianity and Mohammedanism grew from the soil of Judaism, influenced by the Zoroastrianism of Persia. Again, Zoroastrianism has its roots in the vedic religion of the ancient Hindus. Judaism in its turn gradually was developed from the polytheistic beliefs of the different tribes of Asia, of the Babylonians, Chaldeans and Phoenicians, influenced by the Zoroastrianism of Persia. Christianity was also influenced by the Aryan religion, the Buddhism, as also by philosophy and religion of ancient Greece. You are also familiar how Buddhism in its turn bloomed forth on the soil of Hinduism and its various branches have spread in different parts of the world, in Tibet, Mongolia, China, Japan, Siam, Burma and Ceylon. Buddhism has civilized the barbarous nations of the East, has given them the highest ideals of life and has brought salvation to millions of people all over the world. Taoism which developed in China, is also indebted to the teachings of Vedanta and Buddhism.

Let us now disclose the links in the old and new forms of religion. Later religions do not destroy the earlier ones. They do not contradict each other, but they mark a gradual evolution of man's religious conceptions. The historical successors do not reject the predecessors altogether, but in many cases the former purify the latter and thus give them a fresh lease of life. Often they introduce new creeds, doctrines, rituals, and ceremonies, but uphold through them that central spirit which animated earlier religions. The change which the new religions bring about in the spiritual realm, is not so much of spirit as of technique. The same God is often conceived in another name and form. The same Jehovah of Judaism is called by the later Christians as the Father in heaven and Allah by the Mohammedans. Different phases and different aspects of the same Deity are manifested in each of these religions. The Christian conception of God is more developed than the old Judaic conception. The Christian conception of God is of a loving

Father, which is different, of course, from the revengeful God of Judaism.

Notwithstanding these facts, the followers of each religion forget the truth and the history of their forefathers' religion, and declare in a spirit of blind dogmatism that theirs is the only true religion, thus rashly repudiating the claims of other religions to that exalted status. Each religion preaches and propounds certain doctrines and dogmas and insists upon its votaries accepting them as the only real ones. The zealous followers do not rest content in this, they go further and think that those who do not believe in their doctrines will go to eternal perdition. Some proceed still farther: They will draw their sword and employ force to convert others into their particular religious fold. The Mohammedans, for instance, in their religious career forced others to accept their belief even at the point of the sword. They argued: "Either give up your faith and accept mine, or give up your life". They slaughtered thousands and thousands of innocent non-believers. They committed these acts not through a native wickedness, but through what we may call intense fanaticism. Fanaticism has its roots in man's possessive impulse. It rouses in man many wicked feelings, stirs up the animal in him, hardens his heart, makes him commit violent acts and ultimately change him into a ferocious beast. The cause of this fanaticism is nothing but the perversion of religion. What else can be the cause of Mohammedan fanaticism? It is their perverted ideology. But true religion brings the most intense love for humanity, nay, for all living creatures while its perversion brings the most diabolical hatred and persecution the world over. The former changes men into supermen, while the latter degenerates men into sub-human beings. Like the Mohammedans the Christians also resorted to violent force for the propagation of their religion. The fire of Inquisition kindled by religious fanaticism killed thousands of pious and innocent men whom we now regard as martyrs of history. Nothing can make one so tender and kind-hearted as religion and nothing is so diabolical as its perversion. It was religion which stopped the slaughter of animals. It was religion that inspired men to build hospitals for men and animals and asylums for the poor and the needy. Again, the perversion of religion once let loose, had worked towards a opposite extreme,

inflicting untold miseries on mankind. The history of humanity stands like a living witness to all these noble and ignoble acts.

Each of these religions claims to be revealed by God. That is a very peculiar point. A Mohammedan says that his religion is a direct revelation from God, and when the Mohammedans killed all the Jews and innocent Arabs, they thought that they were not killing, it was God who was killing those men and that the will of God was being fulfilled through them. Whenever they declared war, they said it was God's command and there was the following passage in the Quran: "The Lord says through His Angel Gabriel go and do this," and so he does.

Again the Christians say that their religion is true, because it was a direct revelation from God. As the Quran is the revealed scripture of the Mohammedans, so is the Bible of the Christians, the Old Testament of the Jews, the Zend Avesta of the Zoroastrians, the Vedas of the Hindus, and so on. Now, if all these scriptures are the revealed words of God, may we then ask why is there so much difference of opinion? A Mohammedan will not accept any other scripture as revealed. He will say that his scripture is the only one which was revealed by God and some of the Mohammedans will again, say that this revelation was the last. A Christian will not accept other scriptures as true, but he will take his own and denounce others. If a Christian believes his own scripture is true and revealed, why should he not allow others to believe in the same way? Then there would be an end of quarrels. But, at the same time, if a Mohammedan is allowed to believe in that way, he will not stop there; he will persecute others, because he will think that he is fulfilling the will of God. What are we going to do under these circumstances? Who will decide which scripture is truly revealed and which is not? We are not in a position to decide it. A Christian cannot decide it, because he will say that his is the only scripture revealed. Who will decide it? If God comes down Himself and takes a human form and explains that among these scriptures such and such an one is truly revealed, even then perhaps we will not accept that statement. Then, again, the followers of Mohammed will try to force others and quarrel with those who follow other scriptures and other religions and other Prophets. A Christian will

denounce the prophets of other religions. He will say that other Prophets are not true, but that his own prophet is the truest and most historic. He will bring you many arguments, without thinking for a moment that if those arguments be applied against his own religion the whole structure of the religion will fall to pieces. We cannot accept those arguments, because they are one-sided.

This process of coercion has been going on from the beginning of history of religions and will continue in the future. Then where is the harmony? How can we find peace? Harmony and peace will come only by seeing the unity in the variety of religions. And where is that unity? We do not find unity in the doctrines and dogmas, because each religion, or each scripture, preaches some doctrines and dogmas which are different from others. We cannot find that unity in the lives of the founders of many faiths, because the miraculous deeds and historical lives of these founders differ from one another. If we accept the life of Christ as true and real and as the only one, then we cannot accept the life of Mohammed as true and real, because his life is different. He was born under different conditions, amid a different nation and he lived a different life. He married and had a great many wives. Christ had none. Now, how are you going to reconcile that? There is another difficulty. If the miraculous deeds and wonderful events in the life of one particular founder of a particular religion agree with those of another founder, then the followers of the first will not accept them as real. For instance, Christ walked on the sea and healed the sick and raised the dead, and so on. Now, if those acts were found in the lives of Buddha and Krishna, then a Christian will not accept them as true. He will say: "Oh, they are not historical, and they are all mythical legends built on the life of Christ." But if you say to them that those legends in the life of Christ were built upon all these traditions of the lives of Krishna and the deeds of Buddha, now who is going to decide that? The doctrines and dogmas are intimately related to the lives of the founders, or embodied in the mythological descriptions of a God with a particular name and a particular form. The Buddhists cannot separate their religion and the ideals of their religion from the life of Buddha. If the life of Buddha be taken away from Buddhism, it will fall to pieces. Similarly, the ideals of

Mohammedanism are intimately connected with the life of Mohammed. If Mohammed was not inspired by Gabriel, then the whole Quran is false and the whole religion goes to pieces. Similarly, if the life of Christ be taken out of Christianity, nothing is left. But the followers of each of these founders of great religions will cling to their own Masters and Prophets and say that their Prophets are the only historical ones, while other Prophets are all false, unhistorical, or perhaps not authorized or commissioned by God.

In these circumstances, we do not find any hopeful sign of peace and harmony unless we rise above all sectarian religions and turn to Vedanta. Vedanta asks us not to quarrel and fight over the doctrines, dogmas, creeds and rituals, because they are the non-essentials of religion. Vedanta asks us to look to the essential point of religion and there we will find the unity. Conscience is the ideal and that is the attainment of perfection, no matter how you can get it or how you do get it. As long as the ideal is the same and the results of realization are the same, so long we find there the unity. We must look at the highest ideals of these great religions of the world and understand the true meanings, rejecting the sectarian meanings as given by particular sects. For instance, the Bible is interpreted in a thousand different ways by different followers of different denominations, and there are about two hundred sects in Christianity and each one quotes from the Bible and gives a particular interpretation. Now which are you going to follow? Go to a Catholic church and there you will find a different interpretation. Go to a Christian Science church, there you will find Mrs. Eddy's interpretation which may be true, but that is different. Go to a Unitarian church, there you will see the difference. Therefore this is extremely confusing to the followers of religions who really wish to understand the truth and to get the highest ideal and realize it. Vedanta is extremely helpful for that. Vedanta is far above the level of these sects and there it stands as a witness upon the rock of Truth. It applies reason, science, philosophy and spiritual laws that have been discovered by all the great Saviours and saints and spiritual leaders of the world and tells how to understand the spirit of the scriptures from the more universal standard, as Christ said: 'And ye shall know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free, then understand it. What

is knowing the 'Truth' and what is 'freedom'? Now, sectarians may say that Truth is the personality i.e. the personality like Christ. Another may say that Truth is God. But whether it be Christ or God, it is one. Why do you not take it as one Truth? It will appeal to your reason. Science tells the same thing. All philosophers have said the same thing and all religions tell the same that Truth is one and universal. Therefore find that universal Truth, know it, and then freedom will come. That would be the rational way.

That is the position of Vedanta. Christ alone did not say that Truth. Long before Christ, Buddha said: "Truth is one. Know it and realize it, and then you will be free; emancipation of the soul will come to you." Vedanta teaches the same thing. Read the *Upanishads* which were given to the world hundreds of years before Christ and there you will find the same Truth, "Truth is one, universal, and the worship of truth is the one goal of all religions." Truth may be called Father in heaven or Allah, Ahura Mazda or Divine Mother, Over Soul or Spirit. Call it by any name, but it is one and the same thing. We cannot destroy all religions, but we must see harmony in them, as we cannot find that harmony in the mythologies, in the rituals, in the doctrines and dogmas and in the peculiar beliefs and traditions upon which they are built. We must find unity in the highest goal, or in the worship of Truth. You will worship the truth by going to church, but not believing that outside of the church is hell. You may go to church, but do not say that those who are not going to church, are going to eternal perdition. But believe that the human body is the best church. Herein dwells the Divinity; realize Him therein. All churches and temples are made after the human body. If you stretch your arms, you are a cross and all churches are built in the form of a cross. Why is it holy? Because your human body is holy. What can be holier than the human body? What can be greater than it? It is a living shrine of the Divinity and so we shall worship the Truth or the absolute Truth within the heart. If you go to a mosque, there you can worship also being a Christian. Certainly if you go to the temple of a Hindu, or of a Buddhist, do not see faults there. They may have peculiar rites and ceremonies and images and all those things as in the Roman Catholic churches, but these are non-essential. The most vital point of

religion is the worship of Truth. Be really a seeker after Truth and sit in your own room and feel there you are in a church. What can be greater and more universal than that? Even when you are walking, think that you are walking in the church. The whole universe is pervaded by the Supreme Being. What place can we exclude from His omnipresence, from the Divine presence?

Therefore Vedanta asks us to worship the Truth, no matter by what name we call it. It will not make any difference in substance, for religion is not so much a matter of profession as a thing of active cultivation. If you pray, do not pray in mere words, but pray in spirit. That prayer will be fulfilled "Out of the fulness of the heart the mouth speaketh", but when the heart is empty, the words may flow in torrents without producing any lasting impression. If a speaker has no fulness of heart, his wonderful discourse, fine rhetoric and fine oration, will fail to induce others to an acceptance of his experience. But when the utterance leaps forth from the inner depths, it engages the depths of another. All Prophets, all Messengers of God, first fill their own souls with the thoughts and ideas and then speak out before the world. The world bows down before that divine voice, because the Lord speaks through it. They forget themselves and become channels through which the Lord speaks, and, therefore, the world worships them, idolizes them, reveres them, honours them, and calls them the saviours of mankind. Christ and Mohammed were Prophets. Zoroaster was a Prophet. Buddha was a Prophet; Laotze was a Prophet, and there have been many other Prophets, like Krishna, Ramakrishna and others. They do not care to foretell fortunes, but they are Messengers of God, greater than Jewish prophets in some respects, because they do not simply predict, but they understand the spiritual laws and are living examples before the world. Therefore they are worshipped by humanity, and if we understand that unity in variety of religions, then we may live with the Mohammedans, with the Christians, with the Jews, Zoroastrians, Hindus and Buddhists, without quarrel and fighting.

The world will learn this wonderful acceptance of unity in variety of religions from India as upheld in her long historical tradition. Therefore you see in India the Mohammedans, the Buddhists, the Hindus, the Parsees and the Christians—all living together as friends. As long as you worship

God, you are all right. And so when you find the principles of Vedanta, do not think for a moment that you are going to be converted. You do not believe in conversion, but believe in telling you to see the unity, to understand the highest ideals of all religions, and to worship the Truth in the church of your own heart which is the living sanctuary of God.

CHAPTER XIV

UNIVERSALITY OF THE VEDANTIC RELIGION

It is extremely gratifying to me to know that you care more for your religion, for your spirituality than for anything else. All other subjects, such as politics and social progress, are secondary to us and spirituality is our life. Spirituality is a part of our soul. We cannot give it up. The moment we give it up, we will be dead. From time immemorial, from the day when all the Anglo-Saxon and European nations were tattooing their bodies and eating raw animal flesh from that hoary age down to the present day, our treasure and wealth have always been in spirituality and not in politics or in social reform.

Our religion and philosophy are absolutely universal and that we have inherited from our ancient forefathers who were the *mantra-drashtas*, i.e., the seers of Truth. They do not take their stand upon the quick-sand of doctrines and dogmas, but upon the solid bed-rock of eternal Truth and spiritual laws that govern our souls from eternity to eternity and standing upon this solid foundation, our religion and philosophy have withstood all the ravages of time and have been able to conquer all other kinds of movements that have sprung up from time to time. Our religion and philosophy have civilized the nations of different countries, whether of Asia or of Europe, directly or indirectly. Spiritual ideals of the highest nature first arose from the soil of India and then travelled westward and eastward—westward as far as Alexandria and Greece and eastward as far as China, Japan and Korea. Even centuries before the Christian era the great preachers of Hindu philosophy and religion went to distant lands outside of India to preach the gospel of Truth. They never carried swords or guns, but they spread and showered benediction and good-will, peace and love, wherever they went. The spirituality which we have inherited through our wonderful religion and philosophy, is known under the name of Vedanta.

By 'Vedanta' many people may think that it means certain sectarian philosophy, or some metaphysical dogmas, which are

purely monistic or dualistic, and consequently, is one-sided. The term 'Vedanta' is not limited by any sectarian doctrine or dogma or any metaphysical theory, but it means 'the end of wisdom'. Really spiritual knowledge or *Brahmajnana* or *Atmajnana* is an ultimate one and it is the *summum bonum* of all human beings and so it is known as an 'end.' It is not limited to any particular book or writing or scripture, but it is absolute in its nature. So the 'end of wisdom' must not mislead us to any such conclusion that wisdom can be limited or can be made final. The 'end of wisdom' means that goal which is reached by all relative knowledge i.e. by all knowledge which proceeds from the phenomenal world or from our sense perception. Knowledge which is scientific, is only striving to reach that climax to which it will never go. And where is that climax? Is it in the knowledge of matter, or in the external phenomenal world? No, matter is the combination of material particles known as the phenomenal world which means one-half of the universe. There is another half which is not matter, but the knower of matter. It is not the same as the combination of material particles, but it is the knower, the power, the intelligence by which we are conscious of external conditions. We can perceive the existence of matter and we can know that there is such a thing as the phenomenal universe, or the external world, which is merely objective and is one-half of the universe. The other half is subjective and when we combine the knowledge of the objective world with that of the subjective world, then we find a grand wisdom which is unlimited by time and space. That wisdom is called the divine or eternal wisdom. That unlimited wisdom is the beginning and end of the whole universe. But where is that wisdom? Is it in the universe? Is it outside this cosmos? Is it outside our bodies? No, it pervades the whole universe. It is outside as also inside. It is everywhere. The whole universe with its animate and inanimate objects is pervaded by it: '*isha vasyam idam sarvam*'. We have wisdom itself in our souls. In fact, our souls are but the manifestations of that infinite wisdom which is the foundation and also the end (*pratistha* or *adhishthana* and *anta*) of all phenomenal existences.

This wisdom is described by various names. Some personify and call it the Lord of the universe, but make this wisdom as

world. If we understand the nature of that Infinite Being as nameless, then we may say that it is the Brahman of the Hindus, Vishnu of the Vaishnavites, Siva of the Saivaites, or Sakti of the Saktas. It is also the Father in heaven of the Christians and the Allah of the Mohammedans, Jehovah of the Jews, and so on. The difference is only in name and not in essence. Different names do not change the nature of that absolute wisdom, or the Divine Being, or the Supreme Lord of the universe, and, therefore, all religious quarrels and persecution that have been described in the pages of the religious history of the world, should not exist in future if we understand that 'unity in diversity' is the ideal of our existence. If we realize that the unity of Godhead has different names and forms under a variety of manifestations only, then there would be no more quarrel and no more fight between the Hindus and the Mohammedans, between the Christians and the Mohammedans, between the Hindus and the Christians and other followers of various sects. All these quarrels and fights proceed from fanaticism which is the child of ignorance. Wherever there is ignorance there is fanaticism and fanaticism leads to all kinds of diabolical methods which deluge the world under the name of religion. The Christians have held swords and guns in their hands and demolished temples in this country and Ceylon. They have demolished the Buddhist temples in Japan and China. It is recorded in history that the Mohammedans have demolished the Hindu temples through fanaticism and through that spirit of zeal to propagate their faith, but the Hindus have always practised toleration. They have never held swords and destroyed any religious monument for the sake of their faith. Show me a nation like the Hindu nation who built churches for the Christians and mosques for the Mohammedans. Why did they do so? Because they know that the Lord who is worshipped under the name of Allah or the Father in heaven, is the same Deity whom they worship under different names. So the toleration of the Hindus had been unique in the religious history of the world. We have never shed blood in the name of religion. We, the Hindus understand better, and, therefore, are still capable of being the spiritual leaders and the teachers of the Western nations. They are yet to learn from the Hindus the grandeur of religious toleration. Hinduism accepts the

fundamental principles of all religions. It is very difficult to reconcile so many varieties of creeds with religion and philosophy of Vedanta, but, if you look a little deeper, you will see religion and philosophy of Vedanta do not deal with mere doctrines and dogmas, but give spiritual laws which are eternal and universal and are the common property of all religious nations. And what are those spiritual laws, the ethical laws, the relation between the soul and God, and the relation between the individual soul and the external world? All these are most beautifully described and rationally maintained by no other system than the system of Vedanta which is not only a philosophy, but also a religion.

Now religion and philosophy of Vedanta can be divided into three principal parts. One part is dualistic. By that word I mean that it admits the existence of three entities as separate, but closely related to one another. The existence of the individuals to one another, the existence of the individual soul, of the external nature, and the existence of the Creator; these three are co-eternal entities. These exist but they are not one and the same. Those who admit these three things as separate entities, are known as dualists. Among the Hindus you will find the Vaishnavites admit that the Lord is separate from nature as also from the individual souls. But among the Western nations those who proclaim Judaism, Mohammedanism, Christianity, etc., you will find the majority of these followers believe that the Lord of the universe is separate from the universe, and He is the ruler and the governor of the universe. The creator is distinct and separate from the individual souls which are His creatures. This is the first step in the spiritual evolution of the soul. First of all, when we see beautiful things which we perceive by the senses, we conceive of a creator, a ruler, a governor and we think of His attributes, His powers and His majesty and then we bow down to Him and worship Him. In times of distress and suffering we pray to Him and call for His help. That is only natural. Then, gradually we begin to feel that the Lord of the universe whom we conceive as dwelling beyond our reach, is not far from us. He manifests Himself within our souls, as an internal ruler and comforter within ourselves.

Then we feel we are not separate from Him but more

closely connected with Him in some mysterious manner. Our true nature is not absolutely separate from Him. It is not a part inseparable from the whole ; yet as a part is not the same as the whole, so we feel that our individual souls are but parts of the one stupendous whole and yet are not the same. This is the second stage of the spiritual evolution. It is called *Visishtadvaita*. It means that we are in the body of the supreme Being, and the whole external phenomenal world forms the gross physical body (*viratmoorti*) of that infinite wisdom, and each individual soul exists in the body of the Lord. Sometimes it remains there and at other times it manifests itself in various manifestations and Incarnations.

There is another still close realization and that comes to the soul which has reached beyond the limits of all relative knowledge, sense-perceptions, thoughts and ideas. When we rise above all relative conceptions, we find that there is something which is the base on foundation of our conceptions of the Creator, the preserver, and the Destroyer, which forms the essence of the Lord whom we worship under different names and forms. When we realize that, we enter into the domain of the absolute existence, then we are no longer conscious of external things and we feel a blissful state of *samadhi* which is indescribable. There we find all differentiations vanish. The phenomenal sun, the moon and the stars disappear. Where do they go? What we do not know, but there exists one infinite wisdom and it is said in the Vedas that neither the light of the sun, nor that of the moon, nor that of the lightning can show the glory of that infinite wisdom which these external material lights cannot reveal. How can earthly light reveal that Supreme Being. But, at the same time, it dwells in the sun, in the moon, and in the stars as well. It is the essence of all of them. No one can transcend it. It is indescribable, unfathomable, and immortal. This state is called monistic or *Advaita*. Then we realize that these three, the individual soul, the external nature and the creator (*jiva, jagat* and *Isvara*) are but the manifestations of one absolute wisdom which is infinite and eternal. In manifestations, there is relativity. A Creator exists so long as there is creation. But when there is no creation how can there be a Creator? So is *Isvara*. What is its mean-

ing? *Isvara* means the Ruler or the Governor. Now can there be a Governor when there is nothing to be governed? And how long does the Governor exist? So long as there is something to be governed. Therefore, so long as the phenomenal world exists, there is that manifestation which is called *Isvara*, or the personal God. But our God is not merely personal, but is also impersonal. Our conception of God as a personal deity is only a poor conception of God. That is only the beginning of religion or realization. We must rise higher and higher in the evolution of our conception of God and gradually we will find that this *Isvara* is only the first-born manifestation of *something* which is indescribable and infinite wisdom. That is the Brahman. Now, under these three heads we can include all the special religions of the world, Christianity, Mohammedanism, Judaism, etc., which are dualistic, and, therefore, they can be embraced by the dualistic system of religion and philosophy of Vedanta. Ramanujacharya has described in his commentaries the grand truth that the First-born Lord of the universe or the *saguna* Brahman is the Almighty Being, in whose body dwell *chit* and *achit*, the individual ego and nature. This idea was expressed by Jesus the Christ when he said that the great Lord is like the vine and we are but branches. It was expressed by Alexander Pope when he said that the Lord is one stupendous whole, of which we are but parts. But when we go a little deeper, we find that He cannot be divided into parts, because He is infinite and every part of Him is infinite. Then comes the most advanced metaphysics of Sankaracharya who says that all these differentiations and distinctions are only on the phenomenal plane. The idea of separation or division exists so long as we are limited by time, space and causation. Time, space and causation are but the products of one Eternal Energy which is known as the *Prakriti* or *maya*.

What is *maya*? Is it merely an illusion? No, it means a relative existence or delusion. It means time, space and causation. Sankaracharya defines it as indescribable in its nature and name. It is the energy of that supreme wisdom and Divinity. It is beginningless. It consists of three qualities or materials which combine themselves and manifest into gross material forms of the universe. Its existence can only be inferred by seeing or deserving the results and it is that which produced all pheno-

menal names and forms.¹ Time, space and causation are included in that, because these are the conditions under which all names and forms exist. European philosophers think that Kant was the first man to discover that time, space and causation are the conditions of phenomenal existence, but that is not correct, as it was known to the Hindus long before the time of Kant. In fact, Sankaracharya mentioned that several times in his commentary on the *Upanishads* and the *Brahmasutra*. It was familiar to the Hindus long before Kant declared it, from the time of Sankaracharya who lived about the eighth century A.D., and, in fact, that idea was in a germ stage in the *Upanishads* which go back thousands and thousands of years before the Christian era. We must not consider that *maya* means illusion. It means the *phenomenal existence*, or the *conditional* or *relative existence*. It means that my existence depends upon the existence of Madras. Madras exists so long as there is India and India exists so long as there is the universe and the universe exists so long as there is the solar system. Therefore *maya* is the conditional existence and that existence is possible only in time, space, and causation. But when we rise above time and space, and when relativity vanishes, there is neither *maya*, nor the manifestation of *maya* and there is the abode of infinite wisdom and yet at the same time it (the infinite Brahman) forms the background of *maya*. It forms like a canvas upon which the most beautiful picture of the phenomenal world is painted by the almighty hand and that canvas gives life and soul to the picture of the phenomenal world.² Nothing can exist as separate from that Infinite Being, and, therefore, we must feel our relation to the Infinite as inseparable and this idea was expressed most beautifully by Christ when he said: "We live and move and have

1. अव्यक्तनाम्नी परभेशशक्तिरनादविद्या त्रिगुणात्मिका परा ।
कार्यानुमेया सुधियैव मायया जगत् सर्वमिदं प्रसूयते ॥

—Vivekachudamani, 110.

² There is a controversy between the author of the *Bhāmatī* and that of the *Vivaraṇa*. Vachaspati Miśra says that an individual soul (*jīva*) is the locus or background of *maya*, and the *Vivaraṇakara* says that the Brahman is the locus or background of *maya* or nescience.

our beings in God" This idea was expressed in India centuries before his time. It is expressed in the *Upanishads* thus: "That from which everything comes into existence, in which everything exists, into which everything returns" So our beings depend upon the Supreme Being This is the ideal goal of our religion and also of all the religions of the world.

Therefore our religion embraces all other religions. For instance, the Vedas say that *moksha* is to be attained through knowledge. By 'knowing' we can attain to absolute emancipation and freedom. The same idea was given in the Bible when Christ said: "And ye shall know the truth and truth shall make you free."¹ Christ there means that knowledge brings freedom. He did not mean the knowledge of any material object or of external matter, but the knowledge of that one Being which when realized, would bring the absolute freedom If you study the Quran, you will find the knowledge of Allah is declared to be the means by which that goal of freedom can be attained Of course, going to heaven and enjoying celestial pleasures are not considered to be the highest state of spiritual realization Although the *Sanatana Dharma* advocates and helps such men who are anxious to reach the goal of celestial pleasures and does not discourage the devotee who wishes to go to heaven and enjoy the celestial pleasures for a certain length of time, yet it holds before us that these pleasures are within the realm of time, space and causation, and teaches us that those seekers after Truth who wish to attain to the absolute Being and who endeavour to enter into the body of infinite wisdom must transcend the celestial region. Other religions do not give that lofty ideal but give only celestial enjoyment as the highest pleasure And, therefore, those special religions can never become universal, because they do not want to go beyond that limit of heavenly pleasures If there be any one who does not care to go to heaven, these special religions cannot help that individual, but religion of Vedanta can help all those who wish to go to heaven and all those also who do not care to go to heaven, and, therefore, this religion is more universal than any other special religion

Another point we must not forget that universal religion of Vedanta which advocates the existence of one truth,

¹ St John, VIII. 32.

one being and one wisdom, is not based on any theory which is like the theory of special creation out of nothing. But it is purely rational. It is in perfect harmony with reason, science, and philosophy. As the modern scientists after long research and investigations have arrived at conclusion that this world was not created in six days out of nothing, but is the result of the gradual evolution of the eternal Energy which is all-pervading and remains unmanifested at certain times and then manifests itself into various names and forms. The evolution theory has been discovered by modern thinkers through long researches and investigations. The ancient thinkers of India discovered the same law of evolution and based their religion upon that law and rejected the theory of special creation of the world by any external deity. And in the Vedas we read that something can never come out of nothing, and this is also a scientific law discovered by modern scientists. Until lately this law was unknown to the scientists of Europe and America, but it was known in India centuries before the Christian era. In the *Chhandogya Upanishad*, the date of which is not yet fixed by Occidental thinkers, we read a father teaching his son saying how can something come out of nothing. That question was raised by the great *Mantra-drashta* of the Vedic period and it is raised today by the scientific thinkers. And, therefore, the evolution theory has given foundation to religion of Vedanta which is universal, and its universality consists in that harmony which exists between itself and all sciences and philosophies of the world. I shall now proceed to show you how the highest ideal of all the scientists of modern times is included within the pale of the Vedantic religion and, therefore, it is universal. At the same time we must not think that this theory explains all things. There are other theories which are higher than the evolution theory. Time will not permit me to enter into the details of that metaphysical point, but I can assure you that there is a theory which is better and more scientific than the theory of evolution, but the modern scientists of Europe do not accept it. Well has it been said by Sir Monier Monier Williams that the Hindus were Spinozites long before Spinoza. This is true, for as early as the time of Kapila, we find him explaining that theory in detail. The modern theory which is so beautifully explained by Herbert Spencer, is not very dissimilar to that

ideal theory of evolution which was started by Kapila at least seven centuries before the Christian era. And thus we find that all scientific thoughts and discoveries are helping and sustaining religion and philosophy of Vedanta. But what has become of the other special religions which were built upon the theory of special creation. They take this for granted. They believe in traditions and are afraid of asking question. If any one ask a question, such as, why did God create the earth before the sun, the answer is not given, and the preacher says it is blasphemous to ask such questions, and that most inscrutable are the ways of the Almighty and He can do anything. Such explanations do not satisfy scientific minds, and, therefore, they do not accept such theories but ridicule them. But in our religion of Vedanta nothing can be ridiculed.

Another point which we must remember before we can understand the universality of Vedanta is this. It has never had any founder. A religion which needs a founder or which is built upon the personality of a founder cannot exist beyond his life, and, therefore, cannot be universal and if the founder be one-sided, it can never be unlimited. It may satisfy certain souls but not all, and, for that reason, we find so many religions existing in this world. Mohammedanism tried to convert the whole world. Christianity has been trying this for the last 2,000 years. But has it succeeded? We doubt it. It may try another 4,000 years. We live in eternity; we do not care. Our life is not limited by three or four scores of years, but we are children of immortal Bliss. We are not afraid of hell-fire after death, and there is, in addition on our side, the fact that we are not going to eternal perdition. I was coming from England to India in a P & O. Steamer. There was a passenger who travelled with me and was interested in the missionary work, and he thought I was a Christian missionary. So, he asked me to what denomination I belonged. I said: "To no denomination." It was very surprising to him. He said: "Don't you believe in Christ?" "Certainly I do," was my reply. Then he asked: "Do you believe 'he is the Saviour'?" I said: "He is one of the Saviours. Mohammed was a Saviour, Buddha was a Saviour and there are many others." He then asked: "Do you believe that you are a sinner? Christ

will save you and through him you will receive salvation"? I said: "I do not believe that" "Don't you?" he asked. I said. "No" He then said "You are the first man I have seen that has the courage to say so." I said: "Yes! we have the courage to say so, because we know it." He then said: "Well, it is very strange. Time will come when you will believe that you are a sinner." I said: "I am a child of God, and to call me a sinner is blasphemy, and if you call me so, you commit a sin yourself". He said: "I have never seen such a man" I said: "You see me and I will show you thousands if you go with me." He then changed the subject

So, our religion gives us that strength that we do not fear eternal hell-fire, because it does not belong to us We are the children of immortal bliss. This must be preached in all countries of the world, where they are groaning under the burden of sin and iniquity and we must remove that by spreading religion of Vedanta. Awake, arise and take the banner of this universal religion and go from land to land and preach the gospel of truth to enlighten the minds of thousands and millions of men who are waiting to receive you as their own saviour. Such is the grandeur of the universal religion of Vedanta and its various methods. It does not say that everybody should believe in one particular creed, but, on the contrary, it says that each individual will have his own particular line of thought and each will lead to that ultimate goal. Christianity, Mohammedanism, Vaishnavism, Saivism and *Saktamarga*—they are all so many paths, each leading to the one goal. If we realize that, there will be no fight, no persecution but absolute peace and harmony. The follower of the Vedantic religion is neither a Hindu, Mohammedan, Christian, Parsi nor any other. He can worship in a church, in a mosque, in a temple or in his own heart Because our human body is the temple of the living God, is the church of the almighty Father and there the eternal Spirit shall be worshipped by spirit and in spirit and then we shall worship the true God. Then and then only, we shall be able to say and know the truth of the great saying which Sri Krishna made known to the world nearly two thousand years before the Christian era. "Whoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him. All religion reach the same goal which is

the infinite and absolute existence, intelligence, bliss and love."¹

1 ये यथा माँ प्रपयन्ते ताँ स्तथैव भजाम्यहम् ।
सम वत्मानुवर्त्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

—*Bhagavad Gita*, Ch. IV.

CHAPTER XV

UNIVERSAL RELIGION OF VEDANTA

The religious history of the world tells us that from time immemorial Asia has been the cradle of all great religions. All the grand religious ideals that have reformed the characters of barbarous nations, tamed man's unruly mind by the loftiest tenets of ethics and morality and have raised human beings above the animal plane and all the sublime truths of spirituality that have transformed human characters into godly and divine nature and have produced the spiritual ideals of nations and Saviours of mankind, first arose in the Orient. It was Asia that gave birth to the great spiritual leaders like Moses and Christ, Mohammed and Zoroaster, Confucius and Buddha, Krishna and Ramakrishna. The spiritual horizon of the East has always been illumined with the glory of the self-effulgent sun of divine wisdom. Whenever there was any religious upheaval in any parts of the world, the origin of that could be traced to the tidal wave of spirituality, caused by the advent of some special manifestation of the Divinity in some part of the Orient.

The present movement of the universal religion of Vedanta which is rapidly spreading all over the world and is moulding the religious ideals of Europe and America, originated very long ago in the very heart of the Orient. It is going to make a wonderful readjustment of the spiritual thoughts of the people and it has already begun to bring the minds of the followers of all sects, creeds, and denominations of all special religions back to that underlying essential truths and fundamental religious principles that are eternal. Its aim is to remove all discord and disharmony that prevail among different sects. This universal religion will also establish a harmony between science, philosophy, and religion and will prove that true religion does neither depend upon doctrines and dogmas, nor upon books, scriptures, and organizations, but upon the eternal truths discovered by the various branches of science and philosophy of the ancient and modern times. It will bring equal comfort and consolation, peace and divine wisdom to all the Christians

and the Jews, Mohammedans and Zoroastrians, the Buddhists and the Hindus of all sects and denominations. This universal religion is not based upon any particular scripture, but it embraces all the scriptures of the world and recognizes their spiritual ideals and teachings as true and eternal. The universal religion is not built around any particular personality, like Christ or Buddha, but it accepts all the great founders of religions as divine manifestations who appeared from time to time to establish righteousness and to remove the corruptions of the existing religions. For instance, the universal religion accepts Christ, Buddha, Zoroaster, Krishna, Chaitanya, Rama-krishna and others as incarnations of the same divine Spirit.

The fundamental principle of the universal religion is the absolute oneness of Divinity. '*ekam sad vipra vadanti*', 'that which exists, is one, men call it by various names'. There is one existence, one reality, one life and one spirit. That Universal Being is manifesting itself in infinite varieties of names and forms. It is the essence of our being, the foundation of our existence and the basis of our intelligence and consciousness. It is the Life of our lives, the Soul of our souls. It dwells in all beings and abides in all hearts: "*ko hyevanyat kah pranyat. Yadesa akasa anando na syat*". Who can live for a moment if 'this space be not filled with blissfulness? This absolute Being is called in Sanskrit *Brahman*. It is the same as the *Good* of Plato, the *Substantia* of Spinoza, the *Ding an sich* of Kant, the *Will* of Schopenhauer, the *Oversoul* of Ralph Waldo Emerson, and the *Unknown and Unknowable* of Herbert Spencer. It is the essence of the Father in heaven of the Christians and Allah of the Mohammedans. It is worshipped under different names such as Jehova, or Christ, Buddha or Krishna. It is impersonal, yet it appears as the personal God, the First-born Lord of the universe. The same one eternal Lord is not only the Father but also the Mother of the universe. He is the efficient and material cause (*nimitta and upadana karana*) of the phenomenal universe. At the beginning of the evolution he projects the world out of His own body wherein it existed potentially in the unmanifested causal state. This undifferentiated causal state of the universe is called energy which is the material cause of all phenomena, is called in Vedanta *Prakriti* (Latin *Procreatrix*), the creative Energy.

The universal religion of Vedanta is not based upon the idea of a special creation out of nothing at a definite period of time, but upon the idea of the gradual process of cosmic evolution, from etherial to gaseous, and gradually through liquid to solid. Thus when the solid was evolved, the germs of life began to manifest on the physical plane first in the form of vegetables, then as animals and lastly, as man¹. The difference between all these grades of life is only in degree, but not in kind. This evolution takes a period of many millions of years. Then dissolution or involution begins in a reverse order and the phenomenal world goes back to its causal state and remains latent in that state for a certain period only to come out again through a similar process of evolution.. Each of these periods of evolution and involution is called a cycle (*kalpa*). The cycle of evolution is followed by a cycle of involution which in turn is followed by another cycle of evolution and so on. The chain of evolution and involution is beginningless and endless. At the time of evolution an infinite number of individual souls come out of the causal state and going through the various grades of evolution becomes clothed, as it were, with the garment of their material bodies of finer or gross kinds and eventually becomes human beings. They manifest their latent powers, fulfil their desires, gain experience and knowledge and march onward to reach perfection. According to the universal religion of Vedanta, each individual soul possesses infinite potentialities and unlimited possibilities. Each one of them is potentially divine and is bound, sooner or later, to reach perfection however imperfect or sinful it may appear to be at present.

According to the universal religion of Vedanta, our souls are not born in sin and iniquity, but we are all children of immortal Bliss. We are not predestined to suffer eternally, nor is this birth the first and last chance of our earthly existence. Our present is the resultant of our past and our future will be the result of our present. We create our own destiny and mould our own future by our thoughts and deeds. God does not punish the wicked, nor does He reward the virtuous. The wicked punish themselves and the virtuous reward themselves.

¹ Vide *Taittiriya Upanishad*, II, 1.

by their own thoughts and deeds being subject to the law of *karma* or cause and sequence.

The attainment of freedom from the law of *karma*, from the cycle of birth and re-birth and from all imperfections and as well as the realization of perfection and Godconsciousness are meant by salvation in the universal religion of Vedanta. This salvation must be here even in this life. He who has attained to salvation, shall be free from all bondage and attachment to earthly conditions and selfishness. He shall manifest divine perfection in all actions of his body and mind. He shall love all living creatures equally and shall see the Divinity everywhere. All knots of desires are torn asunder, all doubts cease for ever, all *karmas* and their effects are transcended and all aims of life are fulfilled when perfection is reached. All sufferings and sorrows diseases and deaths will disappear from the soul which has become perfect in this life. Such a soul lives and dies for others. He is a Christ, a Buddha, a Krishna, or a Ramakrishna.

CHAPTER XVI

SCIENCE OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

We are living today in an age of science. Everything that is scientific appeals to our minds and we accept it as true. With the help of science we can see the vastness of the phenomenal universe and it has revealed to us the profoundest depths of nature. It has studied the cell, divided it into molecules and atoms and shown us that the atoms, in reality, are not indivisible units. Through science we know that all the manifested forces of nature are the expressions of one eternal Energy and that the phenomenal universe has come to its present state through the gradual process of evolution. Furthermore, we have learnt that the life-force is not the exclusive property of the animal creation, but is manifested in vegetables and metals as well. Again, science tells us that God did not breathe the first breath into man and the life of a man is not the result of the intervention of the supernatural Being, but is as natural as the life of the lower animals. Thought transference or telepathy helps us to understand that our minds are but minute particles in the cosmic mind. Never think that our thoughts do not penetrate into other minds. They go through walls of solid rock and if you have a high thought, that thought moves throughout the atmosphere of the whole universe. It is producing waves which are affecting minds, capable of receiving such thoughts. If we can regulate the variation of thought in our own minds and harmonize them with the cosmic mind, then we can become one with it. Herbert Spencer says: "Matter, mind and force are not the reality but the symbols of Reality and the same Reality is manifested subjectively and objectively". You may call it Reality, or Being, or God, or by any name you like, but it is the one Substance. Students of science cannot believe in the Creator, as described in the Genesis, who creates something out of nothing. For science has given evidence to prove that life-germs are uncreatable and indestructible; that they gradually pass from lower to higher stages of development. The old theory of pre-existence and reincarnation explains that

germs of life of individual souls existed before the birth, that they gradually developed according to their desires, creating their own destiny and have evolved from the lowest to the highest stages. These germs of life exist as long as force exists. Science points out the blunders of theological and sectarian religions, and their doctrines have now been set aside by advanced thinkers. The comparative study of religion shows that no religion ever had a supernatural origin ; that religion, however great or small it may be, is but the attempt of the human soul to grasp the universal Truth. Some people believe in the search of man by God. God never searches man apart from Himself. If He would search man He would have to search in His own Being. Our souls, however sinful, exist as parts of the Infinite. Each cell is a life and contributes to the personality of the human being, but each cell has its own individuality. In the same way, we are like so many cells in the spiritual body of the Infinite Being. As, if one would search the individual atoms which make up his own body, he would have to search within his own organism, so if you would search the souls of men, you would have to search them in their own bodies. Nothing exists outside of God, because He is omnipresent. He is all in all. Science obeys no authority of books or personalities. It cares only for truth. We need a religion which is based upon eternal Truth and will harmonize with all the branches of science and also embrace all religions. Is there a religion that embraces all the truths discovered by different nations under the name either of science, or of philosophy, or of religion? Is there a religion that explains unity in variety which is the plan of nature? Our answer is in the strong affirmative. There is one religion which is based upon this truth. It originated in India five thousand years ago and the Sanskrit language was the beautiful medium of its expression. I will quote here a few passages: "One Reality manifests itself in various forms in the phenomenal world. As the wind going through the holes of a flute produces different notes, each complete in itself, so this one Reality manifests in the external and in the material world". "From that one source have evolved mind and intelligence and that is gaseous, liquid, and solid. All forces of nature have evolved from that one source." The universal religion of Vedanta teaches that the germ of life is

eternal and indestructible. The same germ of life or force which appears as good at one time, may appear as evil at another. The same fire that saves a man perishing with cold, may also become the medium of his destruction. The nature of fire is to burn and its power is neither good nor evil. One soul may commit sin, or may make some mistake, but every mistake is a great teacher and helps us toward reaching perfection. The law of action and reaction is inexorable. If you think you are sinful, you are sinful. If you think you are divine, you are divine. God is one stupendous whole of which we are but parts. All these various religions of the world are like so many radii of a circle which converge toward a common centre. The meaning of universal religion was given by Krishna in about 1400 B.C. and it was: "Whoever comes to me, from whatsoever path, I reach him. All men are struggling in the various paths which ultimately lead to me, the infinite existence, intelligence, bliss and life eternal."¹

1 ये यथा माँ प्रपद्यन्ते ताँ स्तथैव भजाभ्यहम् ।
मम वर्त्तिवर्तन्ते मनुष्याः पार्थ सर्वशः ॥

—Bhagavad Gita, Ch. IV, 22.

CHAPTER XVII

IDEAL OF UNIVERSAL RELIGION

The ideal of universal religion of Vedanta is emancipation of the soul from all bondage of selfishness, imperfection, and earthly attachments and it is the attainment of absolute freedom. It is called in Sanskrit *moksha* which literally means 'freedom'. From very ancient times, the saints, the sages, the philosophers and the spiritual teachers of universal religion have upheld this grand ideal, have preached it amongst the masses, and struggled themselves to attain to it during their life-time. When we read the history of the Orient, we find that kings and princes have renounced 'their thrones and wealthy men and women gave away their riches and properties and cut off all earthly ties and have retired to the forest in order to attain to this grand ideal. They had sacrificed all earthly relations and luxuries, considering them as the cause of bondage and unhappiness. But before renouncing all these earthly objects of sense, they had realized the limitations of human existence and had understood that the life of an ordinary mortal on this plane is like that of a slave and it is a state of constant slavery to the masters who are governing us from within as well as from without. In fact, if we examine our own conditions of life, we find that no one of us is absolutely free and yet we do not realize this state of slavery. When we look around us, we find nobody who may be called perfectly free. But we see very few have realized that the life which they are living, is a life of constant drudgery and unhappiness. Few have realized that the individual souls are enchainied by the attractions of the objects of the external world. Fewer still struggle for emancipation and the rest delude themselves by thinking that they are free. They love their bondage and consider that this is the real condition of life and that there is nothing higher or greater. Are we not slaves of our desires and passions? Do we not see around us men and women mad for material prosperity and power as well as for name and earthly fame? Do we not serve these masters who are constantly ruling over our minds and souls? Where is our

freedom? How can we call ourselves free, when we are slaves of anger, hatred, fear, jealousy, self-conceit, beauty, ambition and sense-pleasures? We have tied ourselves down to luxuries and bodily comforts and we think we cannot live without them. We may delude ourselves for the moment by thinking that we are very happy, but there remains hidden in our depths an element of discord and dissatisfaction. Though it is not recognizable to those who live on the surface, yet it keeps the spirit in us utterly dissatisfied with the present state and we long for freedom in its essential dignity. The soul wants to get out of this condition of slavery. Are we not all slaves when we consider how elated and flattered we feel when some kind words are uttered to us and how wounded and hurt we are when we hear harsh and unkind words? Few of us try to know the real condition of things. We go on living as the blind led by the blind. We do not ask of it any questions. We find many people who are willing to help and uplift others, but they should first of all try to uplift themselves and correct their own faults and become free from all the slavery. Here we must not forget what Jesus the Christ said: "Thou hypocrite cast out first the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to pull out the mote that is in thy brother's eye". No one can help and lift another from the mire of slavery, unless he himself has become free and has got a firm foothold upon the rock of absolute freedom.

We are now sleeping the sleep of self-delusion. We must wake up from this state. We must realize how slave like and miserable we have become. Then we must strive for that freedom and attain to it and give it to others. The majority of people are chasing after the phantoms of hope. They appear bright at first, but as we approach them they change their colours and suddenly vanish to appear again and attract the pursuers to chase them once again. We do not realize that these phantoms of hope are the causes of suffering, misery, and disappointment. We do not learn the lesson. We repeat the same process over again, until we are tired and exhausted and our nerves are shattered and we fall dead. In this way, we are living and obeying the commands of these pitiless masters who are

¹ St Luke VI, 42

dominant in us. We never ask for a moment whether we are born to serve these relentless masters, or how long we will continue in this manner. Each individual soul loves and strives after something, not knowing what it is, or how to attain to it, and yet the individual soul cannot rest unless it has attained to that ideal. But we must find out what that ideal is and what it is that our souls want. Our souls want freedom and happiness. We all cry for happiness, but we do not know the conditions under which true happiness comes to the soul, because we are living in the darkness of ignorance. True happiness never comes in slavery, but it comes in absolute freedom. The conditions, under which we are living today, will never bring true happiness to us. We may think ourselves happy and a fool may delude himself by thinking that he is happy, but when he wakes up from that foolish dream, he will discover that it is after all self-delusion and it is not true happiness. True happiness is an accompaniment of absolute freedom. True happiness does not change, it is eternal, and along with it come absolute peace and divine wisdom. These are the signs of true happiness. When we are truly happy, we must possess absolute peace and divine wisdom. Then our spiritual eyes will be opened and we shall be able to see things in a different light. Then we shall have a glimpse of the Absolute. The attainment of the Absolute is real freedom and freedom is the goal of all individuals. Every individual soul is bound to reach it, sooner or later. It is also the goal of evolution. The evolution of nature as well as of all individual souls reaches its perfection when that ideal of freedom is gained.

In our everyday life, we find that we are truly happy, when we have neither wants nor desires. When all our desires and wants have subsided, leaving a peaceful and restful state within us, then we are happy. As desires increase, our happiness decreases. When we want a great many things, we are not happy, because then we are limited by those wants. The soul is tied down by those desires and clamours for their fulfilment. It strives to regain that freedom which it had before these desires and wants have taken possession of it. And these desires and wants are the causes of our misery. So long as there is one single desire or want left unsatisfied, we cannot become

absolutely happy. When we have certain wants, we seek to remove those wants and fulfil our desires, but, if we fail in our attempts, we are unhappy. And this desire has been the cause of a great many troubles that we are going through. We cannot help it, because we were born with desires. These desires we have brought from our previous incarnations. In our previous incarnations, we passed away with our desires unfulfilled and we are trying to fulfil them in this incarnation.

There are two ways by which we can remove these wants and desires, first, by obtaining the objects of desires and by enjoying them, and, secondly, by removing these desires through proper discrimination and also by subduing them. All those desires which are connected directly with the sustenance of life like food and clothes, should be fulfilled by getting the objects of desire, because we must protect our body first. This body will be the means by which we shall attain to freedom and perfection. And this body is the abode of the soul. So we must take care of it first in order to fulfil the highest purpose of our life. But other desires, and passions we can easily remove by right discrimination, by exercising self-control. If we can live in this way we shall attain to unbounded peace and happiness during this lifetime. What is the use of becoming slaves to ambition and greed for wealth and possessions; what is the use of increasing our wants and desires which ultimately keep us enchain'd like a man in prison.

Each individual being has an innate consciousness of 'I' and 'mine'. Whatever we hear or perceive with our senses, we want to bring within the limit of that circle of 'I' and 'mine', and call it our own. If we see anything in a shop, we want to get possession of it and that means we try to bring it within the circle of 'I' and then we are happy. All the things that exist outside of the limit of that circle, we crave to bring within the limit and that is the tendency in each individual soul. In lower animals also we find the same thing, but their desire is limited by physical hunger and appetite. But we collect other things which attract our senses and that tendency, you will find, is at the bottom of all these works which produce trusts and make millionaires and wealthy people at the expense of others. The gratification of these desires may bring happiness to a few

wealthy people, but it brings misery and suffering to a large number of individuals. Those who are living in this world, being attracted by that tendency, do not understand the real purpose of life. Their souls are enchained by greed, avarice, and ambition. They try to get possession of as many things as they can. They want to be the rulers of all, and being mad with that vision, they strive for that goal, but they forget that they cannot be the rulers of the whole earth, it is beyond their power. They constantly serve the internal masters like anger, hatred, jealousy, ambition, and greed for luxury and comforts. If you examine and study the characters of wealthy men and women, you will find that they are never happy. They have outward pomp and splendour, but no inward peace. They are constantly trying to serve the pitiless masters which spur them to action. They are restless and unhappy. They do not understand the purpose of life. They are merely squandering away their time in running after this or that thing for the whole life. They are following the phantoms of hope, pursuing a wild-goose-chase and are always restless. Peace and contentment are strange to them.

There are four kinds of souls found in this world. Those who are absolutely bound by these earthly desires and earthly tendencies, cannot get away from them. Next, those who are trying to be free, are called the *mumukshu*. They are trying to get out of the slavery and to become free. The third, those who have attained to freedom and the fourth, those who are born free. They are Christ and Buddha and are born not as slaves, but as free souls. But their number is significantly small. True freedom comes to those who have reached the knowledge of their true nature, who have realized that they are children of the immortal Bliss, and whose wants and desires are limited and the whole being saturated by real purpose of life. This is the sign of spirituality. A truly spiritual man or woman needs very little and his or her desires are less. He does not seek any comfort or luxury. He does not care for earthly possessions. He understands the transitoriness of earthly life and is contented and happy under all conditions and circumstances, whether agreeable or disagreeable. He has become absolute master of his own animal tendencies and propensities by means of self-control and is free from the sense of 'I', 'me' and 'mine'. So we

must first of all become free from the sense of 'I', 'me' and 'mine' before we can understand what God is. Because where 'I' exists, God cannot come, God is far from that state.

There are two ways by which we can get rid of this sense of 'I', 'me' and 'mine'. The first is the path of discrimination (*vichara* or *Jnana Yoja* and the second is the path of devotion (*Bhakti Yoga*). Those who travel on the path of discrimination, realize that everything belongs to the universe and nothing belongs to the individual soul. Whatever belongs to the universe we cannot call our own. Through proper discrimination and analysis, we discover that when we cannot possess this physical body which we call our own and we cannot keep it permanently, how can we expect to possess other things which are eternally related to this gross material body? It is impossible. Therefore, we should abandon the senses of 'I', 'me' and 'mine', and claim nothing as our own. Really nothing belongs to us, everything belongs to the universe. Those who are animated by this spirit, live freely in this universe calling themselves nothing and seeing everything in the universal Being. They realize that they are not one with the body, but the body is only a transitory abode or shell, through which the soul is manifesting its powers. This world is like a stage where we are playing our respective parts, consciously or unconsciously. Some playing the part of a husband, others of a wife, others of a mother, or a father, or a friend, and so on. Really these are not our actual works which we have come to do, but are the modes of expression by which we are gaining experience, learning the lessons regarding the true nature of things, how things exist in nature, and what benefit they can bring to the soul. If one part which we have played, seems to be unpleasant or seems to produce undesirable results, then we try to play another part and this is the way we are living in this world. But those who have had their eyes opened to the Truth, have understood their true nature. We can also realize that we are not one with the body, that we are souls and that we are children of immortal bliss. Then why should we run after material things which do not and cannot belong to us? Why should we run after earthly objects which can never bring true happiness and freedom? A wise man knows this, and, therefore, he renounces everything. He renounces the attachment to earthly objects, because he

knows that earthly objects will never bring freedom and true happiness. So, instead of wasting his time in chasing after these objects of the senses, he devotes his time and energy to the search of the highest, the eternal, the immortal Being, which is ever dwelling within us.

The other method by which a devotee reaches absolute freedom and happiness, is through the path of devotion (Bhakti Yoga). The travellers on this path believe in the existence of a personal God. They understand that the Lord of the universe is one and whatever exists in the universe, belongs to Him. They do not claim anything as their own. House, property, children, furniture, wealth and other things, all of these things they declare as belonging to God. They say: "This child is not mine, but it is God's child. This house and this property do not belong to me". They dedicate everything to God and think that He is the one Being in the universe. We are all His children. We cannot possess anything. They become free from that sense of 'I', 'me' and 'mine', and, instead of 'I', 'me' and 'mine', they say 'Thou', 'Thee' and 'Thine'. "Whatever is mine is Thine, O Lord," that is their constant prayer (*naham naham, tuhu tuhu*). So everything they possess they give to the Lord and say: "It belongs to Thee, O Lord! make me free from all this bondage, this attachment to earthly things. Make me, O Lord! devoted to Thee, the Infinite Immortal Being". And, gradually, they rise above the plane of selfishness. Selfishness exists so long as we consider ourselves as independent of or separate from God. In fact, 'this is I; this belongs to me' and 'this is you, and this belongs to you' this idea of separateness, or of differentiation, makes us selfish. But when we overcome our individual egoism and think of the Lord as the universal Being who possesses all, then there is no room for selfishness. Think of Christ. Christ said: "Whatever is mine, is Thine, O Lord; let Thy will be done". Christ resigned his individual will to the universal will of the Lord and, in his lifetime, you will notice that he never had his own will fulfilled and did not care for it. He was happy when he found that the will of his Father was fulfilled.

Now, how many of us can live in that way? Not caring for the fulfilment of our own little individual will, but for the fulfilment of our own little individual will, but for the fulfil-

ment of the Divine will that is governing these individual wills. That state comes to a soul who has attained to freedom. The soul then becomes the playground of the almighty Being who plays through him. He has become free from all desires and wants. He does not care for whether he possesses this thing or that. If everything is taken away from him, he is still happy. If this body be taken away from him, he does not mind. It is not a state of indifference, but it is a state of vital strength. Very few people have realized this spiritual strength which comes to the soul who has resigned his individual will to the will of the Lord. Resignation is necessary. In time of distress, sorrow and suffering, when we find no remedy and help from ordinary mortals or earthly beings, then we are resigned. And in resignation comes true peace and happiness. That is the real state which we are longing for. But we cannot resign constantly, and so we are unhappy. We want this and that and we suffer. But a true devotee of the Lord is free from all wants and desires. He does not care whether his desires are fulfilled or not, but he prays to the Lord, saying: "O Lord! Thy will be done, not mine". Then he has absolute contentment and at the same time he understands the true relation of the soul, the relation which the individual soul bears to the Infinite Being. He understands that all individuals are children of the almighty Being. He has neither enemy, nor foe, because all are his friends. He has no attachment to any particular condition or object. He does not care, because he knows that he can possess nothing, and everything that he had, he has given unto the Lord. Then he enjoys that wisdom which we are longing for. That happiness comes to him in this very life, and, after the dissolution of the body, he remains as one with the Infinite. Then he is no longer subject to birth and death, because he has transcended the laws of nature. He communes with the Lord and sees the presence of Divinity around him everywhere. He discovers that everything dwells in God and God dwells in everything, and realizing this he lives for the good of humanity and all the acts of his body become a free offering to the world. He does not seek any result, but gives them as a free offering, and having transcended the laws of nature or the law of action and reaction, he discovers Divine glory and attains to realization.

CHAPTER XVIII

STEPS TOWARD REALIZATION

Realization of God is described in Vedanta as the highest ideal of earthly existence and also the final goal of all religions. A Christian, a Mohammedan, a Jew, a Buddhist, or a Hindu equally aims to become some day conscious of the divine Spirit which is regarded as the Lord of the universe as well as the Soul of our souls. The followers of all sects and creeds hold this ideal. Although they march each along their chosen paths, they fix their minds upon this one destination, the knowledge of God, or the realization of the eternal Truth. Their paths may vary, but their goal is the same. A Christian, for instance, may follow the path laid down by Jesus of Nazareth and by his votaries. He may hold Jesus the Christ on the Cross as the highest ideal. He may repeat his holy name reverentially, bow down before him, expect his grace to be saved from eternal perdition, having his sins washed off by the blood of the only-begotten son of the Heavenly Father, and eventually to enter into the celestial abode where he hopes to come in direct presence of the almighty Spirit and to feel the Divinity within the soul and outside of it. A Mohammedan, on the contrary, may not believe in the worship of Jesus the Christ. He may not care for the path of salvation laid down by the Christians, but still he aspires to know God by following the path of Mohammed, the only Prophet of his Lord. A Jew may not worship Christ. He may follow the teachings of Moses, yet he expects to realize Jahveh in the end. A Buddhist may not believe in any personal God, he may not care to go to heaven, but his ideal is to realize that eternal Truth which was realized by Buddha, to become Buddha, which means 'the Enlightened'. Buddha realized the Truth to attain to perfection and to commune with the eternal Truth. In this manner, we can show that all the religions of the world hold the ideal of realization of Truth above all other ideals. Although the paths, described in these religions, may vary, the goal is one and the same. The same ideal may be expressed in different terms; some may call it salvation, others

may call it perfection, the Buddhists may call it Buddhahood or Nirvana, the Christians Christhood or state of Divine communion, but all these names show that their true meaning is the realization of God, or the attainment of God-consciousness, or to become conscious of the Divine something which is the eternal source of all existence, intelligence, and happiness.

This ideal has been held before the masses of people in India by all the great sages saints, prophets, and philosophers as the highest of all other ideals. Inspired by a tremendous urge for this realization of God, kings and princes have renounced their thrones, men and women have sacrificed their wealth and comfort, and unhesitatingly they have gone through the most severe trials and austerities, struggles and hardships. The materialists and agnostics, who do not believe in the existence of God, may think it is foolish to sacrifice immediate pleasures and comforts of life. They may think that it is waste of time and energy to search after that Being. They may devote their energy to fulfil their worldly desires and ambitions, they may chase the phantoms of hope with the idea that the attainment of success in business or earthly prosperity is the highest aim of life, but the time is sure to come when they will wake up from the slumber of this self-delusion and begin to see things as they are in reality. Scientists can never solve these problems. Philosophers who have not reached the highest goal cannot answer these questions. Each individual soul must solve these problems for himself or herself. In that state of spiritual realization, the light of the supreme Being will reveal. In that light all darkness will vanish and then through the light of Divine wisdom we will be able to see things as they are in reality and not as they appear to our senses. Those who have not attained to this realization, or have not got the light of Divine wisdom, are groping in the darkness of ignorance. They are asleep; they do not know what they are doing; they are dreaming the dreams of material objects. All these ambitions and earthly desires are like dreams or nightmares of the soul (*jivatman*), and they are going through them not knowing that the soul-life is eternal. They do not know that they existed before this present life and that will continue to exist even when this body is dead and gone. They do not understand what will enrich the soul and what will impoverish it. They think that

material prosperity and earthly riches will enrich the soul. What matters it to the soul whether we posses earthly riches or go without possessions? The soul is never poor. Did you ever ask whether by material wealth and prosperity your soul would be enriched? No, if you asked that, you would not run after wealth and riches.

Accumulation of wealth is the result of a disease of the brain. The millionaires and multi-millionaires are suffering from that disease. They do not know it, for their souls are not awakened. Who can help them unless they help themselves? What gain or loss will it be to the soul if the whole world praises you, or blames you, or passes unjust opinion upon you? The soul is always unaffected by praise, or by censures of people. It is beyond all material possessions and riches. The wealthiest multimillionaire who owns the riches of a whole nation or half of the world, does not think for a moment that he will be unable to carry even a pin beyond the grave. He must be a fool who thinks himself rich by owning a few millions of golden coins, or a large real estate, or a palatial building, with perhaps hundreds of men and women to wait upon him. He must be a fool who thinks that by mere possession of all these earthly objects he is superior to his fellow-beings, or that he will be able to carry with him a particle of these objects which in reality do not belong to him. What will he carry with him? The only thing that goes with us beyond the grave is our character or impression or *samskaras*. How important it is then to build our character, to mould it in the cast of the divine Ideal, so that in future we shall be better and not worse than what we are today.

The divine Ideal is free from all limitations. Wherever there is limitation there is the imperfect manifestation of the Divinity. Therefore, if we wish to harmonize our character with the divine Ideal, we must remember that the Divinity is free from all limitations, while we are crippled by the conditions under which we are living, and our attempt should be to rise above and remove all limitations which prevent the manifestation of Divine power to realize the emancipation of the soul. Holding that ideal before the mind, we must march onward towards the goal.

Each individual soul, being a spark of the huge bonfire of

the Divinity, is of a similar divine nature. If you go to your innermost depths, there you will find the eternal spark within you. Behind the ego there is a spark and that spark is immortal and divine in reality. But it is covered or veiled by your mental, conditions, desires, ambitions, earthly limitations, physical limitations, and sense powers. Every individual soul may, therefore, be called potentially divine and each is struggling to make that potential Divinity manifest itself on the plane of consciousness to make it an actual reality. We are all struggling to be conscious of our divine nature and to be perfect, and so long as there is that struggle to become perfect, there cannot be peace and happiness. Knowingly or unknowingly, each individual soul is striving for becoming perfect and to reach that state where absolute contentment and happiness, peace and blissfulness reign for ever. For this reason, we find that men and women of the world are not contented, they are not happy and are running after something, but they do not know what that thing is. However they are trying to be perfect, but they do not know what will make them perfect.

Absolute peace, contentment, happiness and wisdom are the conditions of spiritual realization. As the splendour and most glorious illumination of the dawn herald the immediate rising of the sun above the horizon, so all these saintly qualities, purity, contentment, chastity, tranquillity, disinterested love for all, non-attachment to material things, and perfect wisdom are the signs which herald the rising of the Divine sun upon the horizon of the individual soul. Then, in that light of the Divine sun, darkness of night is dispelled, and darkness which enveloped the real nature of things and made it invisible to mortal beings is vanished. In that divine light, the past and future will be like eternal present. There is neither past, nor future for the soul. If you rise on the soulplane, the past and future will vanish. You will remember everything that has happened to you and will happen to you. This day and night, this month and year, which we are counting today, do not affect the soul. The moment you close your eyes, all this calculation of time will vanish and all these space relations will not also exist.

In that state, there is no sorrow, no pain, no suffering of birth or death. Then absolute peace and happiness come to the soul. It is said that in that state of realization all knots of

desires are torn asunder, all desires are fulfilled, all doubts cease for ever, all question of the mind are answered, crookedness of the heart is straightened, and the individual soul, transcending all limitations, soars high in the infinite space and the souls eternally enjoy absolute freedom and bliss. The souls which have reached spiritual realization, are conscious of God the Absolute and lose the sense of '*I, me and mine*'. That to which we cling now, is the sense of '*I*' as an individual, as a son or daughter will not exist Then it will die. But by the death of this limited '*I*', we lose our identity with the mortal body. This identification is only a false consciousness of the soul. It is like the state of an actor on the stage who thinks of himself as impersonating some other being If he holds that idea of '*I, me and mine*' for the time being that may be true, so long as he is on the stage, but out of the stage he is no longer the same being. So we are impersonating somebody, but in reality, we are not so In reality, this sense of '*I, me and mine*' does not affect us You may now claim that these things belong to you, and these relations are yours; but who is your relation? You are a child of God and they are also children of God Why should you claim them as yours, simply on account of some earthly relation or blood relation? Blood relation does not produce any effect upon the soul All souls are children of God.,

In that state of God-realization, the individual soul, tracing the source of the individual will to the Universal Will, resigns itself and lets the Divine Will work through the individual will It then becomes the playground of God Self-resignation comes to the soul, and in that self-resignation, the free soul does not lose anything, but gains infinite power and is stronger in its will and energy than it was ever before. In that state of revelation, inspiration comes to the soul The knowledge of higher truths then comes This state is called by different names Some call it communion of the individual soul with the Heavenly Father. The Christian mystics of the Middle Ages and the Mohammedan Sufis describe it as a state of ecstasy, while the Buddhists call it Nirvana, the attainment of perfect emancipation or freedom of the soul and the cessation of all sorrow, misery and suffering which come from birth and death Some say that Nirvana is a state of void or nothingness (*sunyata*) but

that is not correct, as Nirvana is a positive state of thatness or suchness (*tathata*). In the science of Yoga, it is called *samadhi* or superconsciousness. The names may vary, but the meaning and ideal are the same.

Now, the question arises, how can this realization or Nirvana be attained? What are the steps for the attainment of this superconscious state? In answering the first question, Vedanta says that realization or Nirvana can be attained in perfect silence. It may sound strange to our ears, but it is the most difficult thing to accomplish. It is not merely external silence, but is the silence of the mind. It is the inner tranquil mood in which our mind is not disturbed by passions like anger, hatred, jealousy, envy, or attachment to material things. In that state of inward calm and serenity, the perfect realization of God dawns upon us. Eckhart, the great German Christian mystic, said: "There must be perfect stillness in the soul before God can whisper His word into it, before the light of God can shine into the soul and transform the soul into God. When passions are stilled and all worldly desires silenced, then the word of God can be heard in the soul". How can we expect to commune with the Lord when our minds are busy with a thousand and one things of this world? The secret chamber of the soul of a man or woman is packed up from the floor to the ceiling with worldly thoughts and ideas, with urges and passions of the flesh, and there is not an inch of space left vacant, and still we wonder why God does not come to us, why we do not commune with the Lord? How can we expect to invite the divine guest in that crowded room where there is not an inch of space to receive him? Even if God comes into such a crowded room He would not find a place for Him, and so, He would turn away. There would be no room for God. We never think for a moment, where shall we receive Him if He comes to us? Have we cleansed our inner chamber; have we made it vacant to receive Him? No, we do not think of that. Our eyes are closed; we cannot see things and understand the conditions. A seeker after realization should, therefore, first of all clean the sacred chamber of his soul and should remove all those things which have taken possession of the space. He should cleanse the floor by tears of repentance for the wrongs committed during ignorance; he should employ the guard of right discrimination to keep a constant

watch and prevent impure thoughts and unholy ideas from crossing the threshold of that sacred chamber

He should next practise dispassion ; he should not allow his mind to be attracted by the pleasures of senses, by the attractions of the world, and then with childlike simplicity, he should send the prayers of invitation to the Lord, asking Him to come and occupy that empty space of the inner chamber of the soul. Nature abhors a vacuum If the inner chamber of our soul be freed from all worldly thoughts and desires, it will be taken possession of by the Divine Spirit Then the Divine Spirit will come but it cannot come when there is no space left for Him to occupy. Sending the prayers of invitation to the Lord, he should wait in silence, concentrating his mind upon Him, expecting to see Him at every moment, with a longing as strong as it is in the heart of a lover who expects to see his beloved who has been away from him for a long time With that intense longing, he must wait to receive Him whenever He comes As the tremendous longing of a lover makes him impatient and forces all the energy of his mind and heart to flow through one channel towards his beloved, so a true lover of God must have his mind and energy concentrated or one-pointed and then let it flow towards the Divine Ideal With that intense longing the soul will transcend all limitations and will be able to commune with the Lord The stronger the longing, the quicker is the realization We must have intense longing first, but that longing will not come to the soul which has not been awakened

The awakening of the soul is the first step in the path of realization. The soul must be awakened from the sleep of self-delusion We are now sleeping the sleep of self-delusion We must wake up and see things as they are in reality and not as they appear to be This awakening of the soul is called in Sanskrit *pratibha*, the first step in the path of realization When the soul is awakened, it begins to see how far the animal nature leads us and what is the next step, where we are going, what we are doing, what all this means Then the soul tries to live a moral, spiritual and righteous life. It tries to correct its errors and to purify its inner nature

The purification of the heart or mind (*chitta-suddhi*) is the next step It is the state of the neophyte The awakened soul

becomes a neophyte when he purifies, his heart. The purification of the heart or mind is possible when we have controlled our animal propensities, when we keep them down, rise above them and conquer them. Four things are absolutely necessary to attain to the purification of the heart or mind. The practice of self-control, which means the control of the mind, must be brought under control. You are the ruler of the mind. Mind is not your ruler, but you have allowed it to become your ruler and to enslave you. You must turn the tide and make it stay where it belongs. You are the master, but you have lost your mastery over your mind and senses. You have weakened yourself. How can you expect to have that realization when you are so weak that you cannot control your own mind and senses? They are your slaves and so keep them as slaves. You are the master.

Self-control is the first thing. Then comes the practice of truthfulness, because the eternal Truth cannot be attained by falsehood. We must be true to ourselves first, then true to our neighbours, next to humanity and finally to God. Are we true to ourselves? No. Are we true to our real nature? No. We must be true to ourselves first. Truth is the second thing. Disinterested love for humanity is another; and unselfish work the next. Why should we remain selfish? What for? This little self is not much, sacrifice it upon the altar of humanity and be Christ. That is the ideal. If we can practise these four things during our lifetime, we have purified ourselves and made ourselves ready to receive the highest Truth.

Right discrimination (*sadasat-vichara*) is the third step in the path of realization. Discrimination between the spirit and the matter, between the eternal and the non-eternal, between the real and the unreal is an essential thing in the path of Divine realization. Now everything is mixed up, as we mistake the real for the unreal, the spirit for the matter, and the matter for the spirit. Right discrimination will make us see the difference that exists between the two things. It will also enable us to see how far extends the realm of the matter and where is the realm of the spirit. Right discrimination will clarify the entire position and will give us right knowledge of everything in the universe.

Non-attachment (*vairagya*) is the fourth step. Everything

that does not belong to us, must not affect us. If matter is not our being, it ought not to affect us. If senses are not parts of our true being, they must not produce any change in us. If we are parts of the Divinity and are unborn children of the immortal bliss, why should we allow ourselves to be dragged on the sense-plane by these limitations and little attractions? Be godly. God is never attracted by these little sense desires. Then why we, the children of God, should be attracted by these? We must be worthy of our Heavenly Father. We must not allow ourselves to be overcome by these attractions. Attachment to earthly things cannot exist in the soul which has reached this step in the path of realization.

Then comes the fifth step, the step of spiritual enlightenment. In this state, the light of the Divine sun begins to shine in the soul. We then understand that we are not of this world. This world is not our home. Earthly relations belong to the earth, but we are essentially rooted in the world of the supreme Spirit. We are above and beyond this earth. This body is only a physical shell or a gross garment of the soul. We shall be able to throw it aside and rise above it by our will-power. Then we shall know that the soul existed long before this body was born. Then we shall be able to say: "Before Abraham was, I am." This is the expression of the eternal Truth, not of one individual soul alone, but of all. And when we are able to do that, we know that death cannot attack us and birth cannot touch us. We are free from birth and death.

The next step is spiritual illumination. This is the sixth stage in our progress to realization. In this state, the highest nature of our being runs with tremendous force like a mighty river running towards the ocean of the Absolute. Nothing can check its course. It flows towards the Absolute and it communes with the Absolute. And all earthly fetters fall off, desires of this world no longer rise, peace and omniscience begin to shine in the soul. Thereafter nothing remains unknown. Past, present and future become as clear as broad daylight. Then you will be able to say where those departed souls belong, what they are doing will also transcend them all. You will see how transitory they are, and you will not care for them. God is not attracted by heavenly pleasures. Those mortals who are craving for pleasures, like to imagine a place or a realm where they will

be able to enjoy those pleasures through eternity. That is the expression of the desires of our own soul. But rising above all the celestial pleasures, you will become divine. That is the last step. Then you will be conscious of your divine nature. All the divine qualities will reveal through you. That state is called the seventh step, or the state of superconsciousness. It is also known as Godconsciousness, or *Samadhi*, or Nirvana.

Godconsciousness can be attained in this life and not after the grave. In this state of unspeakable bliss, your body will remain silent for the time being. You will rise above all conditions, but you will be able to come back after realization. Then you will be a different being. Your whole nature will be changed or transformed. You will be able to say to your relatives that they are not your relatives, just as Christ said to his mother: "Who is my mother? Who is my brother? These are all my mothers and brothers". In fact, with the dawn of spiritual realization you will be able to say the same with as much confidence and power as Christ did; you will not then see the blood-relation, but the spiritual relation. You will see that each soul is a child of God, and your whole being will be a dedication to humanity at large. He who has reached that state, is a blessing to humanity. Life in this world would have been utterly dull and barren if it were destitute of such blessings. The world would not exist if such blessings did not come to us often. Such souls do exist even now. Even in this age of a dominant materialism and commercialism, there are souls who have reached such a state of realization, and when that state of realization is reached, nothing is left unaccomplished. All desires are fulfilled, all ambitions are satisfied and the aspirations of the soul are completed. The soul has become then divine, and it remains divine forever and ever.

CHAPTER XIX

DIVINE REALIZATION

The universal religion of Vedanta although accepts all the rituals, ceremonies and symbols used by various sects of the dualistic religions and encourages its followers to practise them as non-essential. The essential part is the realization of the Truth that underlies them all. We must know the spiritual meaning for which each symbol, ritual or ceremony stands. Blind practice or unmeaning observance of the ritual and ceremony will not make one truly spiritual. These will not lead men to the realization of the true nature of the soul, or of God and of their mutual relation. Religion which does not bring this kind of realization in the end, is no religion at all. We do not call him religious in the truest sense of the term who has not realized the absolute Truth, or who has not seen God. We may read the scriptures and may listen to the eloquent sermons throughout our life, but what good will it do if we do not realize the Truth, if we do not see God, if we cannot become divine?

Being and becoming divine are the meaning of realization and it is, therefore, the highest ideal of the universal religion of Vedanta. To reach perfection and to manifest divine powers in daily life are included in the realm of Divine realization. He who has attained to realization, has become perfect and has manifested the divine powers. He is free from selfishness. His animal nature is conquered. He lives for the sake of humanity. He loves all living creatures equally. The doubts of his mind are solved and his questions are answered. His soul rests in perfect peace. He has attained to absolute freedom and emancipation from all bondage. He feels the presence of Divinity within him as well as in all living creatures. He communes with the Divine Being and ultimately becomes one with Him. To realize God is to be godly and divine. Francis Bacon said: "The truth of being and the truth of knowing are all one. A man is but what he knoweth". Is it not an echo of what Vedanta has taught for ages? As long as a thing remains

distinct and separate from the knower, it is not known. We can know a thing by finding ourselves in close contact with the thing and by making our thought and the state of consciousness one with the thing. So knowing Truth means to be one with the Truth. This is what is meant by realization.

Vedanta says that a knower of the Brahman, or the Divinity, is divine and is one with the Divinity. '*Brahmavid Brahmarva bhavati*'. Before a man can attain to that realization of the Divinity, he should have an earnest longing for the attainment of the Divinity, and he should sincerely search it within himself and he should concentrate his whole mind and energy upon it. Because Vedanta says. "The Divinity cannot be realized by mere book-reading, or by the reading of the scriptures, neither by intellect, nor by the constant hearing of learned discourses about it. He who longs for it with intense love and devotion, realizes it and unto him the Divine Being reveals his true nature"¹. The same idea was conveyed by Jesus the Christ when he said "Ask and it shall be given you, seek, and ye shall find, knock, and it shall be opened unto you."² That asking must proceed from the soul, seeking must be from within and knocking must be at the temple-portal of the Divinity that is closed behind the soul of ordinary mortals. It is not a physical knocking, but the soul must knock at the door that leads its entrance into the abode of the Supreme Spirit. A Persian mystic poet beautifully described this spiritual knock at the door of the Supreme Spirit. "There came one and knocked at the door of the Beloved and a voice answered and said, 'Who is there?' The lover replied: 'It is I.' 'Go hence', returned the voice, 'there is no room within for thee and me' The lover went away disappointed and after spending sometime in penance and austerity returned again and knocked for a second time. Again the voice asked: 'Who is there?' The lover

1 "नायमात्मा प्रवचनेन लभ्यो
न भेदया वहुना श्रुतेन।
यमेवैष वृणुते तेन लभ्यस्तस्यैष
आत्मा विवृणुते तनुं स्वाम् ॥"

—*Mundakopanishad*, III, 2, 3.

² St Matthew, VII, 7

Bliss, for it is already potentially divine. The divine powers are latent in us. We must learn to unfold them and bring them on the conscious plane. We must be conscious of our divine nature and that is the aim of spiritual realization which is the ideal of the universal religion of Vedanta.

The seers of Truth in ancient India after their attainment of highest realization each declared before the world: "Hearken ye all children of immortal Bliss and those that dwell in the sphere of gods! I have realized that divine Being whose eternal radiance shineth for ever far beyond all darkness. By realizing Him within the shrine of thy soul ye shall cross the ocean of death and shall reach the abode of immortality. There is no other way; there is no other way."

APPENDIX I

THE VEDANTIC TRUTH*

Before entering into the subject of my discourse of this evening allow me to thank Prof Howison through whose kindness I have been favoured with the privilege of addressing this learned audience that have assembled here to night I have been requested to give a general outline of the Vedanta philosophy I suppose very few of us present here are familiar with the doctrines of this most ancient system of philosophy which have helped mankind in solving the most intricate problems of life and death and which have led the truth-seeking minds of all ages and climes to the threshold of the abode of the absolute Reality of universe.

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

The truth-seeking minds of the vedic philosophers did not stop at their researches until they could unify and harmonize the diverse phenomena of the universe into absolute oneness After discovering the one ultimate source and goal of the universe they tried to explain through logic and science the process by which that eternal one appears as manifold when looked through the limitations of time, space, and causation. In their attempts they discovered the law of evolution which governs the cosmic phenomena The philosophers who came

* Delivered in the University of California, in Sept 6, 1906.

later developed from those conclusions different systems of philosophy of which *Sankhya* system of Kapila and the Vedanta philosophy stand most prominent. Kapila is called the father of evolution theory in India. He was the first who gave the most logical and scientific explanation of the process of cosmic evolution out of one eternal Energy called *Prakriti*. Prof. Huxley admits this fact when he says the doctrine of evolution was known to the Hindu sages long before Paul of Tarsus was born. Well has it been said by Sir M. M. Williams: “* * the Hindus were Spinozists more than two thousand years before the existence of Spinoza, and Darwinians many centuries before the doctrine of evolution had been accepted by the scientists of our time, and before any word like ‘evolution’ existed in any language of the world”. The theory of special creation out of nothing was refuted by a Vedic sage as early as 1500 years before Christ with these words: “How can O my disciple, something come out out of nothing?” Therefore, Vedanta does not teach the theory of special creation.

The fundamental principle of Vedanta is absolute oneness. There is one existence, one life, one spirit, one Being in the universe. The very idea of separateness is unreal. Vedanta does not teach, as some people think that the phenomenal world is a mere illusion. What is regarded as illusion in Vedanta is not the phenomenal but the attribution of true substantiality or essentiality to the phenomenal without the recognition of the underlying unity. But it teaches that the underlying reality is the absolute Being which is one. That absolute One is called by various names. It is Brahman in Vedanta. The same absolute Being was called by Plato, the Good. It is the Substantia of Spinoza, Ding-an-sich or the transcendental thing-in-itself of Kant, the unknown and unknowable of Herbert Spencer. Some call it Noumenon, Schopenhauer calls it the Will, Emerson calls it Oversoul. But Vedanta differs from these systems by unifying the subject and object in Brahman.

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

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

Thus Vedanta recognizes three entities in the universe. God, soul and matter, though they are the emanations from the same absolute One, the secondless Brahman. The God of Vedanta is not an extra-cosmic Being. Vedanta gives a rational formation to religion which harmonizes with the latest conclusions of modern science and philosophy.

APPENDIX II

INTRODUCTORY

After the untimely death of Swami Trigunatitananda there were party feelings and inharmony among the students of Vedanta in the Hindu Temple in San Francisco, California. Some of them grouped round Swami Prakashananda who had started a separate Society, under the name of "The Pacific Vedanta Centre" at a rented house in the same city, while others remained loyal to Swami Trigunatita's teachings. Thus two factions had party feelings against each other.

At that time Swami Abhedananda was lecturing in Los Angeles in South California. The president of the Vedanta Society at the Hindu temple invited Swami Abhedananda's assistance to bring about unity and harmony between the two parties.

In response to this call Swami Abhedananda spoke on *Unity and Harmony* at the Hindu temple, on 18th March, 1915 A.D.

Before beginning with the subject of the evening, the Swami held a short meditation and gave a brief sketch of the history of the Vedanta work on the Pacific Coast. He said: Our brother, Swami Trigunatitananda was a great soul. I knew him for many years. In India we were together at the feet of our Divine Master, Sri Ramakrishna, and before we came to this country we lived and worked together for a long time. In 1901, after Swami Vivekananda had left the Pacific Coast, I visited San Francisco, met many of his friends and students of my brother Swami Turiyananda who was working here at that time, and delivered a lecture on Vedanta philosophy before the Faculty of Berkeley University, in California.

I have been in this country since 1897 and have steadily helped toward the growth of the pioneering movement of Vedanta work in America which was started by my predecessor, Swami Vivekananda. Although I have seen many changes that this movement has gone through, still I must say that the ideal of Vedanta has always been to spread love, peace, brotherhood and above all unity and harmony.