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SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

EGOISM

THE "I" which makes a man worldly and attached to lust and wealth is mischievous. The Individual and the Universal are separated owing to this "I" being in the middle. If a stick is thrown across a sheet of water it appears divided into two. The stick is the "*aham*." Take away the stick and it is the same one mass of water.

WHAT is called the "mischievous I"? The "I" which says, "Don't they know me? I have so much money, who is so wealthy as myself? Who dares surpass me"?

THE following are among those who cannot gain self-knowledge. Those who boast of learning, those who are proud of knowledge and those who are vain of riches. If one says to these, "In such and such a place there is a very good Sannyasin, will you come to see him"? they would invariably make many excuses and say they could not go, but in their mind they think they are men of high positions, why should they go to another"?

THE nature of *Tamas* is egoism which is bred of ignorance.

THE rain-water never stands on high ground but runs down to the lowest level: even so the mercy of God stays in the hearts of the lowly, but drains off from the hearts of the vain and the proud.

SO LONG as there is egoism, neither self-knowledge (*jnana*) nor liberation (*mukti*) is possible and no cessation of births and deaths.

THE vanities of others may gradually die out, but the vanity of a saint about his own sainthood dies hard indeed.

RICE, pulse, potato and other things put in cold water in an earthen jar can be touched with the hand but not after heat has been applied to it. The same simile applies to the Jiva. The body is the earthen jar, wealth and learning, lineage and caste, position and power &c., are like unto the rice, pulse, potato &c., and egoism is the heat. The Jiva is made so hot (haughty) by egoism!

THE sun can give heat and light to the whole world, but it can do nothing when the clouds are about and shut out its rays. Similarly, so long as egoism is in the heart, God cannot shine upon it.

THE CRUCIFIXION, DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

THE ancient Jews predicted great events that concerned their political and religious evolution. "Behold the Messiah cometh" to march Jewish humanity onward, was the chosen theme and the general chorus of the prophets of the Old Testament. But regarding the Messiah-ship of Jesus Christ, there is no clear and distinct prediction in the Old Testament, nor even his birth, crucifixion, death and resurrection. The Messiah was a general term for a *Deliverer* used by the Jewish prophets. But at no time had the spiritual been separated from the political by the Jews. The theory of Jewish Government went hand in hand with the secular and the spiritual. Jewish politics was only Jewish religion in its outward relations, for Jehovah was the political as well as the religious head of the nation. The peculiar constitution of the State inevitably identified this glorious future (the advent of Jesus) with a political and material kingdom in Palestine with Jerusalem as its capital. But such a conception of the Messiah cannot be true of Jesus Christ, for his kingdom was not of this world, and his mission, purely spiritual. He came into this world, as we are told, to establish a kingdom of love and not of aggression. So he was not "the expected Messiah" of the Jews as predicted in the Talmud. Christ himself forbade his apostles to speak of his Messiah-ship—"See that thou tell no man of it."

Not a single sentence of the Old Testament comes under our ken which does in its simple sense signify Christ's Messiahship—his birth, death and crucifixion. Neither did Moses, nor Joshua, neither Jeremiah nor Haggai, neither Ezra nor Habakkuk, prophesy that the Messiah would be a suffering saviour, that is to say, his blood would be shed in the cause of humanity. In vain do our Christian brethren attempt to read into the following quotations from the Old Testament a prophecy of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. Daniel prophesied "the Messiah shall be cut off" (Daniel IX.26). But it is sheer madness to make it refer to Christ, for the very language unmistakably expresses a king's assassination and not a Messiah's crucifixion for the remission of the sins of humanity. And another prophet, Isaiah by name, foretold, "He hath poured out his soul unto death" (Isaiah LIII.12). But this prediction is uncertain, and has no reference to Christ. In the New Testament nowhere does Christ make any clear and distinct declaration of the alleged crucifixion. The Scriptures do not mean all that they are made to mean.

The Synoptics do not agree in all particulars regarding the circumstances of the alleged crucifixion. It is unnecessary to enter *in extenso* into the many differences, but I cite only a few instances and leave them to the consideration of my

readers. In the first place, we are told that shortly before Christ yielded up his spirit, unrest and irritation were felt all over Palestine ; that is vividly narrated in Matthew only. Mark and John absolutely speak nothing of this circumstance, and though Luke relates it, he fails to speak of "the earth that did quake, and the rocks that were rent and the dead bodies of saints that came into the holy city and appeared unto many." (Matthew XXVII.51-53). In the second place, the Synoptics fail to give exactly the same words of the superscription of Christ's accusation that was put on the cross. They all differ. Besides this, John and Luke say that it was written in three different languages, *viz.*, Hebrew, Latin and Greek ; which Mark and Matthew fail to report. And lastly, the Synoptics differ in stating the time when Christ was crucified. Mark says that he was crucified in the third hour and John says in the sixth. Matthew and Luke absolutely omit this. Had the Synoptics been eye-witnesses of the terrible catastrophe caused by the death of Christ, they would have agreed in all particulars. Either they were not present when Christ was on the cross or the whole story is a pure fabrication.

The Holy Book of the Mahomedans furnishes another demonstration, still clearer, distinct and conclusive. But the attitude of Islam towards Christianity requires an obvious consideration before I endeavor to show the unreliableness of the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus from the Islam view-point. Sagacious and discerning in religious zeal, the Mahomedans bear a high esteem for Christ under the name of *Isa Masih* and

regard him as one of the *payagumbar*s in the hierarchy of Islam. Needless to mention that the religion of the Prophet of Nazareth is closely allied to the religion of Mahomet. In short, Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Christ and Mahomet are proclaimed the six lawgivers who have announced to mankind the six successive revelations of various rites of the *one immutable religion*. In authority, they rise in just gradation above each other, but whosoever hates or rejects any one of the prophets is numbered with the infidels. The Mahomedans however sneer at the Christian Scriptures, for there is a wide gulf between the Jesus of the Koran and the Jesus of the Bible. In their opinion the Christian Bible is greatly corrupted and altered from the original. The Jews and Christians are charged with corrupting Taurat (the Pentateuch or the Book of the law, given to Moses), Zabur (the Psalms of David) and Injeel (the Gospel of Jesus). The Mahomedans use the word *Takriff* to denote the corruption of the Scriptures. It means to alter or to turn aside from what is true, and they ascribe corruption both to *Manvi* (meaning) and *Lafzi* (words) of the Holy Scriptures. They deny Christ to be the son of God, and he is said to have followed the footsteps of his forerunners with the Book of the Law that was sent down before him. All that the Koran acknowledges regarding Christ and his forerunners is this—Ibrahim Khalil-oolah, Musa Kalim-oolah, Isa Ruhlallah—that is to say, Abraham was the friend of God, Moses spoke with God and Christ is the spirit of God ; and it remains only for Mahomet to stand as the prophet of God—Mahammud Rasulallah.

Now to return to our subject. Unlike the Christians, the Mahomedans deny the story of crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is the firm belief of the Mahomedans that Christ did not die here on earth, nor was he crucified; the fact is that Christ was represented by one in his likeness who was crucified in his stead, for in Sura Nisa of the Koran, IV. 155, 156, we read: "And for that they have not believed in Jesus and have spoken against Mary a grievous calumny; and have said, verily we have slain Christ Jesus the son of Mary, the apostle of God; yet they slew him not, neither crucified him, but he was represented by one in his likeness; and verily they who disagreed concerning him were in a doubt as to this matter, and had no sure knowledge thereof, but followed only an uncertain opinion. They did not really kill him; but God took him unto himself; and God is mighty and wise." The Mahomedans firmly believe that God Almighty took him unto himself, and he is still living in the flesh to come down to earth at the approach of the Day of Judgment. The original verse of the Koran, Sura Imran III. 48, runs thus:*

Iz Kala-al-laho ya Isa *innimutavaffika*

*As Christians, the English translators of the Koran wrongly translate this verse in order to bring it into harmony with Biblical narratives, for they actually render the words '*inni mutavaffika*' into English as '*I will cause thee to die*'. Hence I insert the transliteration of the verse. [*Vide* Sura Nisa, page 19, *Selections from the Koran compiled from Sail, Muir, &c*]

wa rafioka illaya wa mutha-hiroka minal lazeena kafaru wa ja-il-ullazeena attal haveka faukal lazeena kafaru eela yowmil kyama.

The literal meaning of which is "O Jesus! verily, I will cause thee to come back, and will take thee up to myself and will clear thee (from the imputations) of the Kafirs (unbelievers), and will keep thy followers over (the head of) those who did not believe you (did we consider you as a prophet) till the day of Kyama (Judgment)."

Thus there is a wide gulf between Christian and Mahomedan views of Jesus Christ—a gulf never to be bridged. Had the crucifixion and death of not only an ordinary mortal, but of the Logos who "was with God" and "was God," and who was afterwards "made flesh" and "dwelt among us" been true, it would have filled the pages of the Canonical and Apocryphal Gospels, and have been the general chorus of the writers of the Koran, the Talmud, the Kabala, the Old Testament and the New Testament; nay, it would have illumined the pages of the world's history. No doubt Christianity suffers a mournful eclipse, and the sun fades when we look most and long for its brilliant rays.

PROMOTHO NATH DUTT.

Christian apologists are finding themselves harder and harder pressed by rationalists, until they are forced to make desperate efforts to reconcile the apparent contradictions and inconsistencies which abound in the Scriptures. In hundreds of passages in the Bible they twist the plain, literal, common-sense interpretation out of all recognizable shape by assuming, without the least authority in most cases, that the language is figurative and does not mean what it says.—*Bowerman*.

THE STORY OF KING BUILDER

IN the very ancient times there lived a mighty king named Builder. He had a very excellent friend for whom he did not care : but all slights and non-recognitions notwithstanding, the friend constantly watched him and tried to do him good, incognito. Once the king took it in his head that he would roam all the world over in search of a suitable palace, which he did. When he was nearly disappointed and tired with his long travel, he came across a beautiful city in that part of the world which is known as the Region of Work. The city had nine gates and was well fortified and decorated. In fact there was nothing which king Builder thought could improve its internal or external appearance and arrangement.

While sauntering round, contemplating and admiring the excellence of the city, the king met a lady of wonderful beauty, who had evidently come for an afternoon walk that way. She had ten male and many female attendants with her. But the strangest thing about her apart from her beauty was a fiveheaded snake who kept quite close to her all the time evidently acting as her chief guard.

The more did the king look at her, the more did he bleed from the arrows of love which showered upon him from every feature of the lady, till he was completely overpowered. Addressing her he asked many questions about herself, the city and her attendants. He was very curious to learn about the snake

and finally introduced himself to her adding that she had imprisoned him with invisible chains after severely wounding him in a fight that can be described as bloodless and the arms used therein as intangible. The lady replied that she was the queen of that part of the country, the city belonged to her and the snake was her body-guard, who watched over her every moment, day and night. In fact the latter was her only guard during her hours of sleep. But she did not know who she was, not knowing her parents, nor did she know who built that incomparable city. She invited the king to live there with her and expressed glad concurrence in his proposal of marriage. She said she did not care for any man as she did for him : she had no patience for those who did not apply themselves to the study of the science of love. Continuing she stated in strong language her contempt for those visionaries who forego the certain and tangible pleasures of this world in the vain hope of gaining a blissful state after death : for according to her all possible happiness could be gained in this world. She concluded with flattering herself as being the mistress of the highest fortune in getting him as her husband and issuing immediate orders for the celebration of her nuptials that night.

Each day found king Builder more and more captivated by the charms of his wife. There was none equal to her in devising fresh and fresh means of

pleasure and enjoyment exactly suited to the moment. Each of the nine gates of the city opened out to a different scene, a completely different aspect of things. Not only this, but no two gates led out to a single object which was the same as or had the slightest resemblance to another occurring in any other gate.

In the city there lived many court officers. Of them Mute and Carrier who were blind were the constant companions of the king in whatever he did and wherever he went. In the inner apartments, Variegator was the chief officer who waited upon the king, when in the company of his wife and children he shared in their joys and sorrows. But it was the queen who completely hypnotised him. He got so much under her control that her impulse and wish became his; when she drank wine, he drank to intoxication. What she ate or drank was the choicest food and drink for him. He echoed her unconsciously in, and identified himself with, every mood of hers; when she sang, he sang; when she cried, he cried; when she laughed, he laughed; when she gossiped, he gossiped; when she ran, he ran; when she was still, he was still; when she lay down, he lay down; when she sat, he sat; when she heard, saw, smelt, or touched anything, he exactly did the same; when she was sorrowful, he lamented like one helpless and when she was cheerful, he became the happiest of men. In this way, having lost all independence and self-control king Builder lived there, the sporting automaton of his queen.

King Builder was passionately fond of hunting. When he used to go into the forest of Five Terrors in search of game

accompanied by his eleven choice *shikaris* riding on his beautiful chariot which was strengthened by a couple of posts and fitted with two wheels and three flagstuffs, drawn by five horses and well covered by a sevenfold coat of armour with five holes for shooting out, he would nearly forget even his own beloved wife, for which crime, as could be easily imagined, he had on return home to pay dearly.

Thus king Builder lived on, a father of many hundred sons and daughters, deeply attached to his family, tasting the varied pleasures and pains of life.

The invisible *gandharva* Irresistible, who was an inveterate robber with his 360 male and the same number of female attendants, waged unending war on king Builder ever since the latter entered the famous city of the Nine Gates. The tireless five-headed snake kept the robber successfully at bay for full one hundred years. The force of the besiegers was reinforced by the accession to it of a demon king and his hideous sister with numerous attendants and followers who assailed the city on all sides. At last when the snake got enfeebled the besiegers set fire to the city and closing in with the king laid him low. The snake unable to stand the fire any longer, made off from the city with great difficulty shaking from head to tail. And the king with his mind enveloped in deep dark sorrow for his beautiful wife fell an easy prey to his enemies, who cut him into pieces.

In his next incarnation, king Builder having died with the intense thought of his queen in his mind, was born as the daughter of a great king. She was very desirably married and lived a long and

happy life with her husband and many children. When her husband left his home and kingdom to enter into the forest life, she followed him. After a time her husband died in the forest and she prepared to burn herself in the funeral pyre with her husband's corpse. At that moment the friend of her previous Builder incarnation who used always to watch Builder closely and do good to him, unseen, appeared on the scene in the form of a Truth-knowing Brahman and addressed her thus: "Do you know who thou art,—thou who art now masquerading in the garb of a beautiful lady? Both you and I were swans of the mind lake where we lived together before you decided to taste earthly pleasures and left me. You are the Self. The city of Nine Gates you chose to live in was the subtle human body. The queen of the palace whom you married and identified with yourself, was dual self-consciousness, the source of the feelings 'me' and 'mine.' Her ten male attendants were the ten senses of perception and action respectively, the many female attendants the many impulses of the senses, and the five headed snake was the fivefold *Prana*, vitality. The nine gates were the nine sense-openings. Mute and Carrier were the hands and feet respectively. Variegator was mind."

Hunting stands for enjoyment of sense-objects. The forest of Five Terrors symbolises the household where occur the five *gunas* or sins*. The eleven hunters

stand again for the ten senses and the mind. The chariot is the gross human form. The two pillars that support it are the feelings "me" and "mine." The two wheels are happiness and misery. The three flagstaffs are the three *gunas*, *Satva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas*. The five horses are the five senses of cognition. The sevenfold coat of armour is the sevenfold material of which the body is made.† The five holes in it are the five sense apertures. The *gandharva* Irresistible is time and his 360 male and the same number of female attendants represent the days and nights of a year and the fire that he set to the city stands for the agony preceding death.

The demon king is death; the demoness his sister is old age; their attendants and followers are the various maladies which attack the human frame when it approaches its end.

—BHAGAVATA.

†Humor, blood, flesh, fat, marrow and the vital fluids.

When a man thinks of objects, attachment for them is formed. From attachment arises desire; from desire arises wrath. From wrath arises delusion; from delusion, loss of memory: from loss of memory, failure of discrimination; from failure of discrimination he is utterly ruined. (*Gita II, 62-63*).

Thou Life within my life, than self more near!
 Thou veiled Presence infinitely clear!
 From all illusive shows of sense I flee;
 To find my centre and my rest in Thee.

—Eliza Scudder.

*Accruing from the inevitable killing of life due to the use of the husking and grinding instruments, oven, waterpot and the broom.

A WONDERFUL PSYCHIC

THE following is abridged from an American paper :— Further out into that vast untrodden realms of psychical knowledge than any one has gone before, recently have passed Dr. Frank Brett of South Braintree, Mass., and his 11-year-old son Alfey Lionel.

Hypnotised by his father, who is a physician, this remarkable lad can see things which hitherto have been revealed only to the material optics of the X-ray machine. But he goes beyond that, for while the X-rays point out in the skio-graph, or, as seen through the fluoroscope, only darkened outlines, the boy sees all the colours. He can make out all the bones of the human body of any person at whom he looks, no matter how snugly that person may be clothed. The boy described the bone formations in the arm of Mr. L. J. Meacham, one of the most experienced hypnotists in the country without ever having seen him before, and without touching the arm and while that number was fully clothed. But even more wonderful than that was another experiment in which the boy plainly saw and indicated to his astonished auditors the brain flashes of the sensory and motor nerves from the brain centres to the arm and back again, and indicated by his fingers the very spots in the cerebrum as the origin places of the flashes, in which scientists are agreed are located the centres for controlling the movements of the upper extremities. One day Alfey startled his father by declaring, while in a

highly hypnotised state : “Why, papa, I can see your bones.” Mr. Meacham was the unfortunate possessor of a peculiar elbow, which has been a puzzle to several hundred of more or less eminent surgeons. Alfey looked first at the one and then at the other for two or three moments. Then he pointed at the left arm and said : “This one is not like the other one. This one is funny.” The boy was called on to tell why the left elbow was funny. This seemed a pretty hard problem for an eleven-year-old. With little hesitation he placed his hand upon the outer condyle of the prepared humerus and said, “There is something gone there.” He was asked if he observed anything further, and he replied “There is a piece of gristle there,” pointing to the space between the upper ends of the ulna and the radius. Wonderful as it may seem this little lad of 11, bright and healthy-looking, practically had described the condition of a joint as it had been determined by the most eminent authority upon fractures and dislocations and by skillful use of the X-rays.

In describing how he sees things, he says that when he is in that state all things appear differently. There are new lights and shadows, not ordinarily visible and which somewhat resemble those seen in a cannel coal fire.

Possibly the most remarkable of all the experiments which have been made with young Brett are those conducted by Dr. J. S. Flagg, a scientist of note, who to ascertain if the boy could observe the workings of the brain, asked him to

observe his father's head very carefully. While the latter raised his right arm and dropped it, Alfey exclaimed, "Oh papa, there was something jumped out right here and then went back and a streak ran into your shoulder and down your arm to the elbow here," placing his forefingers on each side of the head just over the areas where neurologists, in accordance with the most approved view of to-day, have agreed the centres for controlling the movements of the upper extremities are located. Thus in a moment they are able to establish, or at least corroborate, facts that have required years of patient

research, and hundreds of experiments upon monkeys and other animals.

Now as to the explanation : Dr. Brett's theory as to the nature of the power is that when the boy is in a certain stage of hypnosis, his nervous system becomes more delicately balanced and is then affected by vibrations not ordinarily recognizable, and thus he is able to see through flesh and even through bone. The peculiar lights and shadows observed corroborate this theory, as do the modern discoveries in X-rays and wireless telegraphy, to say nothing of experience in telepathy.

WHAT IS VEDANTA ?

MANY people have the erroneous idea that by Vedanta Philosophy is meant a philosophy confined exclusively to the Vedas, or Sacred Scriptures of India; but the term "Veda" in the present case is used to signify, not a book, but "wisdom," while "anta" means "end." Vedanta, therefore, implies literally "end of wisdom"; and the philosophy is called Vedanta because it explains what that end is and how it can be attained. All relative knowledge ends in the realization of the unity of the individual soul with the ultimate Truth of the universe. That ultimate reality is the universal Spirit. It is the infinite ocean of wisdom. As rivers running across thousands of miles ultimately end in the ocean, so the rivers of relative knowledge, flowing through the various stages of the phenomenal universe, ultimately end in the infinite ocean of existence, intelligence, bliss and love.

To realize this unity must be the aim of all true religions, but the religious history of the world shows that no other nation has ever at any period understood it so clearly, or preached it so boldly, as did the sages among the ancient Aryans who inhabited India. For nearly five thousand years, indeed, India has held in her bosom the sublime idea that "Truth is one, but the means of attaining it are many." In the Rig-Veda, the most ancient of all known scriptures, we read, "That which exists is one, men call it by various names". The Jews call it Jehovah; the Christians, God or Father in Heaven; the Mohammedans worship it as Allah; the Buddhists, as Buddha; the Jains, as Jina; while the Hindus call it Brahman.

Upon this fundamental Truth rests the whole structure of Vedanta teaching and students of comparative religions are coming to recognize that because, more

than any other religion or philosophy of the world, it insists upon this doctrine of the unity of existence under a variety of names, it offers, as can no other, an adequate foundation for all the different phases of dualistic, qualified non-dualistic, and monistic systems of religious thought. Vedanta, indeed, may be said to establish a universal religion, which embraces all the special religions of the world.

This uniquely universal character, moreover, is still further emphasized by the fact that it is not built round any particular personality. Any religion or philosophy that depends for its authority on a specific personality can never satisfy the demands of a universal religion. In order to make a system of philosophy or religion universal, the first thing necessary is that it be absolutely impersonal. So long as there is a founder of a religion, so long is it limited by the personality of the founder, and cannot be universal, as we find in special religions like Christianity, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, and kindred faiths. The followers of each of these great religions, forgetting the principles, become attached to the personality of the founder and refuse to recognize any other; and this results in the discord, conflict, and persecution with which the pages of religious history are filled.

The system of Vedanta has many phases. The dualistic phase includes the fundamental principles of all the dualistic or monotheistic systems, such as Zoroastrianism, Judaism, Christianity, and all systems that advocate the worship of the personal God, or devotion to any divine ideal.

The qualified non-dualistic phase embraces all the systems which teach the immanency and transcendency of God. It includes all such ideas as "God dwells in us as well as in the universe"; "We live and move and have our being in God"; "He is the soul of our souls"; "We are parts of one stupendous whole"; "We are the sons of God, the children of Immortal bliss," etc. But the monistic phase of Vedanta is the most sublime of all. Very few thinkers can appreciate the grandeur of spiritual oneness. Yet herein lies the solution of the deepest problems of science, philosophy, and metaphysics, and the final goal of all religions. It alone explains how it is possible for one to say, "I and my Father are one."

Vedanta is a system of religion as well as a system of philosophy. There are, it is true, many systems of philosophy in Greece and Germany, but none of them has succeeded in harmonizing itself with the religious ideals of the human mind; or has shown the path by which man can attain to God-consciousness and emancipation from the bondages of ignorance, selfishness, and all other imperfections, in so rational a way as has the Vedanta philosophy in India. It does not ask anybody to accept or believe any thing which does not appeal to reason, or which is not in harmony with the laws of science, philosophy, and logic. But in India, it must be remembered, religion has never been separated from science, logic, or philosophy. As a consequence, Vedanta, ancient as it is, is none the less in strict accord with the ultimate conclusions of modern science, preaches the doctrine of evolution, and

still has room left for all truths which may be discovered in future.

Another notable feature of Vedanta is that it does not prescribe to all one special path by which to reach the ultimate goal of every religion. On the contrary, it recognizes the varying tendencies of different minds, and guides each along the way best suited to it. It classifies human tendencies into four grand divisions, which, together with their subdivisions, cover almost all classes of people; and then it sets forth the methods which may be helpful to every one. Each of these methods is called in Sanskrit "Yoga."

First is Karma Yoga. It is for the active man, for those who like to work and are always ready to do something for the help of others : in short, it is for the busy, every-day working man or woman. Karma Yoga teaches the secret of work, and tells us how we can turn our daily tasks into acts of worship, and thus reach perfection in this life through work and work alone. It is essentially practical and absolutely necessary for those who prefer an active career, for it will teach them how to accomplish a maximum of labor with a minimum loss of energy. The larger part of mental energy of the majority of people in this country is needlessly wasted by the constant rush of their daily lives, which is merely the result of lack of self-control. Did they know the secret of work they would not only avoid this waste, which is the cause of the many nervous disorders to which they are at present subject, but would actually lengthen their days. Karma Yoga reveals this secret, and opens the way to complete self-mastery.

The next method is Bhakti Yoga. It is for such as are of an emotional nature. It teaches how ordinary emotions can bring forth spiritual unfoldment of the highest kind and lead to the realization of the ultimate ideal of all religions. In a word, it is the path of devotion and love. It explains the nature of divine love and shows us how to turn human love into divine, and thus fulfil the purpose of life both here and hereafter.

The third is Raja Yoga—the path of concentration and meditation. The field of Raja Yoga is very vast. It covers the whole psychic plane and describes the processes by which the psychic powers are developed, such as thought-reading, clairvoyance, clairaudience, the evolving of finer perceptions, the going out of the body, the curing of disease through mental power, and the performing of all such acts as are ordinarily called miracles. All the psychic powers which were displayed by Jesus of Nazareth and his followers, and which are used to-day by Christian scientists, mental healers, faith healers, divine healers, and the various other kinds of healers, have been displayed from ancient times by the Yogis in India.

Raja Yoga takes these psychic powers and phenomena, classifies them and makes a science out of them. It also teaches the science of breathing. The wonderful effects of breathing exercises on mind and body are not unknown to the mental healers of the West. If, however, Raja Yoga deals scientifically with the psychic powers, it does not cease to warn its students that the attainment of any of these powers is not a sign of spirituality. This is a great lesson which the mental healers and Christian scien-

tists of this country especially, will have to learn from the Yogis of India. Little brains and weak intellects easily turn away from the path of spiritual truth when some psychic power begins to manifest itself; and they think that they have reached the highest state of spirituality because they have the power to cure headache or heartache. Raja Yoga, however, teaches that the exercise of psychic power and the making a profession of it are great obstacles in the path of spiritual advancement. Its principal aim on the contrary, is to lead the student, through concentration and meditation, to the highest state of super-consciousness, where the individual soul communes with the universal Spirit and realizes the unity of existence, eternal peace, and happiness.

Jnana Yoga is the fourth method. It is the path of right knowledge and discrimination. This is for those who are intellectual, discriminative, and of a philosophical nature. Thus we can see in some slight degree how universal is the scope of Vedanta. It also explains the fundamental principles of spiritualism; tells us how the soul exists after death and under what conditions; what kind of souls can communicate with us, and what becomes of them afterwards; how the earth-bound souls, being subject to the law of Karma or Causation, reincarnate on this earth, taking human form again and again. It explains the science of the souls; and it expounded the law of correspondences ages before Swedenborg was born.

The religion of Vedanta accepts the teachings of all the great spiritual teachers of the world, recognizes them as

Incarnations of Divine Spirit, and has room for those who are yet to come for the good of humanity.

Vedanta explains the basis of ethics. Why should we be moral? Not because some one has said this or that; not because it is written in a certain chapter of a certain scripture, but because of the spiritual oneness of the universe. If you injure another, you injure yourself. If you are wicked, you not only do harm to yourself but also to others. It also explains through this spiritual oneness why we should love our neighbor as ourselves, because in spirit we are already one with that neighbor.

The ethics of Vedanta bring peace and harmony to the religious world. Wherever Vedanta reigns, religious toleration and cooperation among all sects prevail, and religious persecution ceases forever.

A student of Vedanta does not belong to any sect, creed, or denomination. He is neither a Christian, nor a Mohamadan, nor a Buddhist, nor a Jain, nor a Hindu; yet in principles he is one with all. He can go to a church or a mosque or a temple. He is a follower of that nameless and formless Eternal Religion, which underlies all the special religions of the world; and as he grows into a deeper and deeper understanding of this universal religion, he cannot but declare, as did Professor Max Muller, "Vedanta has room for almost every religion; nay it embraces them all." And so it must, because its whole teaching is based on those all-inclusive words of the Blessed Lord Krishna in the Bhagavad Gita:

"Whosoever comes to me through whatsoever path, I reach him; all men are struggling in the paths which ultimately lead to ME, the Eternal Truth."

ABHEDANANDA.

OUR RELIGIOUS BODIES

WE have in our country at the present moment several religious bodies, the existence of which betrays the spirit of organised action. We watch the movements of these bodies with considerable interest, since the great names associated with them arouse in our minds visions of progress and betterment that are coming. But at the same time we plead guilty to a misgiving which would cruelly scatter these visions as soon as they are up—is it the child of the lesson brought home by past experience?

We know associations have their use. They are the brains, as it were, of communities, and point out the path by following which the latter fulfil themselves. And like brains they degenerate,—into places for useless and harmful controversies and oratorical flourish, and are soon wiped out of existence without leaving a trace behind.

We have not unoften noticed with great pain people gather together in regular assemblies only to set forth in eloquent terms the past glory of India. Of course a right knowledge of the past is necessary to determine the course to be taken. But in the absence of practical work, these talks amount only to self-praise—praise of a self that is dead and past—the best possible friend to inherent inertia and the most dangerous foe on the path to progress.

We do not wish merely to criticise. We beg to suggest a remedy. This seems to us to lie in forming a *central organisation of work* where the best men and material should be brought together from all the existing religious bodies. These picked men should after

mature and deliberate consideration, determine the lines of work and then set to practicalising the plans themselves. Unless the best men that are available are gathered together in a common purpose and undertake to practically carry out their hopes and wishes with their own hands, there is little hope of any good ever coming from any of these associations or bodies.

It is not desirable that the different bodies should die out, being deprived of their best men and resources. They should co-operate with the central organisation by serving as feeders, and spreading its ideas among the people of their respective localities, enlisting their sympathy and raising funds for it.

Two problems face us. *First*, stopping the loss which the nation sustains by (a) death and deterioration from starvation and (b) by perversion into foreign creeds; and *secondly* equipping the masses with resisting power by improving their moral and material condition. The solution of both of these problems can, to a great extent, be helped by a wide diffusion of the right kind of knowledge and by the opening up of fresh fields of work.

Who does not know that thousands upon thousands are dying every year of sheer starvation and hundreds are going into foreign folds only to save themselves the unbearable throes of an empty stomach? It is madness to expect that people with their nerves completely shattered and their brains thrown out of order by the excruciating torments of hunger followed by disease, should cling to their own faith simply out of devotion to it, or because their forefathers attained to a glorious height through it. It will be

only adding to their anguish to talk of ideal things to them. He who really feels for them will first feed them and bring them to their normal condition. Then they should be taught how to hold their own against the forces that tend to throw them off their material well-being. Ideal religion should come last—after they have been completely safe-guarded (by means of *practical* religion) against the weaknesses that follow in the track of physical privations.

The first thing is the spread of education, the wide diffusion of healthy ideas—physical moral and sanitary—which are truly helpful to men in various conditions to raise themselves higher. Therefore the first practical step in this direction is the founding of an institution for training teachers, who by personal contact, teaching and example will keep the circle of progress ever expanding onward.

The publication and circulation of pamphlets and leaflets in all Indian vernaculars, embodying the best thoughts on healthy social, religious and sanitary principles, is a fitting complement to the work of education which we would suggest the central organisation to take in hand.

The taking back of perverts into Hinduism will also be a strong check upon the de-Hinduising forces that are at work in our country. We believe that the present condition of our nation makes the strongest demand upon all orthodox bodies to apply their reason, heart and knowledge of the Scriptures to throw open the door which has been kept so long shut against those who out of ignorance and under the severe stress of necessity have allowed themselves to be perverted from their peerless ancient religion.

Ours in an agricultural country. There can be no doubt that if scientific knowledge can be brought to bear upon the natural resources of the country, the material condition of the

people will be much bettered. To us it therefore seems that to fight chronic famine no better preparation can be made than to start on a large scale, an Agricultural Institute where training can be given by experts brought over from foreign countries. In this connexion attention is also drawn to the necessity of doing something towards the revival and progress of indigenous industries.

We are painfully conscious of the immense national energy that is wasted by leaving orphans, widows, and other helpless men and women to their own fate. If this waste energy could be reclaimed, it could be turned to many highly useful purposes. Leaving them to shift for themselves not only means loss of numerical strength to the nation, but something more. Left to themselves they turn out (as is quite natural) bad characters, and bad characters cannot but be positive influences for evil to the nation to which they belong. Orphanages and homes on a large scale should therefore be opened to reclaim this waste energy and the sooner it is done the better.

Our Scriptures lay the greatest stress upon love—looking upon every individual as one's own self. But our conduct shows that we of all nations have wandered away most from this central teaching. The idea of a national unity is most wanting in us and what does this mean but want of sympathy and fellow-feeling? The poor starving wretch dying under the very eyes of his prosperous brethren has no consciousness that he has a claim upon their sympathy. The roving orphan meets none upon whom he can count for help. Can a nation, so fallen from its own ideal live long? The thought is painful, yet it is a fact and we cannot shut our eyes to fact. If our religious bodies really feel for the country, its people and its religion, let them show it by *work*.

A SANNYASIN.

CORRESPONDENCE

NEW YORK VEDANTA WORK

To the EDITOR, Prabuddha Bharata.
Sir,

The annual meeting of the Society held on the 21st of January, afforded an excellent opportunity to judge of the status of the organization ; and all those who listened to the reports of the various committees, must have felt that the promise of the autumn had already been fulfilled. One of the most gratifying features in the general tone of the gathering was the greater understanding and appreciation shown of what the Society owed to the Swami Abhedananda as its Master and Spiritual Teacher. The President, Dr. Parker, in alluding to this, emphasized the fact that the Swami stood not only as the spiritual, but also as the temporal head of the organization ; and reminded all those present that the well-established condition of the work was due entirely to his patient devotion and persistence in the face of apparently insurmountable obstacles.

In the customary routine of the Society, one of the most encouraging signs of the hold which the Vedanta teaching has taken upon the public, is the increase in the attendance at the Tuesday evening lectures. This course is always more advanced than that offered at the Sunday series in Carnegie Lyceum ; and the exposition of the Upanishad "The Secret of Death," which the Swami has been giving during the last three months has been specially profound ; yet week after week the rooms

have been crowded to the doors and every one has listened with wrapt attention.

The Children's Class is also beginning to assume a more important place, and every Saturday brings fresh accessions to it ; while the audiences at the Carnegie Lyceum on Sunday now number at times as many as SIX hundred. The subjects treated during January and February have been :

JANUARY

- 5th—Pantheism and Vedanta.
- 12th—Science of Breathing.
- 19th—Truths of Christian Science.
- 26th—Power of Concentration.

FEBRUARY

- 2nd—Was Christ a Yogi ?
- 9th—How to gain Self-control.
- 16th—Spiritualism, Ancient and Modern.
- 23rd—Communion with God.

The list of March and April reads :

- Secret of Work.
- Duty or Motive in Work.
- Heredity and Re-incarnation.
- Buddhism and Vedanta.
- Worship of Divine Mother. (Repeated by request).
- Efficacy of Prayer.
- Was Christ a Yogi ? (Repeated by request)
- Salvation through Love.
- What is an Incarnation of God ?

L. G.

New York, Feby. 6th, 1902.

NEWS AND NOTES

THE Berlin electric overhead and underground railway has been formally opened.

THE University Commission has returned to Calcutta from tour and commenced sittings at the Town Hall.

MARCONI'S life has been insured for £200,000 by the company formed to take over his system of wireless telegraphy.

PLAGUE has got firm hold of several towns in Australia, notably Sydney, where plague mortality is of daily occurrence.

THE tribes of the Hindu Kush have been discovered to respect caste observances similar to those that prevail in India.

PROFESSOR Marshall has arrived in India and has taken up his duties as Director-General of the Archæological Survey.

MR. MARCONI says that the G. P. O. monopoly prevents him from establishing and working his system throughout the British Isles.

THE King and Queen Alexandra have intimated that they will do all in their power to stop the slaughter of birds for ladies' hat trimmings.

THE Government of India have received official intimation that the Turkish Government have imposed ten days' quarantine at the Hedjaz upon all arrivals from India.

THE will of the Duchesse de Valence who died in December, provides that her famous jewels and collection of lace shall be sold and the proceeds distributed among various charitable institutions.

A PROPOSAL that Japan should send three or four of her best ships to attend the naval celebration on the occasion of the Coronation of King Edward is gaining much support among the Japanese.

THE famine returns for the first week of March show about 323,700 persons on the lists, of whom 247,000 belong to Bombay districts, 32,700 to Rajputana, 34,700 to Central India States, and 9,300 to Ajmer-Merwara.

THE Government of India have accepted the necessity of the demolition of the Sadar Bazar, Rangoon, in the interest of the public health, and have agreed to contribute half a lakh of rupees towards the cause of this measure.

MR. HARRY F. WITHERBY is just about to leave England on a new ornithological expedition to Persia. It is Mr. Witherby's intention to penetrate the mountainous region north-west of Shiraz, after working the area between that town and Bushire.

A NOVEL experiment is being made in the Native State of Pudukkottai. The Raja, anxious that the needs of the people should be learnt, not only from the persons charged with the administration of the State, but from others who have opportunities of mixing with the people and discovering their needs, has formed a Representative Assembly to make suggestions and to receive accurate information regarding the action taken by the Government.

The anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna's birthday came off with the usual gathering of devotional people of different sects, feasting &c., at the Belur Math on the 10th March. A gloom was cast over the celebration by the serious turn which the malady of the Swami Vivekananda has taken. The doctors say he has Bright's disease. The Swami's proposed visit to Japan will be delayed till he feels better.

The anniversary was also celebrated at the Madras Math, at the Ramakrishna Mission, Dacca and at Kankhal Sevashrama.

At the Art and Agricultural Exhibition held recently at Tangail, a town in East Bengal, a handloom, imported from England, was shown to the peasant visitors and the way to work it was explained to them. A Mahomedan Zemindar of the locality spoke to his weaver-tenants present on the occasion, about procuring handlooms of the kind for the improvement of their handicraft and the development of their trade. Lectures on agricultural subjects were delivered by agricultural specialists, and they were

listened to with interest by a large number of ryots who were admitted free into the exhibition.

THE Rai Bhagwan Das Hospital of Calcutta, was opened by Lady Curzon on the 5th instant. The charities of Rai Bhagwan Das, situated in all parts of India, and even in Burma, are maintained by his widow at a cost of over 25,000 rupees a year. But the Rai Bahadur was not content, as the report of the Hospital shows, with providing Chattras, Dharma-salas, Tois, Pathshalas, wells, and marriage-funds. He was keenly alive to the need of providing medical relief for the members of his community, and for this purpose had made provision in his will for the Hospital which was opened, at a cost of a lakh and a half for the building alone, and with an endowment of nearly four lakhs. The Hospital has accommodation for twenty male and five female patients.

THE Government of India have expressed approval of the proposal that the Institution about to be founded at Bangalore by Mr. J. N. Tata, shall be called the "Indian Institute of Science," instead of the Indian Institute of Research. Government acquiesce in the suggestion that there should be three distinct schools in the Institute: a school of Chemistry, a school of Experimental Physics, and a school of Experimental Biology, in the last named of which Physiological and Bacteriological work will be carried on. The establishment for these schools is to comprise three Professors and three Assistant Professors, while six instructors are to be subse-

quently selected from amongst the most successful and capable students. The Government of India suggest, subject to the approval of the Mysore Durbar, that Bangalore should be selected for the site.

ACCORDING to a communication from the President of the Chamber of the Agriculture at Pondicherry, published in the *Journal d'Agriculture Tropicale*, the cultivation of Cassava is an important industry in the whole of Southern India. It is a very remunerative one, with very little risk attaching to it. The variety cultivated in French India is the sweet Cassava, which adapts itself to all varieties of soil, but prefers a sandy, slightly clayish soil to a heavy soil. Generally speaking, the cultivation is carried on in land that can be irrigated, and, indeed, it is only in such cases that cultivation can be advantageously carried on at all. The Cassava plant takes ten months to arrive at maturity, and during a period of drought, from five to six processes of irrigation every month are necessary. The system of drying the roots to preserve them is not adopted in Pondicherry. Cassava, cultivated under good conditions, with good manure, gives from three to four pounds of root per plant, and is sold at the rate of 65 rupees per candy of 240 kilags (528 lbs.) on the field. The President of the Chamber of Agriculture thinks that if a factory for the manufacture of "fecula" were installed in Pondicherry, the production would increase so as to supply several millions of tons per annum, as from 2,500 to 3,000 plants can be planted in a hectare. (247)

PROFESSOR E. Ray-Lankester discoursed the other night at the Royal Institution on the new mammal, the okapi from Central Africa. The new animal, to which he directed their attention, belonging to the donkey tribe, had been discovered, or at least the skin and skull had been obtained, by Sir Harry Johnston. He found trace of it first at all at the settlement occupied by the officers of the Congo State, in the shape of pieces of skin, which looked as if they had been cut from the legs of a zebra. He left the district without any further indication of the okapi, as it was called; but three months afterwards Sir Harry received a complete skin of the animal and two complete skulls, which are now at the Natural History Museum. There could be no doubt that the greatest zoological find of the last half of the century was allied to the giraffe, for it had indications in the teeth which were only found in the giraffe. The curious zebra-like striping was limited to the haunches and legs, while there was a complete absence of any secondary hoofs. There was a difficulty in accounting for these markings on the legs; no antelope had them, but some of the goats had. Their significance was, he thought, that the animal had to come to the edge of the forest to get food, and would therefore be better able to conceal itself from enemies by reason of them.

The chief characteristic of religion is to desist from the destruction of life; without this characteristic there cannot be any true religion. *Alahubharam*

The whole intellect is a form of unity; not in unity is God. *Samadhi*