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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise, Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## MEDITATION\*

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Meditation has been laid stress upon by all religions. The meditative state of mind is declared by the yogis to be the highest state in which the mind exists. When the mind is studying the external object, it gets identified with it, loses itself. To use the simile of the old Indian philosopher: the soul of man is like a piece of crystal, but it takes the colour of whatever is near it. Whatever the soul touches . . . it has to take its colour. That is the difficulty. That constitutes the bondage. The colour is so strong, the crystal forgets itself and identifies itself with the colour. Suppose a red flower is near the crystal and the crystal takes the colour and forgets itself, thinks it is red. We have taken the colour of the body and have forgotten what we are. All the difficulties that follow come from that one dead body. All our fears, all worries, anxieties, troubles, mistakes, weakness, evil, are from that one great blunder—that we are bodies. This is the ordinary person. It is the person taking the colour of

the flower near to it. We are no more bodies than the crystal is the red flower.

The practice of meditation is pursued. The crystal knows what it is, takes its own colour. It is meditation that brings us nearer to truth than anything else.

In India two persons meet. In English they say, ‘How do you do?’ The Indian greeting is, ‘Are you upon yourself?’ The moment you stand upon something else, you run the risk of being miserable. This is what I mean by meditation—the soul trying to stand upon itself. That state must surely be the healthiest state of the soul, when it is thinking of itself, residing in its own glory. No, all the other methods that we have—by exciting emotions, prayers, and all that—really have that one end in view. In deep emotional excitement the soul tries to stand upon itself. Although the emotion may arise from anything external, there is concentration of mind.

\*By courtesy of the *Vedanta and the West*,

There are three stages in meditation. The first is what is called [*dhāraṇā*,] concentrating the mind upon an object. I try to concentrate my mind upon this glass, excluding every other object from my mind except this glass. But the mind is wavering. When it has become strong and does not waver so much, it is called [*dhyāna*,] meditation. And then there is a still higher state when the differentiation between the glass and myself is lost—[it is *samādhi* or absorption]. The mind and the glass are identical. I do not see any difference. All the senses stop and all powers that have been working through other channels of other senses [are focussed in the mind]. Then this glass is under the power of the mind entirely. This is to be realized. It is a tremendous play played by the yogis. Take for granted the external object exists. Then that which is really outside of us is not what we see. The glass that I see is not the external object certainly. That external something which is the glass I do not know and will never know.

Something produces an impression upon me. Immediately I send the reaction towards that, and the glass is the result of the combination of these two. Action from outside—X. Action from inside—Y. The glass is XY. When you look at X, you call it external world—at Y, internal world. If you try to distinguish which is your mind and which is the world—there is no such distinction. The world is the combination of you and something else.

Let us take another example. You are dropping stones upon the smooth surface of a lake. Every stone you drop is followed by a reaction. The stone is covered by the little waves in the lake. External things are like the stones dropping into the lake of the mind. So we do not really see the external [world]; we see the wave only.

These waves that rise in the mind have caused many things outside. We are not discussing the [merits of] idealism and realism. We take for granted that things exist outside, but what we see is different from things that exist outside, as we see what exists outside plus ourselves.

Suppose I take my contribution out of the glass. What remains? Almost nothing. The glass will disappear. If I take my contribution from the table, what would remain of the table? Certainly not this table, because it was a mixture of the outside plus my contribution. The poor lake has got to throw the wave, towards the stone whenever [the stone] is thrown in it. The mind must create the wave towards any sensation. Suppose . . . we can withhold the mind. At once we are masters. We refuse to contribute our share to all these phenomena. If I do not contribute my share, it has got to stop.

You are creating this bondage all the time. How? By putting in your share. We are all making our own beds, forging our own chains. When the identifying ceases between this external object and myself, then I will be able to take my contribution off, and this thing will disappear. Then I will say, 'Here is the glass,' and then take my mind off, and it disappears. If you can take away your share, you can walk upon water. Why should it drown you any more? What of poison? No more difficulties. In every phenomenon in nature you contribute at least half, and nature brings half. If your half is taken off, the thing must stop.

. . . To every action there is equal reaction. If a man strikes me and wounds me, it is that man's action and my body ['s reaction]. . . . Suppose I have so much power over the body that I can resist even the automatic action. . . . Can such power be attained? The books say it can. If you stumble on it, it is a miracle. If you learn it scientifically, it is yoga.

I have seen people healed by the power of mind. There is the miracle worker. We say he prays and the man is healed. Another man says, 'Not at all. It is just the power of the mind. The man is scientific. He knows what he is about.'

The power of meditation gets us everything. If you want to get power over nature, [you can have it through meditation]. It is through the power of meditation all scientific facts are discovered today. They study the subject and forget everything, their own identity and every-



thing, and then the great fact comes like a flash. Some people think that is inspiration. There is no more inspiration than there is expiration; and never was anything got for nothing.

The highest so-called inspiration was the work of Jesus. He worked hard for ages in previous births. That was the result of his previous work—hard work. . . . It is all nonsense to talk about inspiration. Had it been, it would have fallen like rain. Inspired people in any line of thought only come among nations who have general education and [culture]. There is no inspiration. . . . Whatever passes for inspiration is the result that comes from causes already in the mind. One day, flash comes the result! Their past work was the [cause].

Therein also you see the power of meditation—intensity of thought. These men churn up their own souls. Great truths come to the surface and become manifest. Therefore the practice of meditation is the great scientific method of knowledge. There is no knowledge without the power of meditation. From ignorance, superstition, etc. we can get cured by meditation for the time being and no more. [Suppose] a man has told me that if you drink such a poison you will be killed, and another man comes in the night and says, 'Go drink the poison!' and I am not killed, [what happens is this:] my mind cut out from the meditation the identity between the poison and myself just for the time being. In another case of [drinking] the poison, I shall be killed.

If I know the reason and scientifically raise myself up to that [state of meditation], I can save anyone. That is what the books say, but how far it is correct you must appraise.

I am asked, 'Why do you Indian people not conquer these things? You claim all the time to be superior to all other people. You practice yoga and do it quicker than anybody else. You are fitter. Carry it out! If you are a great people, you ought to have a great system. You will have to say good-bye to all the gods. Let them go to sleep as you take up the great philosophers. You are mere babies,

as superstitious as the rest of the world. And all your claims are failures. If you have the claims, stand up and be bold, and all the heaven that ever existed is yours. There is the musk deer with fragrance inside, and he doesn't know where the fragrance comes from. Then after days and days he finds it in himself. All these gods and demons are within them. Find out, by powers of reason, education, and culture that it is all in yourself. No more gods and superstitions. You want to be rational, to be yogis, really spiritual.'

[My reply is: With you too] everything is material. What is more material than God sitting on a throne? You look down upon the poor man who is worshipping the image. You are no better. And you gold worshippers, what are you? The image worshipper worships his god, something that he can see. But you do not even do that. You do not worship the spirit nor something that you can understand. . . . Word worshippers! 'God is spirit!' God is spirit and should be worshipped in spirit and faith. Where does the spirit reside? On a tree? On a cloud? What do you mean by God being *ours*? You *are* the spirit. That is the first fundamental belief you must never give up. I am the spiritual being. It is there. All this skill of yoga and this system of meditation and everything is just to find Him there.

Why am I saying all this just now? Until you fix the location, you cannot talk. You fix it up in heaven and all the world over except in the right place. I am spirit, and therefore the spirit of all spirits must be in my soul. Those who think it anywhere else are ignorant. Therefore it is to be sought here in this heaven; all the heaven that ever existed [is within myself]. There are some sages who, knowing this, turn their eyes inward and find the spirit of all spirits in their own spirit. That is the scope of meditation. Find out the truth about God and about your own soul and thus attain to liberation.

You are all running after life, and we find that is foolishness. There is something much higher than life even. This life is inferior, material. Why should I live at all? I am



something higher than life. Living is always slavery. We always get mixed up. . . . Everything is a continuous chain of slavery.

You get something, and no man can teach another. It is through experience [we learn]. . . . That young man cannot be persuaded that there are any difficulties in life. You cannot persuade the old man that life is all smooth. He has had many experiences. That is the difference.

By the power of meditation we have got to control, step by step, all these things. We have seen philosophically that all these differentiations—spirit, mind, matter, etc—[have no real existence]. . . . Whatever exists is one. There cannot be many. That is what is meant by science and knowledge. Ignorance sees manifold. Knowledge realizes one. . . . Reducing the many into one is science. . . . The whole of the universe has been demonstrated into one. That science is called the science of Vedanta. The whole universe is one. The one runs through all this seeming variety.

We have all these variations now and we see them—what we call the five elements: solid, liquid, gaseous, luminous, ethereal. After that the state of existence is mental and beyond that spiritual. Not that spirit is one and mind is another, ether another, and so on. It is the one existence appearing in all these variations. To go back, the solid must become liquid. The way [the elements evolved] they must go back. The solids will become liquid, etherized. This is the idea of the macrocosm—and universal. There is the external universe and universal spirit, mind, ether, gas, luminosity, liquid, solid.

The same with the mind. I am just exactly the same in the microcosm. I am the spirit; I am mind; I am the ether, solid, liquid, gas. What I want to do is to go back to my spiritual state. It is for the individual to live the life of the universe in one short life. Thus man can be free in this life. He in his own short lifetime shall have the power to live the whole extent of life. . . .

We all struggle . . . If we cannot reach

the Absolute, we will get somewhere, and it will be better than we are now.

Meditation consists in this practice [of dissolving everything into the ultimate Reality—spirit]. The solid melts into liquid, that into gas, gas into ether, then mind, and mind will melt away. All is spirit.

Some of the yogis claim that this body will become liquid, etc. You will be able to do anything with it—make it little, or gas, pass through this wall—they claim, I do not know. I have never seen anybody do it. But it is in the books. We have no reason to disbelieve the books.

Possibly, some of us will be able to do it in this life. Like a flash it comes, as the result of our past work. Who knows but some here are old yogis with just a little to do to finish the whole work. Practice!

Meditation, you know, comes by a process of imagination. You go through all these processes, of purification of the elements—making the one melt into the other, that into the next higher, that into mind, that into spirit, and then you are spirit. [*Edit. note:* This purification of the elements, known as *bhūta-shuddhi*, is part of the ritualistic worship. The worshipper tries to feel that he is dissolving earth, water, fire, air, and ether with their subtle essences, and the sense organs into mind. Mind, intellect, and sense of individual ego are merged into *mahat*, the cosmic ego; *mahat* is dissolved into *Prakṛiti*, the power of Brahman, and *Prakṛiti* merges into Brahman, the ultimate Reality. The *Kuṇḍalinī*, the coiled-up power at the base of the spine, in his thoughts, is led to the highest centre of consciousness in the brain, where he meditates on his oneness with the supreme spirit.]

Spirit is always free, omnipotent, omniscient. Of course, under God. There cannot be many gods. These liberated souls are wonderfully powerful, almost omnipotent. [But] none can be as powerful as God. If one [liberated soul] said, 'I will make this planet go this way,' and another said, 'I will



make it go that way,' [there would be confusion].

Don't you make this mistake! When I say in English, 'I am God!' it is because I have no better word. In Sanskrit, God means absolute existence, knowledge, and wisdom, infinite self-luminous consciousness. No person. It is impersonal.

I am never Ram [never one with Ishwara, the personal aspect of God], but I am [one with Brahman, the impersonal all-pervading existence]. Here is a huge mass of clay. Out of that clay I made a little [mouse] and you made a little elephant. Both are clay. Melt both down. They are essentially one. 'I and my Father are one.' [But the clay mouse can never be one with the clay elephant].

I stop somewhere; I have a little knowledge. You a little more; you stop somewhere. There is one soul which is the greatest of all. This is Ishwara, Lord of Yoga [God as Creator, with attributes]. He is the individual. He is omnipresent. He resides in every heart. There is no body. He does not need a body. All you get by the practice of meditation, etc., you can get by meditation upon Ishwara, Lord of Yogis. . . .

The same can be attained by meditating upon a great soul; or upon the harmony of life. These are called objective meditations. So you begin to meditate upon certain external things, objective things, either outside or inside. If you take a long sentence, that is no meditation at all. That is simply trying to get the mind collected by repetition. Meditation means the mind is turned back upon itself. The mind stops all the thought-waves and the world stops. Your consciousness expands. Every time you meditate you will keep your growth. . . . Work a little harder, more and more, and meditation comes. You do not feel the body or anything else. When you come out of it after the hour, you have had the most beautiful rest you ever had in your life. That is the only way you ever give rest to your system. Not even the deepest sleep will give you such rest as that. The mind goes on jumping even in deepest sleep. Just those few minutes [in

meditation] your brain has almost stopped. Just a little vitality is kept up. You forget the body. You may be cut to pieces and not feel it at all. You feel such pleasure in it. You become so light. This perfect rest we will get in meditation.

Then, meditation upon different objects. There are meditations upon different centres of the spine. [According to the yogis, there are two nerves in the spinal column, called *idā* and *piṅgalā*. They are the main channels through which the afferent and efferent currents travel. (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, I, 160, 163.)] The hollow [canal called *sūṣumnā*] runs through the middle of the spinal column. The yogis claim this cord is closed, but by the power of meditation it has to be opened. The energy has to be sent down to [the base of the spine], and the *kundalinī* rises. The world will be changed. . . . [Thus the rousing of the *kundalinī* is the one and only way to attaining divine wisdom, super-conscious perception, realization of the spirit. (*Complete works of Swami Vivekananda*, I, 165.)]

Thousands of divine beings are standing about you. You do not see them because our world is determined by our senses. We can only see this outside. Let us call it X. We see that X according to our mental state. Let us take the tree standing outside. A thief came and what did he see in the stump? A policeman. The child saw a huge ghost. The young man was waiting for his sweetheart, and what did he see? His sweetheart. But the stump of the tree had not changed. It remained the same. This is God Himself, and with our foolishness we see Him to be man, to be dust, to be dumb, miserable.

Those who are similarly constituted will group together naturally and live in the same world. Otherwise stated, you live in the same place. All the heavens and all the hells are right here. For example: [take planes in the form of] big circles cutting each other at certain points. . . . On this plane in one circle we can be in touch with a certain point in



another [circle]. If the mind gets to the centre, you begin to be conscious on all planes. In meditation sometimes, you touch another plane, and you see other beings, disembodied spirits, and so on. You get there by the power of meditation. This power is changing our senses, you see, refining our senses. If you begin to practise meditation five days, you will feel the pain from within these centres of [consciousness] and your [hearing becomes finer. As the organs get finer, the perceptions get finer. (*Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, I. 176). Then the psychic realm opens up.] That is why all the Indian gods have

three eyes. That is the psychic eye that opens out and shows you spiritual things.

As this power of *kundalinī* rises from one centre to the other in the spine, it changes the senses and you begin to see this world another. It is heaven. You cannot talk. Then the *kundalinī* goes down to the lower centres. You are again man until the *kundalinī* reaches the brain, all the centres have been passed, and the whole vision vanishes and you [perceive] . . . nothing but the one existence. You are God. All heavens you make out of Him, all worlds out of Him. He is the one existence. Nothing else exists.

## DOES VEDĀNTA ACCEPT EVOLUTION?

MĀYĀ\*—I

BY THE EDITOR

In this article we would use Vedānta in the sense of Advaita as accepted by Śaṅkara. But there are several schools of Śaṅkara Vedānta. As we are concerned with the elucidation of Evolution, we would accept his Māyāvāda, the theory of Māyā, his especial contribution to the world of philosophy. Now this Māyā, according to the followers of Śaṅkara, is not an entity in the sense Brahman is; it is indefinable, inexpressible something (*yat-kiñcit*)—something, not negative, neither positive, but of the nature of the latter (*bhāva-rūpa*), something akin to the positive. Yet we are no nearer the meaning, it remains the same indefinable.

Māyā could have been defined had it had a particular nature, i.e. fixed connotations or characteristics. By an irony of fate that which has no nature we call 'nature', and honour it, as if we have understood it, by capitalizing the initial letter. One is reminded of a characteristic couplet of Kavīra (a sage of the Middle Ages) which says, 'Wonderful are

the ways of the world; people call oranges, with such a fine hue, the 'colourless' (*narāṅgi*), the solid milk, from which water has been evaporated, the 'lost' (*khoya*). . . . This has set Kavīra to weep.' It need not set us weeping—it is something very funny indeed. This very indefinability, due to constant flux, as long as it appears, is its 'nature', if we are insistent on using a familiar term.

Though, like scientists' matter, Māyā is undefined and indefinable, it is only too well known to us; in fact Māyā and its 'products' are the only things we know; all things and beings and all objects of thought are its 'products', its effects. And effects, as we know, are not different from the cause, but the cause in a different form and under a separate name. Hence we can claim to know Māyā both as a cause and as effects. But we

\*Without a discussion on Māyā, Evolution cannot be rightly understood. Hence we would deal with Māyā in two issues and then take up Evolution.



cannot put our finger on it and say here it is, for by that time it has changed into something else. For all practical purposes we may call it 'transformation' or 'appearance' and its effects in the plural, 'transformations' or 'appearances'.

We are not permitted, though it is natural, to ask, whose 'transformation' or whose 'appearance'? There are two reasons for this. First, the question takes for granted that an appearance, to be so, must be an appearance of something else. This supposition is superstitious. 'Effects', 'appearances', or 'transformations' (they are all synonymous terms) are not of something else which is somewhere outside of them, but they are themselves the cause, which is immanent in them, which differ in forms from those of their immediate antecedents. Appearances are appearances, but not *of* anything. The moment we say X, Y, Z are appearances of W, the latter becomes something different from the former, which is not the case; if we say they are of XYZ, then XYZ becomes a mere summation of X, Y, and Z, and the latter become the realities, which being ever changing, cannot be realities, and by hypothesis they are appearances. And apart from W—X, Y, and Z have no existence, they are the modes in which W appears; not different from W but that itself; but W is not exhausted in them, it is they and many more things. Appearances are not shadows, which are of bodies that occupy separate space. Appearances are the reality and are in it and will merge in it and remain there as it, when they cease to be appearances. Reality is never *seen* except through an appearance. When one appearance subsides another takes its place. Reality is never devoid of an appearance and yet the latter forms no essential part of it. Nor are there in the appearances non-essential parts that were not present in reality. Formal logic looks aghast to formulate Māyā and explain the relation between it and its products.

Second, the question, and answer if any, will not serve any useful purpose. We see the

Māyā and its products, with which we live our lives and can go on improving ourselves and our world, as we like and as we are able to do, *ad infinitum*, and yet we have failed to define Māyā, to know its nature. Of what avail is it, if there be something beyond Māyā, to know that? Will it be less undefined and indefinable? What purpose will it serve? We have seen all our purposes being served by Māyā and its broods. Is it not foolish to go on racking our brains uselessly over a question that is itself baseless and whose answer, if forthcoming, serves no purpose, even of satisfying an idle curiosity?

So Māyā is 'change', 'appearance', 'transformation', and if we like 'becoming'—ceaseless, without beginning and without end. Being so, as we have said, it has no particular characteristic. All the qualities that we sense or reason about, all substances and activities, all thoughts, feelings, and mentations are comprised in it and as such all of them are its characteristics. Hence all contraries and contradictories, all positives and negatives are in it, are itself. It knocks formal logic directly on the head, but as it is based on experience we cannot deny it—its existence, its activities, its products. Formal logic and for the matter of that, all arts, sciences, and philosophies are derived from and based on it; consequently they cannot deny it. They, their laws and conclusions, are true in the regions of particulars, their generalizations and interrelations, but are not applicable to it, the Māyā—how apt is the term chosen to describe it!

The ancients have described Māyā in another way. In obedience to the principle that the cause is not different from the effect, they have analysed the effects, the particulars and found three *almost* distinct emergences in them. Really speaking they are not distinct in the sense that where one is the other two may not be; in fact in most of the particulars all the three are observed inhering in the same locus. Sometimes one emerges out of another and from the second the third. It would be nearer the truth if we could take one as the



basic and the other two as its developments one after the other, but for the fact that in other instances the process is seen reversed, so no one of them is basic. All that we can say of them is that they are eternal associates; sometimes and in some loci one predominates over the other two, predominance being subject to changes, generally gradual but sometimes violent.

We see here three distinct varieties of objects—inert, active, and conscious. Modern science has shown the eternal association of mass and energy, of the first two types of objects; and the association of consciousness with brain and the nervous system is common knowledge. Origin of life is still a debatable point; but the maintenance and growth of life by and through the non-living elements is an everyday occurrence; and the same holds good in relation to life and consciousness. Hence the close association of these three emergences and the predominance of one over the other two in different degrees in different objects and beings are observed facts that are not called in question.

Only some would controvert the development of life from non-living elements and of consciousness from life. This is because they have started with a wrong hypothesis. They have taken the elements to be non-living. Matter and consciousness have likewise been taken as antithetical by some which debar them from accepting the development of consciousness from life. Whereas the ancients and the ultra-moderns, making no such distinctions, do not find any difficulty in deriving life and consciousness from matter under peculiar circumstances. The ancients, however, would like to put it that matter, force, and consciousness are emergences and immergences, constantly heaving up and down, one into and out of another, none of them being basic to the other two, but intimate associates to one another.

If we want to call anything basic it is Māyā. But Māyā, as we have seen, is constant change. We can never grasp it except through its fleeting modes we call its

products. Just as the scientists' ultimate is mass-and-energy and not exclusively either one or the other or a third something and just as we cannot make either mass or energy basic, both being found together and mutually convertible; even so Māyā is mass-energy-consciousness and not one of them nor a fourth, none of them being basic and all mutually convertible according to definite laws. Hence the ancients have called Māyā *tri-guṇātmikā*, 'tri-emergent'. This conclusion is not a deduction but an induction from observed facts and events of the world, external and internal.

## II

We are now in a subtle region, so to say. Whatever terms we may use in any language, including Sanskrit where the 'theory' of Māyā has been evolved, it would be a partial expression of the idea we want to convey. It is for this reason Māyā has been described as 'inexpressible'.

We have used the term 'emergent'. The idea, however, would be better expressed by the abstract noun 'emergence', inasmuch as it is a process or a continuum, and not an entity, a fact, or even an event. These three emergences of mass, force, and consciousness are each a process; and again, taken as a whole, are but one process, emerging and immerging as it wills, according to definite laws, many of which have been discovered by scientists including psychologists.

'Process' presupposes some amount of emergence, but Māyā includes within itself an idea where the sense of emergence or emerging is not present. Hence we cannot use the term 'process' without excluding something from its full connotation. Perhaps 'continuum' may be a better substitute, for it may imply a process as well as something where process has not begun yet but where it may or may not start. A crude example may explain the idea. We know that all the globes in this vast expanding universe have come out of whirling nebulae. New nebulae are found; they may be new discoveries or new forma-



tions. Where they are formations they were not processes before the starting moment. So previous to that there was something which was not a process but a continuum. And in the universe, in spite of innumerable globes formed and in the process of formation, there is infinite continuum where processes have not started. Yet where processes are going on, the continuum has not ceased to exist, but is as truly present as elsewhere. Continuum does not exclude process but is not exhausted by it. In this sense 'continuum' seems to be a better word to carry the idea we want to express. We come very near to Einstein's space-time continuum. But we would not use 'space-time' for that is conceivable only where process has started. Just as process is inconceivable without space-time, so the latter cannot be thought about without the former. Space-time without things and events is one of the numerous wrong abstractions, extant in the world of ideas.

This primordial 'continuum' is the process that is sensed, with and without the aid of fine instruments, when it is called the 'manifest', *vyakta*; it is also beyond process, when it is called the 'unmanifest' *avyakta*. Although it is thus both the manifest and the unmanifest, *vyaktāvyakta*, and although both the categories are ever present in it in a continued state of transformation, yet, compared to the manifest, the unmanifest state being very vast, out of which, into which, and as which the former springs, subsides, and remains, it is generally known by the name of the unmanifest, *avyakta*. Just as the ultimate forms of matter, the electrons, protons, etc. remain unchanged in spite of the innumerable and incessant changes in their configuration, so this *avyakta* remains unchanged in the midst of infinite modal changes. They are manifest to the senses, so they are 'manifestations'; they appear to them, therefore they are 'appearances'; they appear in various manners, hence they are 'modes'; they do not stay but grow and decay, so they are 'processes'. But it is the one continuum that is variously termed according to different points of view.

Similarly the Sanskrit terms *ākāra* (form), *vikāra* (particular), *prakāra* (mode, modification), *viśeṣa* (particular), *vyakta* (manifested), etc. convey the same idea of 'one' viewed or understood from different angles of vision, laying emphasis on particular emergence or its aspect and ignoring others, past, present, or future. If a particular emergence is integrally or synoptically viewed, it will cease to be a manifest, it will not appear to any of the senses but to reason alone. *Vyaktas* being more variable, and not other than the *avyakta*, the primordial is known as the *avyakta*, though it is immanent in, and the reality behind, the *vyaktas*, individually and collectively.

To view a thing integrally we are to see it in its proper setting, in its environment, which have given it the form and are maintaining and changing it, and to take into account its past history and future progress or regress. Synopsis is an abridgement, a general survey, from which details and elaborations have been omitted. These omissions do not alter the thing, for they are not its necessary parts; with changes in them the thing would have been the same. Synopsis is the presentation of the core or the essence. The redundants or extras are there. They are not non-existent; nor are they of no use. But they, as such, do not enter into the essence of the thing, all the while being the same essence itself. Hence the integral view is the same as the synoptical one, which is very peculiar and which would not have been the case had the extras been something other than the essence.

How is it possible? Extras are not other than, but excess of, the same thing. Still it may be argued that the excess of a thing is not the thing itself; there must be something plus the original. This idea is wrong. Excess of water is water and not something other than water. The additional quantity that is manifest at a particular place has only changed its place or form. When this earth of ours was in the state of a nebula all these bewildering varieties of sentient and in-



sentient creation were not there in their present manifested ever-shifting forms, etc.; but they were surely there in their potential state. Nothing has been added to it, nor is it possible to add; history of evolution belies it. These forms etc. then are not other than that portion of the nebula which has constituted the earth. The excess that appears to us is one of forms etc., all portions and ideas of which are not anything that was not in the nebula. Buddha and Christ, Napoleon and Hitler are excesses of the nebula—their moral and spiritual, their physical and psychological qualities were all there in the nebula. But what a difference! Again what we call potential and manifest are not even two states one succeeding another; they appear so, because we fix our eyes or attention on a particular place or time. In that integral vision they are eternally there in the same settings. In time, the fourth dimension, they exist; not apart from the other three dimensions, but in that continuum as a whole. The limitations of the senses and the mind have created for us these difficulties, whose mist our focussed intellect partially removes. No man, possessing a sound intellect, will refuse to admit that the modern world with all its cultures and civilizations is anything other than the original nebula. Man vaunts of his part in the creation. His intellect, the real creator of his creation, is born of, and maintained and replenished by these elemental body and the environment, the urge and energy of creation having been supplied by them. So the unmanifest is the manifest with no real extras; even the excess is apparent due to fragmentary vision of the looker-on. Hence both this continuum and the process are called the *avyakta*, another name of *Māyā*.

What then are the unmanifest and the manifest? Is there no difference between the two? There is, but it is, as we have said, only of the point of view, of the vision. When we utter the word 'nebula' we confine ourselves to that whirling, almost amorphous substance; and when the solar system has been formed, even partially, we do not call it

'nebula'; we give it a new name and busy ourselves with the latter's development and forget the nebula. In fact, however, the nebula continues as the solar system, and if and when the system is again reduced to powder, the same nebula will continue. We do not think that the new name has changed the substance. Nobody compelled us to limit the name of nebula to that particular state, which is neither separate nor separable from the other states. From the *avyakta* state, right through *vyakta* stages of infinite variety, down back to the *avyakta* there is no cessation, no break, anywhere in the continuum; our individual inability has ideally broken it to pieces and given different names to ideal states, which we call manifestations or manifests. So it is our 'visions', *dṛiṣṭis* that have brought about this apparent differences in the continuum, *avyakta*. The vision that has created this work-a-day world of ours is the practical or pragmatic vision, the *vyavahārika-dṛiṣṭi* and the integral vision is the vision of the reality, the thing as it is in itself—the *pāramārthika-dṛiṣṭi*. But our visions, our limitations, our inabilities and foolishness do not change or corrupt or improve the thing, which reigns in supreme indifference to the fleeting spectres of humanity or to the less fleeting shining divinity of the seven heavens.

Names do not have any necessary connection with things; nor do forms, which appear inherent in things, really exist as such in them, which stretch to infinity without a break. Names and forms are *our* readings of the continuum, under circumstances created by *us*, for purposes dreamed into existence by *us*, who are *ourselves* products of the wrong fragmentary vision. Circumstances, purposes, ourselves—all are due to breaking the unbreakable continuum into unreal pieces, which, by an irony of fate, we call the real or realities. Who breaks? Why it breaks?—are questions that are inadmissible; for, as we have seen, there is no break or breaking anywhere in fact. If it is apparent, to whom it is apparent is redundant, inasmuch as it is first known to somebody to



whom it is apparent. Again, the individual to whom it appears, being himself a piece of the unbreakable continuum, is either a myth or one with the continuum, infinite and eternal, to whom there can never exist foolish circumstances and purposes—broken realities, half-truths and untruths, all are contradiction in terms and concepts. The fact is, the manifests are mutually manifest, in the hazy twilight of sense-dominated reason, which shining, the mist and the mysty figures disappear. Their quasi-existence is not denied, they cannot be denied. But they are the dissected parts of a butterfly, from which life

has departed and the butterfly has flown. The real butterfly has no parts, it is one indivisible whole. If we want to know it, it must be known as a whole, without disturbing it, without interfering with the continuum that it is. The moment we do it, the continuum breaks. What is left is *our* own creation and we observe and experiment with *our* creatures and extend *our* knowledge of *our* world. This is *vyavahārika-dṛiṣṭi*, pragmatic view, of the world. The integral view is of the reality, the continuum, which is therefore called the *avyakta*, the unmanifest, the unusable, the being-becoming.

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## NEW DISCOVERIES REGARDING SWAMI VIVEKANANDA—V

BY AN AMERICAN DEVOTEE

I find that I must retract a statement I made in the last installment. If readers will remember, I said that on March 19, 1894, Swamiji wrote a letter from America to Swami Brahmananda. I said this because in the English edition of "The Letters of Swami Vivekananda" there is a letter, dated March 19, 1894, which is annotated by the editor, "To Swami Brahmananda," and which starts out: "My dear Rakhal." It did not seem too rash to conclude that Swamiji wrote this letter to Swami Brahmananda. But it has since been pointed out to me that in the Bengali edition this same letter is annotated, "To Swami Ramakrishnananda." Since the original letter was written in Bengali, the presumption is that the Bengali version is the correct one and that Swamiji wrote this letter not to Swami Brahmananda but to Swami Ramakrishnananda.

Before continuing with my narrative, I must make one more reference to the last installment. Perhaps it will be remembered that I quoted from a joint letter written to Swamiji by his Madras disciples on December 7, 1893. "We only came to know," these disciples wrote, "that you were received with an ovation in Washington and Philadelphia where you explained our Vedanta System." This seemed to indicate that Swamiji had spoken in Washington and Philadelphia sometime between the close of the Parliament and, at the very latest, December 1, 1893. I promised to check up on this clue, and I have done so. I regret to say that results have been negative. After a careful investigation of the Washington and Philadelphia newspapers I find that there is no reference at all to Swamiji's having visited those cities until late in 1894. It is difficult to know what the Madras disciples had in mind. Perhaps the Washington and Philadelphia papers reported upon Swamiji's appearance at the Parliament of Religions, or perhaps, although this does not seem likely, their letter is wrongly dated.

In any case, we can now be sure that after the Parliament, Swamiji did not travel



far from Chicago for at least two months but lectured only in and around that city. In this connection it should perhaps be mentioned that in the article, "My Memories of Swami Vivekananda," as published in *Prabuddha Bharata* of September 1936, the author, Martha Brown Fincke, states that Swamiji visited Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts, in November 1893. But Mrs. Fincke's memory did not serve her accurately. As we shall have occasion to see in a later installment Swamiji did not lecture at Smith College until the spring of the following year. And now, having cleared up these matters, we can continue with the story of Swamiji's lecture tour.

## I

In the last installment we left Swamiji in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where he lectured on November 24 and 26, 1893. From there, without even a day's rest, he traveled to Des Moines, Iowa—a distance of well over 250 miles—and gave an informal talk on the afternoon of November 27 and a formal lecture that evening. This lecture had been announced somewhat breathlessly by *The Des Moines Daily News* as follows:

The lecture event of the season will take place to-night at the Central Church of Christ when the Hindoo Monk will deliver his lecture on "The Hindoo Religion." No thinker can afford to miss it.

On November 28, this same paper ran three items regarding Swamiji, one of which covered the informal talk and reception of the afternoon of the 27th. This I shall quote first:

On Monday afternoon, a small company were invited to the home of Dr. and Mrs. H. O. Breeden on Woodland Avenue, to meet the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, whose brilliant intellect made him one of the prime favorites of the parliament of religions, and whose lectures in Des Moines may be said to be of the era-making type. The distinguished oriental first gave an informal talk, in costume, on the manners and customs of India, and afterwards submitted to a running fire of questions from the guests, his witty and often sarcastic retorts proving highly entertaining.

The report of the evening's lecture was given on the same page as the above. Although in spots, as will be seen, the reporter woefully failed to follow Swamiji's argument regarding conversion, he captured enough of it to enable the reader who is familiar with Swamiji's thought to comprehend his meaning. It is apparent that this was an exceptional lecture, embodying ideas which Swamiji did not often express in quite this same way:

Swami Vivekananda, the talented scholar from the far-off India, spoke at the Central church last night. He was a representative of his country and creed at the recent parliament of religions assembled in Chicago during the world's fair. Rev. H. O. Breeden introduced the speaker to the audience. He arose and after bowing to his audience, commenced his lecture, the subject of which was "Hindoo Religion." His lecture was not confined to any line of thought but consisted more of some of his own philosophical views relative to his religion and others. He holds that one must embrace all the religions to become the perfect Christian. What is not found in one religion is supplied by another. They are all right and necessary for the true Christian. When you send missionary to our country he becomes a Hindoo Christian and I a Christian Hindoo. I have often been asked in this country if I am going to try to convert the people here. I take this for an insult. I do not believe in this idea of conversion. To-day we have a sinful man; tomorrow according to your idea he is converted and by and by attains unto holiness. Whence comes this change? How you explain it? The man has not a new soul for the soul must die. You



say he is changed by God. God is perfect, all powerful and is purity itself. Then after this man is converted he is that same God minus the purity he gave that man to become holy. There is in our country two words which have an altogether different meaning than they do in this country. They are "religion" and "sect." We hold that religion embraces all religions. We tolerate everything but intoleration. Then there is that word "sect." Here it embraces those sweet people who wrap themselves up in their mantle of charity and say, "We are right; you are wrong." It reminds me of the story of the two frogs. A frog was born in a well and lived its whole life in that well. One day a frog from the sea fell in that well and they commenced to talk about the sea. The frog whose home was in the well asked his visitor how large the sea was, but was unable to get an intelligent answer. Then the at-home frog jumped from one corner of the well to another and asked his visitor if the sea was that large. He said yes. The frog jumped again and said, "Is the sea that large?" and receiving an affirmative reply, he said to himself, "This frog must be a liar; I will put him out of my well." That is the way with these sects. They seek to eject and trample those who do not believe as they do.

Swamiji's next lecture in Des Moines was announced in this same paper:

"Reincarnation" will be the subject of Swami Vivekananda's lecture at the Central Christian church to-night. Those who heard the gifted Hindu monk last night will be glad of a second opportunity and those who did not are to be congratulated on the fact that they can still hear him. Do not fail to go.

Regrettably, no account is given in the Des Moines papers of this lecture on reincarnation. But on November 29 there is a short editorial which shows Des Moines' appreciation of Swamiji:

Dr. Breeden has conferred a real intellectual benefit upon this community by giving it an opportunity to hear the representatives of the Greek and Hindu religions discourse upon their favorite themes. There is a good deal of philistinism in America, and the west, which feels less of the influence of our foreign relations than is perceptible at the seaboard, is peculiarly liable to become a little narrow and intolerant in its excessive Americanism. The archbishop of Zante and the Hindu monk, Swami Vivekananda, have shown thinking people in Des Moines how possible it is to honestly view the problems of life from a point of view different from that of a busy, practical American.

Although the Archbishop of Zante, a delegate to the Parliament, is mentioned in connection with Swamiji, it is apparent that he visited Des Moines at an earlier date. Unlike Swamiji's lectures in Evanston which, as readers will remember, were given in conjunction with Dr. Carl von Bergen, those in Des Moines were delivered alone. The question as to whether or not Swamiji was at this time engaged by the lecture bureau must remain still unsettled. It is evident from the above account that Dr. Breeden was responsible for his appearance in Des Moines, and thus it would appear that Swamiji was at this time still making his own engagements and answering invitations as they came. However, the lecture bureau may nonetheless have played a part—and taken a percentage of the box-office receipts—in this Des Moines engagement. We cannot know for certain.

Unfortunately we now lose all trace of Swamiji until late in January 1894, and a period of almost two months remains in total darkness. Although during this time Swamiji must have been extremely active, lecturing here and there in large and small cities, so far all attempts to unearth information regarding his whereabouts have been in vain. But the search continues and hope is by no means given up. Somewhere in the old newspapers of the many cities and towns which Swamiji must have visited reports of his lectures and



of the public reaction to them are waiting to be found. In the meantime we must content ourselves with the material at hand. That material, however, is not too meager, for it has been discovered that Swamiji visited Memphis, Tennessee, in the last week of January 1894 and stirred the town into a frenzy of excitement. There can be little doubt but that by January Swamiji's fame had become well established; the Memphis papers were unsparing of space in their reports, at times waxing quite lyrical, and the Memphis citizens could not show him enough honor.

But before presenting this new material, I think it might be advisable to give the reader a brief picture of the Middle West in 1893 which will serve as a background to Swamiji's lecture tour, showing the kind of mentality with which he came in contact, the kind of people he met, and what, on the whole, he was up against during those obscure months. Just as I found it necessary to depict the background of the Parliament of Religions so that Swamiji's performance there might be seen in its proper relation to the whole and be better understood, so I find that an over-all picture of the American scene in the "nineties" is necessary to a true understanding of the period following the Parliament. I do not think that much attention has been given in the biographies to this side of the picture.

The "nineties" were strange and confused years. Americans looked backward, on the one hand, into a more or less orderly century in which they had been robustly confident that they were headed toward a state of social perfection and that their nation was "a special object of Divine favor." On the other hand, the "nineties" stared aghast into a new age in which the end was not at all certain. Economic and social conditions were undergoing rapid and radical changes with which the old moral and spiritual values could not cope, and these values, moreover, were being attacked from within by the new physics and the new biology, to say nothing of Darwinism which had given such a blow to the doctrine of man's unique position in the universe. The optimism and self-confidence that had characterized the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had suddenly given way to doubt and confusion. Nerves were on edge and, as in all transition periods, both the resistance to change and the attempts to adjust to it contained a note of hysteria.

As the story of the Parliament of Religions has shown, there were two very definite and clear-cut religious attitudes. One was that which clung to the old order of things with the strength and ferocity of a death struggle. The denominations which held this attitude, and which were later to be characterized as "fundamentalist," refused to give way to either Darwinism or to the social conditions which called for a broader and more liberal outlook than that of the nineteenth century. They resented the higher criticism and clung with fierce tenacity to a literal and rigid interpretation of scripture. They had little use for the Parliament of Religions, and, of course, no use at all for Swamiji.

Liberal Christianity, on the other hand, had set itself to accept and incorporate man's new knowledge into its tenets, and at the same time, it attempted to socialize religion, conceiving it the duty of the church to examine such problems as the labor question, the growth of slums, the creation of huge and predatory fortunes, political corruption, and so on. It assumed a moral responsibility for man's social and economic welfare and invaded the political field to the neglect of the spiritual. An inevitable secularization was the result. But nonetheless it was the clergy of this liberal brand of Christianity, which, priding itself upon its broadmindedness, welcomed Swamiji. It is no accident that in every city he was almost invariably invited to speak at either a Unitarian or a Congregational church.

It has been said by some that the Transcendentalist Movement, which took place earlier



in the nineteenth century, had prepared the American mind for Swamiji's teachings. In a sense this is true, for the eyes of many had been opened to the life of the spirit by the writings of Emerson, Thoreau and even Alcott. Yet it is a fact that as early as mid-century those eyes had closed again. Transcendentalism had lost ground. It was no longer in tune with a generation that was becoming increasingly materialistic and which looked for a solution to its problems in a more down-to-earth and scientific philosophy. The vanguard of religious thought strove to come to terms with the findings of science, and the emphasis was now upon social reform in accordance with the laws of nature rather than of spirit. It is true that such religions as Christian Science and New Thought were spreading rapidly, but by and large these religions emphasized man's material rather than spiritual welfare. Only in so far as they asserted that man's problems can be solved through a regeneration of the spirit were they in sympathy with the teachings of Swamiji. But even so theirs was a small voice scarcely heard. It was drowned out by the most "respectable" liberal thought of the age, which insisted, as we have seen, that a change in human nature could be brought about only by first transforming the social environment. In the main, then, the dominant religious attitudes were two: the old-fashioned fundamentalism, which predominated in the Middle West and South, and the modern socialized Christianity, whose leaders and adherents were to be found for the most part on the East coast.

While socialized Christianity fought for all manner of economic and social reforms, the "fundamentalists" busied themselves with frenzied attacks upon intemperance and vice. The "churchwomen" whom Swamiji mentioned during an interview in India no doubt belonged to this breed of reformer. Of them Swamiji said:

"These 'churchwomen' are awful fanatics. They are under the thumb of the priests there. Between them and the priests they make hell of earth and make a mess of religion. With the exception of these, the Americans are a very good people."

But these "churchwomen" were legion in the Middle West. Shrill and aggressively moral, they held up a distorted picture of what was at the time extolled as "pure and enlightened womanhood." They formed innumerable committees and besieged and terrorized newspaper editors in their self-righteous crusades, sniffing out vice in every corner and finding it even where it did not exist.

A book which depicts this period speaks of this type of woman as "a terror to editors, the hope of missionary societies and the prey of lecturers. . . . Her performances are listlessly sanctioned by men whose covert emotionalism she openly and more courageously expressed in an instinctive envy of all that was free, cool or unaltered in life, in art and affairs. She was an emblem, a grotesque shape in hot black silk, screaming at naked children in a clear river, with her companionable ministers and reformers at heel."

These "Titanesses," who for the most part inhabited the smaller cities and towns of the Middle West, were not content simply to seek out the depravity, real and imagined, of the large cities, but found a made-to-order outlet in the monstrous tales of "heathen" practices which for decades had been fed to them by the missionaries. There was something almost pathological in this mentality that turned a stiff, disapproving back upon the real issues of the day and clung to an unphilosophical form of rigid Christianity which had nothing to do with the actuality of the world in which its adherents lived and thrived. Hypocrisy was rampant, and it is little wonder that Swamiji's anger rose to a high pitch as



he toured the Middle West. It was, perhaps, the bigoted attitude toward India which upset him most.

It is hard today to grasp the enormity of missionary propaganda that held hypnotic sway over the American mind during the last half of the nineteenth century; for ignorant and fanciful as we may still be in regard to Hinduism, the ground has certainly been cleared of the more absurd and monstrous falsehoods that flourished a half century ago. Let me cite an example or two of the type of thing that confronted Swamiji. Following is a hymn from a book entitled: "Songs for the Little Ones at Home," written by some missionary in India for the edification of the young:

See that heathen mother stand  
Where the sacred current flows;  
With her own maternal hand  
Mid the waves her babe she throws.

Hark! I hear the piteous scream;  
Frightful monsters seize their prey,  
Or the dark and bloody stream  
Bears the struggling child away.

Fainter now, and fainter still,  
Breaks the cry upon the ear;  
But the mother's heart is still  
She unmoved that cry can hear.

Send, oh send the Bible there,  
Let its precepts reach the heart;  
She may then her children spare—  
Act the tender mother's part.

In 1893 such verses, earnestly piped by "the little ones at home," were no laughing matter. Every level of society had been bombarded with falsehoods and slander regarding India. When Swamiji later said that all the mud on the bottom of the Indian Ocean could not balance the filth that had been slung over his motherland, he was not exaggerating. I have before me on my desk a book entitled "India and Its Inhabitants." It was first published in 1858 and comprises 335 pages of lectures delivered throughout America by a Mr. Caleb Wright, M.A. (no relation to Prof. John Henry Wright). On the title page is the information that "The Author Visited India and Travelled Extensively There, For the Express Purpose of Collecting The Information Contained in This Volume"—information, I might add, which was predominantly false, calumnious and sensational. This book, profusely illustrated with line drawings and replete with moral reflections on the order of "Send, oh send the Bible there," had a phenomenal success among the intelligentsia. A preface cites testimonials from the presidents of twenty American colleges, which give unstinting praise to the lectures of Caleb Wright. A comparison of two editions of the book shows that within a space of two years over 36,000 copies were printed.

And this was but one book among many of its kind. For decades before Swamiji came to America, missionary calumny against India had saturated the public mind and provided it with thrills of righteous horror. The atmosphere in the early "nineties" was still thick with ignorance and bigotry, poisonous to both America and India, and it was inevitable that Swamiji, confronted by so strongly entrenched and so pernicious an enemy to his motherland would exert every effort to combat it.

One indication that Swamiji gave serious thought to the caluminous missionary propa-



ganda against India is the fact, recently come to light, that a few months after the Parliament he took the trouble to copy out in longhand on three sheets of letter paper a passage which portrayed the true missionary situation in India. A curious coincidence is connected with these pages, and before giving their contents I would like to digress a little to tell of it. It was through the kindness of Swami Vishwananda, head of the Vedanta center in Chicago, that these three pages, covered with Swamiji's handwriting in pencil, came into the hands of Swami Ashokananda. Welcome as they were, they presented a mystery, for there was no indication from what source Swamiji had quoted, if he had quoted at all. The only clue was a single notation in Swamiji's hand on the back of the third sheet, which read: "Louis Rousselet," an unknown name which could mean anything or nothing. Just at the time Swami Ashokananda was puzzling over the import of Swamiji's writing, the San Francisco Vedanta center received a packet of secondhand books that had been bought on sale, sight unseen. Among them was a large, illustrated travel book on India, long out of print—by Louis Rousselet! For the reader's information, the title of this book is "India and Its Native Princes—Travels in Central India and in the Presidencies of Bombay and Bengal." It is a translation of the French "L'Inde des Rajahs" and was first published by Scribner, Armstrong and Co. in 1876. Later it ran into other editions. The passage which struck Swamiji and which, no doubt, was the first true account of India he had read for a long time, is given here precisely as he copied it:

Is there a people in the world more tolerant than this good gentle Hindoo people, who have been so often described to us as cunning, cruel and even blood-thirsty? Compare them for an instant with the Mussulmans, or even with ourselves, in spite of our reputation for civilization and tolerance. Only let a Chinese or an Indian come and walk in our streets during a religious festival or ceremony, and will not the crowd exhibit the most hostile feelings towards him if his bearing should not be in conformity with the customs of the country? Will his ignorance excuse him? I doubt it. And in what country could such a spectacle be witnessed as that which met my eyes that day in this square of Benares? There, at ten paces from all that the Hindoo holds to be most sacred in religion, between the Source of Wisdom and the idol of Siva a Protestant missionary has taken his stand beneath a tree. Mounted on a chair, he was preaching in the Hindostani language, on the Christian religion and the errors of paganism. I heard his shrill voice, issuing from the depths of a formidable shirt-collar, eject these words at the crowd, which respectfully and attentively surrounded him—"You are idolaters! That block of stone which you worship has been taken from a quarry, it is no better than the stone of my house."

The reproaches called forth no murmur; the missionary was listened to immovably, but his dissertation was attended to, for every now and then one of the audience would put a question, to which the brave apostle replied as best he could. Perhaps we should be disposed to admire the courage of the missionary if the well-known tolerance of the Hindoos did not defraud him of all his merit; and it is this tolerance that most disheartens the missionary one of whom said to me, "Our labours are in vain; you can never convert a man who has sufficient conviction in his own religion to listen, without moving a muscle, to all the attacks you can make against it."

This passage must have seemed like a refreshing oasis of truth to Swamiji, and he copied it out for the benefit of friends. On the back of the second page there is the following notation in an unknown hand:

Written by Swami the 12th of February—after dining with Mr. and Mrs. Woodhead and Carl Von Bergen—Before leaving us in the afternoon, he gave



as one of his most wonderful efforts on spiritual things, "I say there is but one remedy for one too anxious for the future—To go down on his knees."—Mr. and Mrs. Norton came home with the girls in the evening. Swami left for Detroit Monday Feb. 13—1894.

The Parliament of Religions can perhaps be likened to a huge boulder dropped into the middle of shallow pond, causing upheaval on all sides. Even without Swamiji, the Parliament would have created no little confusion, for it was a shock to people to discover that Oriental priests were not on a level with grotesquely masked medicine men; but *with* Swamiji the effect was galvanizing and permanent. Something had happened in America that could never be talked away, although many an effort had been made to do just that. I have given a very brief and general survey of the religious climate of America during the last decade of the nineteenth century, and from this the reader may be able to deduce the various reactions to the Parliament. But the repercussions were even more pronounced than one might have expected, and I know of no better way to study them than through the newspapers of a typical American city, for in this way one can see the situation at first hand.

In "The Life of Swami Vivekananda" it is said: "In his tours the Swami visited all the larger cities of the Eastern and Mid-Western States," and the list of these cities includes St. Louis, Missouri. But Swamiji didn't go there. A thorough search has been made of the St. Louis newspapers of 1893 and 1894 and no mention has been found of his lectures. This is fairly conclusive evidence that St. Louis was not included in his itinerary, for wherever Swamiji went he made news, and it is unthinkable that the reporters of St. Louis would have missed him. One explanation of this lies in the fact that, according to contemporary reports, St. Louis was for unknown reasons "a wretchedly poor lecture town," and was no doubt shunned by lecture bureaus. However, the search of the St. Louis papers yielded more than this negative bit of information. Although Swamiji didn't lecture there, something was nevertheless afoot. St. Louis was not exempt from repercussions of the Parliament, and I think it will serve very well as our typical "case," particularly since Swamiji didn't go there, for one can see the waves more clearly at a distance from the splash that set them rolling.

*The St. Louis Republic* ran a column called "Sunday Thoughts on Morals and Manners." It was written by an anonymous clergyman and is perhaps one of the finest examples of the religious mentality of the Midwest that one could come upon.

On September 10, the eve of the opening of the Parliament, all was serene. Our clergyman with admirable and placid broadmindedness invoked the blessings of God upon the Congress which was to open the next day:

There ought to come out of the parliament an authoritative statement of the creeds of the world, brought down to date, and revised into as close harmony with the age as possible—of rare interest and importance to all students of comparative religion. Thus far we have been obliged to consult ancient authorities, or to grope after rare and sometimes inaccessible books, or else take the word of unfriendly critics, regarding the tenets of faiths beyond the Christian pale. It will be a gain worth the whole cost of the parliament to get from these faiths themselves their *raison d'être*. . . . Not that the faiths represented will fraternize. Far from it. They are essentially antagonistic and exclusive. Each claims all, or will accept nothing. But it is something to win the consent of their representatives to confer at all, and to make on a common platform an *exposé* of faith and conduct.



Our clergyman immediately followed these reflections with statistical proof, for the benefit of "those who imagine that Christianity is declining," that, on the contrary, it was growing by leaps and bounds and that "the Electric Age, on whose threshold we stand, will bring in the greater part of the whole human race [to the Christian roster]."

By the following Sunday our quiet and reasonable clergyman had become transformed. The generosity and calm with which he had settled down to hear what the religions beyond the Christian pale had to say for themselves were no longer anywhere in evidence. He was raging mad. He wrote:

The reports of the proceedings of the Parliament of Religions, which assembled in Chicago last Monday, and is now in session, show, as might have been expected, an insistence upon the part of all the speakers that each one is eternally and exclusively right. This is especially true of the representatives of the various Oriental faiths. Claims are easily made—often out of wind! When claims conflict, the courts test them. Christ lays down a practical rule—"By their fruits ye shall know them!" What are the fruits of the Oriental faith?

Take India. Polytheism prevails in the grossest forms. There are not less than 330,000,000 deities—enough to give each man, woman and child a god of his or her own. These are worshipped by impure rites, and exact on the part of their devotees self-torture, including in the case of widows burial or burning alive. The Hindoo is taught that these images are divine, and the heaviest judgments are denounced against him if he dares to suspect that they are nothing else than the elements which compose them. Caste is universal. Tyranny is immemorial. Woman is degraded. Polygamy abounds. Infanticide is common. Lying and theft are habitual. There is a want of tenderness toward and care for the sick, the poor and the dying. Ignorance and slavery and immorality compose the real trinity of Hindustan. These facts are undeniable.

"Sunday Thoughts" went on to give a brief outline of the faiths of Shintoism and Mohammedanism, which latter "came out of the distempered brain of the epileptic Mohammed." This was the clergyman who had a week before serenely welcomed the opportunity the Parliament offered for the study of comparative religions. This, indeed, was the Middle West in its true colors, the thin veneer of liberality thrown to the winds.

The following week, as the Parliament drew to a close our clergyman made it clear, lest anyone be misled, that nothing at all had been learned from the sessions other than that which he had predicted in the beginning:

Perhaps the chief value [of the Parliament] will be found in the demonstration given of the universality of the religious instinct. . . . There is a difference as abysmal as the space that divides heaven and earth between the ethics of Confucius, the dreamy mysticism of Buddha, the mist and moonshine of Theosophy, the dizzy polytheism of Brahmanism, the ancestor-worship of Shinto and the Christian system. All that there is of sweet and pure and good in the other faiths Christianity contains in a higher development, with a superadded wealth of distinctive tenets all its own. . . . We inscribe over it the old legend that was traced on the pillars of Hercules—*Ne plus ultra*.

Having settled this point, he takes another blow at Mohammedanism and then eases back to pursue the unruffled and platitudinous tone of his column.

But not for long. The Parliament continued to rankle him. On October 15, a large part of "Sunday Thoughts" was devoted to a comparison of the Christian ideal of womanhood with that of "the semi-civilized peoples of the Orient." He said:

The ethnic religions of China, India and Japan and the teachings of Islam are alike in making woman guilty of her sex and in giving her importance solely



as an annex to man. . . . She must be "protected," and to make and keep her willing to be "protected" she is dwarfed in mind, stunted in soul and prostituted to mere physical uses.

There is a great deal more in this same vein. The fact was that if any one wanted to stir up hostility against a culture or a religion he could not do better than suggest, or boldly state, that its treatment of woman was not all it should be. Never had American women been more conscious of themselves as *women* than in the "nineties." One woman writer, an exception among them, summed up the situation with humor and objectivity. In an article entitled "Women's Excitement Over 'Woman,'" which was published in *The Forum* of September 1893, she writes:

Woman is a species of high and heroic and emancipated womanhood, as serviceable to the sex for the purposes of rhetorical and impassioned address, as that gentle and vapid species, "the Fair Sex," is to men for after-dinner gallantry. She is wise with the wisdom of clubs and conventions and strong in her inheritance of instincts. There is nothing of which she is not sure, except that man was designed by nature to be her helper; and there is nothing which she will not do for the good of her own species, except do nothing. . . . She gets columns, nay pages, of the newspapers written by Her for Her. . . . The magazines bow to the pressure of Her personality, and review Her profoundly in the light of history and of every possible and impossible modern circumstance.

All the missionaries had to do in the "nineties" was to elaborate on the plight of the Hindu widow and they had the full force of outraged womanhood ranged beside them. It was a force to be reckoned with and one which few editors dared oppose. It is little wonder that Swamiji so often spoke of the Hindu ideal of womanhood as he toured America, for this aspect of Indian culture had received special attention. It had been dragged as far down into the mud as possible, where it was exploited for all it was worth.

In the same, October 15, "Sunday Thoughts" our clergyman makes use of another current device—one which served many of his kind in getting around the inconvenient fact of the intellectual and moral brilliance displayed by the Oriental delegates. "Sunday Thoughts" quotes the following item taken from a Chicago newspaper, *The Interior*: ". . . It is especially noticeable that most of the men who eulogized alien faiths were those who personally owed their intellectual quickening and their morals to contact with Christianity."

But how was one to deal with Swamiji in this respect? The author of "Sunday Thoughts" maintained a judicious silence on the subject, and one can only imagine the intensity of his indignation when on October 30, 1893, Prince Wolkonsky, the Russian delegate to the Parliament, who, as readers will remember, became a friend of Swamiji's, spoke in St. Louis on his impressions of America. In the course of his talk which appeared in *The St. Louis Republic* of October 31, Wolkonsky said with his customary frankness:

Don't ask every man: "To what church do you belong?" It is of no importance to you, but it is to him. The question is: Is he a man? Judge him by what he is. The great value of the religious congress was that these people learned to know a man. There was one man there the embodiment of spirituality! I do not know what church he belonged to. He thinks and acts and speaks as a Christian. But you say he is not a Christian. So much the better. You say he is a Buddhist. Better still. If you belong to a higher religion you should try to be better still than he.

There can be no doubt at all that Wolkonsky was referring to Swamiji, whom many had taken to be a Buddhist and over whom Chicago went wild.



It wasn't until February 18 that our clergyman had his answer ready. In one short paragraph he neatly dispensed with Swamiji once and for all. It was the perfect retort. One can almost see him standing aside to watch the effect of it.

One of the picturesque figures at the Chicago Parliament of Religions was a Hindoo monk named Vivi Kananda. He impressed his hearers as being a man of remarkable intelligence and vivacity. Many thought highly of a religion that could produce such a representative. Now it transpires that he is a graduate of Harvard University. That is where all his Nineteenth Century notions came from. He is indebted to Asia only for his color and his costume.

"Sunday Thoughts on Morals and Manners," however, does not represent the whole of religious thought in the Middle West. In their reaction to the Parliament of Religions not all the clergy resorted to a tempest of name-calling. The liberal section of the Christian church, which had already faced the fact that the Christian doctrine needed re-examination if it was to meet the requirements of the times, took a more serious and honest view of the situation. The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat*, a far more liberal paper than *The Republic*, reflected this attitude. On October 2, 1893, this paper covered the sermons given on the Sunday following the close of the Parliament in an article entitled, "Religious Provincialism," and subtitled, "It Has Received Its Death Blow in America, Says Dr. Snyder. The Parliament of Religions Discussed in Many Pulpits—Christianity Must Prove Its Superiority at the Bar of Public Intelligence."

The Parliament of Religions, there can be no doubt, had caused a ferment in the pulpits of America. Ministers ranted, reasoned and made resolutions regarding the necessity for self-examination. The storm extended as far as China, where, according to *The St. Louis Republic* of February 18, 1894, a religious Parliament, composed of the various missionary elements at work there, was held for "Mutual encouragement in the one great mission of Christian enlightenment."

But repercussions of this sort were not all: something else happened. A nation-wide religious revival of immense proportions took place. People suddenly began to rush to the churches in overwhelming numbers. According to *The St. Louis Republic* of January 21, 1894:

Revivals are being held everywhere, and the accessions to the church are gratifying results that prove the stability of the great truths taught by the prophets of old, and explained by Christ himself. . . . In New York, Boston, Philadelphia and even in San Francisco, the work is being carried on by religious workers with unusual success, and the new year promises to be as productive of good results as the years of 1857-58, when failure after failure created distrust in the permanence of things of earth. . . . The present generation watching the mighty strides of progress and struggling in the vortex of business cares, has been prone to adopt the negative creed of the Pantheist or to answer in the easy manner of the Agnostic; but now, in the time of trouble, the soul instinctively seeks its Maker and a tide of religious sentiment is rushing with an irresistible current, cleansing sinful lives and carrying away the barriers of sin. . . . Evangelists, zealous workers, are converting sinners everywhere and the light of the gospel, with incomparable radiance, is flooding the land.

On January 29, 1894, *The St. Louis Republic* again covered the religious revival in a front page dispatch from New York, headlined: "A Religious Wave Now Sweeping Over New York and Brooklyn." The article reads in part:

Church workers in New York think that a tidal wave of religion has been fairly launched in the United States and is fairly settling over New York and



Brooklyn. Revival meetings are being held in more than half of the churches in Brooklyn, and ministers in New York are joining the crusade. . . . Now from all parts of the country the news is coming of a religious awakening, promising to surpass in magnitude that one of the past. . . . Ministers from every portion of the City of Churches reported renewed interest; there seemed to be remarkable religious feeling. At last evangelists were engaged. Meetings have been held daily in half a dozen places. Hundreds and hundreds have risen for prayers, and thousands have promised to lead a better life. Last Sunday the new acquisitions to the membership of the churches of the city [Brooklyn] aggregated nearly 500. . . . Last week the Central Committee [a body made up of 17 clergymen of all denominations] decided that the movement had assumed such proportions that the body could not adequately take care of it, so the responsibility was delegated to the rightful authorities and notice was given that every pastor in the city must attend to those nearest his own doors. For three weeks meetings have been held in 13 churches every evening. During the day two meetings have been kept up. This week more churches will be opened every night and the day meetings will be continued. The attendance at all of these meetings has been phenomenal. Every church is crowded. People willingly stand for hours. "After meetings" draw more people than ever. They seem loath to leave the church. The revivals of to-day are conducted very differently from those of 10 years ago. The old way was to frighten sinners with terrible stories of an everlasting hell until they were driven, from sheer sense of fear, into the inquiry room, where "experience meetings" were depended on to do the rest. All is now changed. The all-powerful love of Jesus Christ is the appeal. God's love and forgiveness the theme.

The *St. Louis Daily Globe-Democrat* also covered the religious revival, devoting, on February 4, 1894, more than a full page to a statistical report of conversions in five states. The article consists almost solely of the names of the churches in 177 counties and the number of people who had recently joined them. I cannot imagine anyone sitting down to read this, and fortunately the essence of the whole story is told in the following headlines: "THE CHRISTIAN HARVEST. Astonishing Results of Religious Revivals in the West. Nearly Fifty-Four Thousand Conversions Since Last September. Churches Strengthened by Forty-Nine Thousand New Members. A Religious Awakening Almost Unprecedented in Extent and Power. Special Reports from Globe-Democrat Correspondents, Covering One Hundred and Seventy-Seven Counties in Missouri, Illinois, Kansas, Texas and Arkansas." I hope the reader will note that the figures given pertain to five states only, and I hope he will also note that the revival started in September, 1893—the month of the Parliament of Religions.

It is always a problem for historians and psychologists to explain what incites such phenomena as the sudden conversion of thousands upon thousands of people. Perhaps many forces are at work. In this particular case one can clearly see at least three. First, the obvious one: there was at the time a financial depression. Second: the Christian clergy had been pressed by the unexpected outcome of the Parliament to stir up Christian fervor. And third, and I believe most important: the sudden presence in America of one who embodied a spiritual power of the very highest order.

The most remarkable thing about this revival of 1893 was the unmistakable atmosphere of joy which pervaded it and which distinguished it from revivals of earlier times. A new note had been struck in the exhortations of the ministers. The cry of the clergy was no longer, as it had been in previous revivals, of the imminence of hell-fire and eternal damnation, which terrorized their parishioners into a hysterical surrender. Now the emphasis was upon God's infinite mercy, the glories of heaven. People were



not hounded to church; they poured in and sang their hymns with an irrepressible elation.

A reporter in *The St. Louis Republic* remarked upon this change of attitude from that of the old days in a lengthy article entitled "In The Olden Time." The article concludes with the following paragraph:

[The old time exhorter's] spirit is the distilled essence of vinegar mixed with the extracts of wormwood and gall and his dolorous voice sounds the funeral knell of his parishioners' hopes for happiness on earth. Happily, this class of exhorters is dying off rapidly and the penetrating rays of the true conception of God's mercy are penetrating the fastnesses and jungles in which the somber exhorter had so long held forth.

But aside from the change in the voice from the pulpit, there was a spontaneity in the response which took even the clergymen by storm and which makes it difficult not to believe that the advent of so great a prophet as Swamiji had stirred the spiritual forces latent in America, had awakened such a hunger for spiritual sustenance that men and women everywhere rushed eagerly to satisfy it, flocking in droves to the religion closest to them, in whose tradition they had been reared and with whose doctrines and forms they were familiar.

Swamiji's fame, as we know, had spread like wildfire through America both during and after the Parliament of Religions. Swami Abhedananda, who knew at first hand the American reaction to Swamiji, said in a lecture delivered on March 8, 1903, before the Vedanta Society of New York: "During the last decade there have been few pulpits in the United States which have not held preachers who have had something to say either for or against the teachings of the world-renowned Swami Vivekananda." Thus his message as well as that of the other Oriental delegates to the Parliament was spread far and wide. In one guise or another it became known to the people, and it cannot but be supposed that a surge of genuine religious feeling came as a result of this great current of fresh thought from the East.

Undoubtedly the revival had been fomented by the clergy as their answer to the Parliament of Religions; and no doubt the depression contributed to the intensity and extent of the people's response: such demonstrations of religious conversion had taken place before in America in times of trouble. But in the "nineties," when, on the whole, religious fervor was at an extremely low ebb and materialism was the fashion, something more than a financial depression was required to stimulate such wholehearted, joyous and far-flung religious enthusiasm.

The Parliament of Religions was in itself a stimulus to religious thought, and added to this, Swamiji had spoken through it to the whole of America with the full vigor of a spiritual power such as the world has rarely known. Such power moves silently and invisibly but surely, working on all levels, churning the surface into a foam, as well as altering forever the deep, hidden currents of the spiritual life of a whole people. It was the latter for which Swamiji had come, but the former was bound to take place; and when one thinks of it, it would seem more a matter for wonder if something of this sort had *not* taken place than it had. And we should, knowing Swamiji, have wondered about it all along.

## II

Having in mind this general picture of the religious situation in the Middle West following the Parliament of Religions, we can now turn to the story of Swamiji's visit to



Memphis, Tennessee. His first lecture in that city was given on Tuesday, January 16, and was reported in *The Appeal-Avalanche* of January 17, as follows:

### PLEA FOR TOLERANCE

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Swami Vive Kanada Instructs Christians on the Faith of the Hindus.

An audience of fair proportions gathered last night at the Auditorium to greet the celebrated Hindu monk, Swami Vive Kananda, in his lecture on Hinduism.

He was introduced in a brief but informing address by Judge R. J. Morgan, who gave a sketch of the development of the great Aryan race, from which development have come the Europeans and the Hindus alike, so tracing a racial kinship between the people of America and the speaker who was to address them.

The eminent Oriental was received with liberal applause, and heard with attentive interest throughout. He is a man of fine physical presence, with regular bronze features and form of fine proportions. He wore a robe of pink silk, fastened at the waist with a black sash, black trousers and about his head was gracefully draped a turban of yellow India silk. His delivery is very good, his use of English being perfect as regards choice of words and correctness of grammar and construction. The only inaccuracy of pronunciation is in the accenting of words at times upon a wrong syllable. Attentive listeners, however, probably lost few words, and their attention was well rewarded by an address full of original thought, information and broad wisdom. The address might fitly be called a plea for universal tolerance, illustrated by remarks concerning the religion of India. This spirit, he contended, the spirit of tolerance and love, is the central inspiration of all religions which are worthy, and this, he thinks, is the end to be secured by any form of faith.

His talk concerning Hinduism was not strictly circumstantial. His attempt was rather to give an analysis of its spirit than a story of its legends or a picture of its forms. He dwelt upon only a few of the distinctive credal or ritual features of his faith, but these he explained most clearly and perspicuously. He gave a vivid account of the mystical features of Hinduism, out of which the so often misinterpreted theory of reincarnation has grown. He explained how his religion ignored the differentiations of time, how, just as all men believe in the present and the future of the soul, so the faith of Brahma believes in its past. He made it clear, too, how his faith does not believe in "original sin," but bases all effort and aspiration on the belief of the perfectibility of humanity. Improvement and purification, he contends, must be based upon hope. The development of man is a return to an original perfection. This perfection must come through the practice of holiness and love. Here he showed how his own people have practiced these qualities, how India has been a land of refuge for the oppressed, citing the instance of the welcome given by the Hindus to the Jews when Titus sacked Jerusalem and destroyed the Temple.

In a graphic way he told that the Hindus do not lay much stress upon forms. Sometimes every member of the family will differ in their adherence to sects, but all will worship God by worshiping the spirit of love which is His central attribute. The Hindus, he says, hold that there is good in all religions, that all religions are embodiments of man's inspiration for holiness, and being such, all should be respected. He illustrated this by a citation from the Vedas, in which varied religions are symbolized as the differently formed vessels with which different men came to bring water from a spring. The forms of the vessels are many, but the water of truth is what all seek to fill their vessels with. God knows all forms of faith, he thinks, and will recognize his own name no matter what it is called, or what may be the fashion of the homage paid him.



The Hindus, he continued, worship the same God as the Christians. The Hindu trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva is merely an embodiment of God the creator, the preserver and the destroyer. That the three are considered three instead of one is simply a corruption due to the fact that general humanity must have its ethics made tangible. So likewise the material images of Hindu gods are simply symbols of divine qualities.

He told, in explanation of the Hindu doctrine of incarnation, the story of Krishna, who was born by immaculate conception and the story of whom greatly resembles the story of Jesus. The teaching of Krishna, he claims, is the doctrine of love for its own sake, and he expressed by the words "If the fear of the Lord is the beginning of religion, the love of God is its end."

His entire lecture cannot be sketched here, but it was a masterly appeal for brotherly love, and an eloquent defence of a beautiful faith. The conclusion was especially fine, when he acknowledged his readiness to accept Christ but must also bow to Krishna and to Buddha; and when, with a fine picture of the cruelty of civilization, he refused to hold Christ responsible for the crimes of progress.

This next lecture of which we have a record Swamiji gave on Saturday, January 20. It was reported in *The Appeal-Avalanche* the following day:

## MANNERS AND CUSTOMS IN INDIA

LECTURE BY SWAMI VIVE KANANDA,  
THE HINDOO MONK.

He Beautifully Describes the Tradition of  
His Native Country—A Cordial Welcome  
Has Been Extended the Hight Priest From  
India—He Lectures Again Tonight.

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, delivered a lecture at La Salette Academy yesterday afternoon. Owing to the pouring rain, a very small audience was present.

The subject discussed was "Manners and Customs in India." Vive Kananda is advancing theories of religious thought which find ready lodgment in the minds of some of the most advanced thinkers of this as well as other cities of America.

His theory is fatal to the orthodox belief, as taught by the Christian teachers. It has been the supreme effort of Christian America to enlighten the beclouded minds of heathen India, but it seems that the oriental splendor of Kananda's religion has eclipsed the beauty of the old-time Christianity, as taught by our parents, and will find a rich field in which to thrive in the minds of some of the better educated of America.

This is a day of "fads," and Kananda seems to be filling a "long felt want." He is, perhaps, one of the most learned men of his country, and possesses a wonderful amount of personal magnetism, and his hearers are charmed by his eloquence. While he is liberal in his views, he sees very little to admire in the orthodox Christianity. Kananda has received more marked attention in Memphis than almost any lecturer or minister that has ever visited the city.

If a missionary to India was as cordially received as the Hindoo monk is here the work of spreading the gospel of Christ in heathen lands would be well advanced. His lecture yesterday afternoon was an interesting one from a historic point of view. He is thoroughly familiar with the history and traditions of his native country, from very ancient history up to the present, and can describe the various places and objects of interest there with grace and ease.



During his lecture he was frequently interrupted by questions propounded by the ladies in the audience, and he answered all queries without the least hesitancy, except when one of the ladies asked a question with the purpose of drawing him out into a religious discussion. He refused to be led from the original subject of his discourse and informed the interrogator that at another time he would give his views on the "transmigration of the soul," etc.

In the course of his remarks he said that his grandfather was married when he was 3 years old and his father married at 18, but he had never married at all. A monk is not forbidden to marry, but if he takes a wife she becomes a monk with the same powers and privileges and occupies the same social position as her husband.

In answer to a question, he said there were no divorces in India for any cause, but if, after 14 years of married life, there were no children in the family, the husband was allowed to marry another with the wife's consent, but if she objected he could not marry again. His description of the ancient mausoleums and temples were beautiful beyond comparison, and goes to show that the ancients possessed scientific knowledge far superior to the most expert artisans of the present day.

Swami Vivi Kananda will appear at the Y.M.H.A. Hall to-night for the last time in this city. He is under contract with the "Slayton Lyceum Bureau," of Chicago, to fill a three-years' engagement in this country. He will leave tomorrow for Chicago, where he has an engagement for the night of the 25th.

It is quite unlikely that Swamiji made the remark attributed to him in the third paragraph above regarding the marriage of monks. This must have been an aberration on the part of the reporter, for, as is well known, if a sannyasin takes a wife he is considered by Hindu society to be a fallen person and beyond the pale. Probably what Swamiji said was that if a married man should renounce the world, then his wife would do likewise.

Swamiji's "theory fatal to the orthodox belief" was too much for one Reverend G. T. Sullivan whose Sunday sermon was given in *The Appeal-Avalanche* of January 22. The Reverend Mr. Sullivan took as his theme a Biblical text often cited at the Parliament of Religions: "For I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." The sermon need not be quoted here. Suffice it to say that the Reverend Sullivan characterized the Parliament of Religions as "the greatest fraud of the Nineteenth Century." It might also be mentioned that in the course of his lecture he displayed a confusion typical in Western thought regarding the doctrine of reincarnation. Swamiji often took pains to set this matter straight, for it was, and perhaps still is, a stumbling block to the West's understanding of Eastern religions. Out of his fund of current misinformation, the Reverend Mr. Sullivan explained:

Another feature of the world's religion is, it does not recognize the immortality of man. Transmigration of the soul is taught; that is, our soul, they say, will go out into some animal, perhaps, or some other creature. . . . I would rather never to have lived to think my soul would go into an ox. I had rather not live at all than to die and be annihilated. Better be cast into the sea with a millstone about your neck than to be a materialist.

On Sunday the twenty-second Swamiji held a discussion in the parlors of La Salette Academy, where he lived during his stay in Memphis and where he also lectured, as has been seen, on January 20. The reporter from *The Appeal-Avalanche* was evidently deeply appreciative of Swamiji, and fortunately he was present at this meeting, for he gives us one of our rare and invaluable close-range word pictures of him;



## A TALK WITH THE HINDOO MONK

### HE THINKS AMERICANS ARE MATERIA- LISTS AND TELLS WHY

His Mission to This Country Is Not to Gain  
Converts to His Faith, But to Raise Funds  
for a College in His Native Land—His  
Religion.

Swami Vive Kananda, the Hindoo monk, whose lectures have attracted marked attention during his sojourn here, has been misunderstood, insomuch as the object of his visit to America is concerned. He is here not to propagate the doctrines of any religion of India and make converts to the same, but to raise the money wherewith to establish a polytechnic institution in his native land that shall be the nucleus around which he hopes to build an educational system that shall tend to develop the minds of his people along lines of thought to which, owing chiefly to their religious beliefs, they have been strangers heretofore.

Kananda has no quarrel with the faith of the people of the Western world, as he calls Americans. While he sees much in their mode of life, their social and religious institutions, to disagree with, he does not criticise them unless called upon to do so. He is here rather to cull from American soil ideas and natural aid that will advance his people. As a conversationalist Kananda is very agreeable. Modest in his demeanor, he is inclined to be diffident until aroused by some query that affects his mission, his religion or his people. Then he is assertive, but never aggressive. Perhaps there is at times a tinge of irony, felt rather than seen, in his manner when contrasting the manners and customs of his people with those of the West, but being a gentleman by instinct, a scholar by training and a monk by choice, he is always courteous and never impatient.

If there has been anything of the irascible in his nature it would surely have been developed last evening when, for an hour or more, he was subjected to a cross-fire of interrogatories that kept him ever on the alert and frequently on the defensive. The conversation was participated in by a number of those who have become interested in the work and his mission since he arrived in Memphis, among those present being a representative of The Appeal-Avalanche. Kananda has said much in behalf of his people and their religion and much concerning Americans and the doctrines of Christianity, and it was to ascertain something of the ground upon which he bases his claims for the Hindoo belief and to settle points not made clear by his discourses that the monk was induced to discuss certain interesting topics.

Kananda is diplomatic to a marked degree. While ever ready to reply to any question propounded him, he is, nevertheless, capable of amusing those that he does not see fit to enter into conversation in detail in a way that precludes further discussion, while not committing himself or offending his interrogator. He is remarkably well versed upon religious, scientific and metaphysical literature, not only of his own country but of the world as well, and is capable, by reason of his versatility, of maintaining himself in any position in which circumstances may cast his lot. There is throughout his bearing and conversation a certain child-like simplicity of manner that enlists one's sympathy, and convinces one of the sincerity of the man's utterances before he begins to speak.

According to Kananda, the spiritual life ought to be developed at any cost, and it is to the attainment of the spiritual rather than the material that his religion tends.



"I am a monk," he said, as he sat in the parlors of La Sallette Academy, which is his home while in Memphis, "and not a priest. When at home I travel from place to place, teaching the people of the villages and towns through which I pass. I am dependent upon them for my sustenance, as I am not allowed to touch money.

"I was born," he continued, in answer to a question, "in Bengal and became a monk and a celibate from choice. At my birth my father had a horoscope taken of my life, but would never tell me what it was. Some years ago, when I visited my home, my father having died, I came across the chart among some papers in my mother's possession and saw from it that I was destined to become a wanderer on the face of the earth."

There was a touch of pathos in the speaker's voice and a murmur of sympathy ran around the group of listeners. Kananda knocked the ashes from his cigar and was silent for a space.

Presently some one asked:

"If your religion is all that you claim it is, if it is the only true faith, how is it that your people are not more advanced in civilization than they are? Why has it not elevated them among the nations of the world?"

"Because that is not the sphere of any religion," replied the Hindoo gravely. "My people are the most moral in the world, or quite as much as any other race. They are more considerate of their fellow man's rights, and even those of dumb animals, but they are not materialists. No religion has ever advanced the thought or inspiration of a nation or people. In fact, no great achievement has ever been attained in the history of the world that religion has not retarded. Your boasted Christianity has not proven an exception in this respect. Your Darwins, your Mills, your Humes, have never received the endorsement of your prelates. Why, then, criticize my religion on this account?"

"I would not give a fig for a faith that does not tend to elevate mankind's lot on earth as well as his spiritual condition," said one of the group, "and therein I am not prepared to admit the correctness of your statements. Christianity has founded colleges, hospitals and raised the degenerate. It has elevated the downcast and helped its followers to live."

"You are right there to a certain extent," replied the monk calmly, "and yet it is not shown that these things are directly the result of your Christianity. There are many causes operating in the West to produce these results.

"Religious thought should be directed to developing man's spiritual side. Science, art, learning and metaphysical research all have their proper functions in life, but if you seek to blend them, you destroy their individual characteristics until, in time, you eliminate the spiritual, for instance, from the religious altogether. You Americans worship what? The dollar. In the mad rush for gold, you forget the spiritual until you have become a nation of materialists. Even your preachers and churches are tainted with the all-pervading desire. Show me one in the history of your peoples, who has led the spiritual lives that those whom I can name at home have done. Where are those who, when death comes, could say, 'O Brother Death, I welcome thee.' Your religion helps you to build Ferris wheels and Eiffel towers, but does it aid you in the development of your inner lives?"

The monk spoke earnestly, and his voice, rich and well modulated, came through the dusk that pervaded the apartment, half-sadly, half-accusingly. There was something of the weird in the comments of this stranger from a land whose history dates back 6,000 years upon the civilization of Nineteenth Century America.

"But, in pursuing the spiritual, you lose sight of the demands of the present," said some one. "Your doctrine does not help men to live."



"It helps them to die," was the answer.

"We are sure of the present."

"You are sure of nothing."

"The aim of the ideal religion should be to help one to live and to prepare one to die at the same time."

"Exactly," said the Hindoo, quickly, "and it is that which we are seeking to attain. I believe that the Hindoo faith has developed the spiritual in its devotees at the expense of the material, and I think that in the Western world the contrary is true. By uniting the materialism of the West with the spiritualism of the East I believe much can be accomplished. It may be that in the attempt the Hindoo faith will lose much of its individuality."

"Would not the entire social system of India have to be revolutionized to do what you hope to do?"

"Yes, probably, still the religion would remain unimpaired."

The conversation here turned upon the form of worship of the Hindoos, and Kananda gave some interesting information on this subject. There are agnostics and atheists in India as well as elsewhere. "Realization" is the one thing essential in the lives of the followers of Brahma. Faith is not necessary. Theosophy is a subject with which Kananda is not versed, nor is it a part of his creed unless he chooses to make it so. It is more of a separate study. Kananda never met Mme. Blavatsky, but has met Col. Olcott, of the American Theosophical Society. He is also acquainted with Annie Besant. Speaking of the "fakirs" of India, the famous jugglers or musicians [magicians?], whose feats have made for them a world-wide reputation, Kananda told of a few episodes that had come within his observation and which almost surpass belief.

"Five months ago," he said, when questioned on this subject, "or just one month before I left India to come to this country, I happened in company in a caravan, or party of 25, to sojourn for a space in a city in the interior. While there we learned of the marvelous work of one of these itinerant magicians and had him brought before us. He told us he would produce for us any article we desired. We stripped him, at his request, until he was quite naked and placed him in the corner of the room. I threw my traveling blanket about him and then we called upon him to do as he had promised. He asked what we should like, and I asked for a bunch of California grapes, and straightway the fellow brought them forth from under his blanket. Oranges and other fruit were produced, and finally great dishes of steaming rice."

Continuing, the monk said he believed in the existence of a "sixth sense" and in telepathy. He offered no explanation of the feats of the fakirs, merely saying that they were very wonderful. The subject of idols came up and the monk said that idols formed a part of his religion insomuch as the symbol is concerned.

"What do you worship?" said the monk, "what is your idea of God?"

"The spirit," said a lady quietly.

"What is the spirit? Do you Protestants worship the words of the Bible or something beyond? We worship the God through the idol."

"That is, you attain the subjective through the objective," said a gentleman who had listened attentively to the words of the stranger.

"Yes, that is it," said the monk, gratefully.

Vive Kananda discussed further in the same strain until the call terminated as the hour for the Hindoo's lecture approached.

Vive Kananda goes to Chicago today.



That night Swamiji gave his last and, according to *The Appeal-Avalanche*, his most stirring talk. It is interesting to note that although Swamiji was attempting to earn money by lecturing, it was evidently impossible for him not to give away most of what he earned even before it touched his hands. Not only in Memphis, but in other towns, notably Boston, we see him lecturing for the benefit of various local charities. His farewell lecture in Memphis was reported upon as follows:

## GAVE HIS FAREWELL LECTURE

### SWAMI VIVE KANANDA MAKES THE GRANDEST EFFORT OF HIS LIFE.

“Comparative Theology” Was the Subject, and He Handled it in a Masterful Manner. The Discourse Was Interspersed With Eloquence and Logic.

“Comparative Theology” was the subject of a discourse last night by Swami Vive Kananda at the Young Men’s Hebrew Association Hall. It was the blue-ribbon lecture of the series, and no doubt increased the general admiration the people of this city entertain for the learned gentleman.

Heretofore Vive Kananda has lectured for the benefit of one charity-worthy object or another, and it can be safely said that he has rendered them material aid. Last night, however, he lectured for his own benefit. The lecture was planned and sustained by Mr. Hu L. Brinkley, one of Vive Kananda’s warmest friends and most ardent admirers. In the neighborhood of two hundred gathered at the hall last night to hear the eminent Easterner for the last time in this city.

The first question the speaker asserted in connection with the subject was: “Can there be such a distinction between religions as their creeds would imply?”

He asserted that no such differences existed now, and he retraced the line of progress made by all religions and brought it back to the present day. He showed that such variance of opinion must of necessity have existed with primitive man in regard to the idea of God, but that as the world advanced step by step in a moral and intellectual way, the distinctions became more and more indistinct, until finally it had faded away entirely, and now there was one all-prevalent doctrine—that of an absolute existence.

“No savage,” said the speaker, “can be found who does not believe in some kind of a god.

“Modern science does not say whether it looks upon this as a revelation or not. Love among savage nations is not very strong. They live in terror. To their superstitious imaginations is pictured some malignant spirit, before the thought of which they quake in fear and terror. Whatever he likes he thinks will please the evil spirit. What will pacify him he thinks will appease the wrath of the spirit. To this end he labors ever against his fellow-savage.”

The speaker went on to show by historical facts that the savage man went from ancestral worship to the worship of elephants, and later, to gods, such as the God of Thunder and Storms. Then the religion of the world was polytheism. “The beauty of the sunrise, the grandeur of the sunset, the mystifying appearance of the star-bedecked skies and the weirdness of thunder and lightning impressed primitive man with a force that he could not explain, and suggested the idea of a higher and more powerful being controlling the infinities that flocked before his gaze,” said Vive Kananda.



Then came another period—the period of monotheism. All the gods disappeared and blended into one, the God of Gods, the ruler of the universe. Then the speaker traced the Aryan race up to that period, where they said: “We live and move in God. He is motion.” Then there came another period known to metaphysics as the “period of Pantheism.” This race rejected Polytheism and Monotheism, and the idea that God was the universe, and said “the soul of my soul is the only true existence. My nature is my existence and will expand to me.”

Vive Kananda then took up Buddhism. He said that they neither asserted or denied the existence of a God. Buddha would simply say, when his counsel was sought: “You see misery. Then try to lessen it.” To a Buddhist misery is ever present, and society measures the scope of his existence. Mohammedans, he said, believed in the Old Testament of the Hindoo [Hebrew?] and the New Testament of the Christian. They do not like the Christians, for they say they are heretics and teach man-worship. Mohammed ever forbade his followers having a picture of himself.

“The next question that arises,” said he, “are all these religions true or are some of them true and some of them false? They have all reached one conclusion, that of an absolute and infinite existence. Unity is the object of religion. The multiple of phenomena that is seen at every hand, is only the infinite variety of unity. An analysis of religion shows that man does not travel from fallacy to truth, but from a lower truth to a higher truth.

“A man brings in a coat to a lot of people. Some say the coat does not fit them. Well, you get out; you can't have a coat. Ask one Christian minister what is the matter with all the other sects that are opposed to his doctrines and dogmas, and he will answer: ‘Oh, they're not Christians.’ But we have better instruction than these. Our own natures, love and science—they teach us better. Like the eddies to a river, take them away and stagnation follows. Kill the difference in opinions, and it is the death of thought. Motion is necessity. Thought is the motion of the mind, and when that ceases death begins.

“If you put a simple molecule of air in the bottom of a glass of water it at once begins a struggle to join the infinite atmosphere above. So it is with the soul. It is struggling to regain its pure nature and to free itself from this material body. It wants to regain its own infinite expansion. This is everywhere the same. Among Christians, Buddhists, Mohammedans, agnostic or priest, the soul is struggling. A river flows a thousand miles down the circuitous mountain side to where it joins the seas and a man is standing there to tell it to go back and start anew and assume a more direct course. That man is a fool. You are a river that flows from the heights of Zion. I flow from the lofty peaks of the Himalayas. I don't say to you, go back and come down as I did, you're wrong. That is more wrong than foolish. Stick to your beliefs. The truth is never lost. Books may perish, nations may go down in a crash, but the truth is preserved and is taken up by some man and handed back to society, which proves a grand and continuous revelation of God.”

On Monday, after less than a week in Memphis, during which short time perhaps hundreds of people had come into contact with Swamiji and, knowingly or unknowingly, had received his blessings, he left for Chicago.

‘First, let us be Gods, and then help others to be Gods, “Be and make”, let this be our motto.’

—Swami Vivekananda



# LOCAL FACTORS IN INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

BY DR. V. M. APTE

*(Continued from the June issue)*

## THE VAST SIZE

The vast dimensions of India have proved to be both a blessing and a curse. They have been a blessing in the sense that by providing ample space and almost inexhaustible natural resources, they left no room (in ancient times at least) for unhealthy competitive struggles among the inhabitants. In the early epochs (in the Vedic age, for example) the almost unlimited prospect permitted the easy exercise of the principle of 'live and let live', not only on the physical plane but also on the social, cultural, and religious planes; not only on the material but also on the spiritual plane. It thus induced early that unique spirit of religious toleration which should be the envy of the votaries of many other religions, a spirit testified to by the ubiquitous edicts of Ashoka, the magnanimous Buddhist emperor. This tolerant attitude towards outside religions (the religions of the foreigners) and towards the autochthonous sects and creeds went on gathering strength till it may be said to be bred in the bone of the Hindus. The unlimited resources of the country, the enjoyment of which was comparatively free from foreign interference not only kept the wolf from the door but also dimmed 'the call of the flesh' and encouraged the unhindered evolution of that remarkable poetic, ritualistic, religious, and philosophical thought and literature of the Vedic age, which are the wonder of the world. But these vast dimensions have not proved to be an unmixed blessing. They have encouraged, at least accommodated, fissiparous tendencies and isolationist attitudes in all spheres of life, owing to the absence of the binding force of mutual interdependence. The isolation or separation of one social or religious

group from another was not only easy but also unattended by any inconvenience or violation of humanitarian principles that would shock other groups and sects and bind them into unity. The ambitions of even the greatest in the land were circumscribed. The chauvinism, bellicosity, or jingoism of an Indian ruler did not necessarily lead him to foreign conquest, as the ample territorial prospect within India itself offered adequate scope to his militaristic aspirations. In the southern peninsula, although the extensive coastline on the east and west made the inhabitants of those regions skilled sailors, the tremendous expanse of the sea on either side poured cold water over the dream of an overseas empire, if ever an Indian sea lord dared to nurse it, because the stability of colonial outposts on the African coast and hinterland in the West and in Indo-China or the East Indies in the East was a very doubtful proposition owing to the formidable water-barrier. Only cultural conquests became possible, therefore, through the development of trade and commerce, culminating in peaceful colonization, as a result of individual enterprise only. Political unity is difficult (if not impossible) in a country of the vast size of India. Why, it has proved difficult even separately inside the two broad divisions of India—North India and South India—because of the vast area covered by each of these two divisions. And thus we come to a consideration of the natural divisions of India caused by such peculiar topographical features, as mountains, plateaus, large rivers, forests, and deserts.

## THE NATURAL DIVISIONS OF INDIA

India is divided into two broad regions,



popularly known as North India (or Hindustan) and South India. The almost continuously extending basins of the three great rivers, the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra, with their various affluents and tributaries, form the great plain of Hindustan which is cut off from the peninsular southern region by the two parallel ranges of the Vindhya and the Satpura mountains which extend from east to west, across almost the entire breadth of the peninsular plateau lying south of them—a geographical fact having repercussions not only on the political history but also on the racial and cultural patterns of these two regions which have run on somewhat different lines. North India is further subdivided into two zones. One is the North-west India or the Basin of the Indus with its affluents, bounded on the north and west by the hilly districts of Kashmir and Baluchistan and losing itself into the desert of Rajputana in the south. This region is fertile only in the vicinity of the Indus and some of its tributaries where the soil can be brought under cultivation by means of river-irrigation. The other is the area of the continuously extending basins of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra with their affluents. This alluvial tract constitutes the main part of North India and is thickly populated. The hinterland is dominated in the north by the Himalayas, which feed the mighty rivers whose fertilizing operations have virtually moulded the life of the people living within their orbits. It is interesting to note further, that even within these zones, peculiar topographical features like the barriers of mountain ranges, high plateaus, and dense forests have created insular territorial units, each with its own regional and historical bias. Thus in the mountainous regions and neighbouring hilly areas of the north-west, there are sequestered valleys that have afforded asylums to hardy tribes who have maintained their independence in defiance of the invading forces of Alexander and the Arabs and have been leading their own separate existence from time immemorial. Similarly, the glens and glades (respectively)

of the hills and forests of the Central Indian Plateau from Bundelkhand to Chota Nagpur have provided almost inaccessible sanctuaries to primitive tribes who have escaped subjugation by their more powerful and civilized neighbours of the Indo-Gangetic plains. The exceedingly elevated plateaus of Kashmir, Nepal, and Shillong have so isolated these regions from the rest of India that their detached political history is more like an appendix than an integral part of the political history of India. Further, the barriers and dividing lines formed by mountains, plateaus, desert wastes, large rivers, and forests have affected India's political destiny by splitting her up into numerous states more often than not in conflict with one another. Only occasionally was one of them able to subjugate the others and found an empire like the Mauryan empire of Chandragupta and Ashoka, which lasted from 315-178 B.C., and later the Mogul and Maratha empires in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But even these empires could not establish their jurisdiction effectively over the whole continent. Whenever the autocratic monarchical power holding together such an empire waned at the centre, the rivalries of the component states started afresh. Every such disintegration with its aftermath of chaos provided a golden opportunity to any outside colonial power. The British, for example, availed themselves of such a chaos that prevailed after the dissolution of the Mogul Empire and established their suzerainty over the whole country.

#### THE RIVERS

How important a part is played by great rivers in shaping the economic and cultural life of a region is seen from the case of North India, the prosperity of which is ensured by the mighty rivers—the Indus, the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra—that flow from the high mountains covered with perpetual snow. They have provided excellent highways of communication owing to their long and leisurely courses through the broad valleys; and by their perennial supply of water, have been



instrumental in bringing one-fifth of the land in India under cultivation through irrigation, unaffected by the vagaries of the monsoon. No wonder, important centres of civilization and culture should have developed on the banks of these three great rivers. In South India, not favoured with such high snow-covered mountains, irrigation has to be carried on by means of tanks or artificial reservoirs, which unfortunately have to be cleared of silt, now and again. Irrigation, which encourages providence and circumspection, trains people in the arts of peace and communal life and develops a spirit of self-sacrifice for the common good, is at once the hall-mark and promoting instrument of civilization. It has played a vital role in the early civilizations of Egypt, Mesopotamia, and China also. In other ways too the rivers of India have left their mark (in historic and prehistoric times) in the spheres of religion, literature, and art. The Ganges and the Jumna, as well as the Nerbudda and the Godavari have been for long revered to the point of deification, by a people grateful for their never-failing supply of pure water. From all parts of India, pilgrims flock to the sacred source of 'Mother Ganges' and the scene of the 'sisterly embrace' (confluence) of the Ganges and the Jumna for a bath which is believed not only to cleanse the body but also to purify the soul. In pre-historic times, too, the 'Seven Rivers' (*sapta-sindhavḥ*) in the aggregate and individually, as also certain rivers like the Sarasvati, have been invoked as deities (e.g. in the hymns of the *Rig-Veda*). Countless prayers and devotional poems have been addressed to the holy rivers in Indian literature. In the field of art (to take one example), the enchanting view of the lovely curves of the Jhelum river, as seen from the top of the famous hill 'Takht-i-Suliman', at the foot of which the town of Srinagar nestles snugly, is credited by connoisseurs with having influenced the peculiar design of Kashmir art. Against these beneficent aspects must be set down the maleficent aspect also of these rivers (and all rivers generally). Capricious floods work havoc on

the plains and cause the silting of harbours and the formation of new islands, which, in their turn, alter the fluvial course of the rivers. Thus are villages and even prosperous towns damaged and sometimes completely washed off. Indian history has a doleful tale to tell of the ruination of many a city, situated within a few miles of the banks of the Indus and the Ganges and their tributaries. The cases of Delhi and Patna (the ancient Pātali-putra) commanding key situations come easily to our mind in this connection. The towns of Gujerat in the Punjab, Kanauj (the ancient Kānyakubja), a mighty legendary city of Aryan civilization, in ancient India—now a mass of ruins about four miles from the Ganges—and the ancient Hastināpura, are victims of such river caprice.

#### THE CLIMATE

The importance of climate derives from its unalterable character. Man can struggle against and partially overcome the obstacles presented by other physical features. Tunnels can be bored through mountains; a comparatively barren tract of land can be made cultivable by irrigation, manures, and tractors; even rivers can be made to change their courses; but with all his scientific progress, man is helpless against climate. History tells us that Alexander the Great, who had almost realized his ambition to conquer the (then known) world, could penetrate into India only as far as the Punjab, where his soldiers, already battle-scarred, were so completely unnerved by the heat and the cyclonic monsoon winds of the south-west that they refused to march forward to the Ganges. Medical authorities testify that the scourge of malaria undermined the Roman empire more effectively than any other single factor. Napoleon, the hero of a hundred campaigns, who would not admit the impossibility of anything, found the climate of Russia impossible and had to retreat from Moscow in 1812. The climatic conditions of the countries of some Asiatic neighbours explain the motive and incentive of their invasions of India. The rather excep-



tionally dry eras of climatic cycles in the past centuries have caused scarcity of food in Central Asia, as evidenced by the level of salt lakes, the growth of old trees, and the ruins. No wonder, the nomads of the Central Asian deserts were driven to the overrunning of their more lucky neighbouring tracts, such as the Punjab, for example, in the seventh century A.D. The same is the explanation of the lightning forays into the preserves of their neighbours made earlier by the Huns in the fifth century and later by Genghis Khan in A.D. 1200. It is interesting to note in this connection that even the incursions of the Moguls after A.D. 1500 coincided with a period of the extreme aridity of the deserts. Climate determines the supply of the materials needed for the vital necessities of life, namely food, clothing, and shelter.

It is undeniable that the agricultural character of India is due mainly to its physical features, such as its being a monsoon country (like most of China) from the climatic point of view, its size, the nature of its soil, etc. In the monsoon region, the people have the blessings of the rains coming in summer, when most needed for cultivation, the south-west monsoon in India, having greater utility in this connection than any other seasonal winds. The result is that millet and rice—the staple foods in such a climate—can be harvested in abundant quantities, solving practically the whole problem of food supply. No wonder, the monsoon countries are generally densely populated. In the sub-tropical regions, however, the rainfall occurs in the winter, when it is hardly of any use to the crops. On the debit side of the monsoon regions, however, must be reckoned their liability to famines, consequent on the failure of the rains—their deficiency, excess, or untimeliness—when disaster ensues, since people are dependent on agriculture.

The agricultural and pastoral pursuits of the early Aryan settlers in India have, in their turn, affected the course of their history and the history of India—social and political—by encouraging and consolidating the patriarchal

system, which, as the structural foundation of the smallest unit of society, the family, had its counterpart in the monarchical character of the government of the larger unit of society, the tribe. At the bottom was the village, a number of villages formed a settlement and an aggregate of settlements constituted the political unit called 'the tribe'. The peaceful life of agricultural and pastoral pursuits to which the Aryan community had settled down was ideally conducive to the tendency of vocations to become hereditary and thus along with other factors helped to harden the class system which the Aryans brought with them into India into the rigid system of castes. That the caste system, with its appendage of the system of four *Āshramas* (orders or stages of the life of an individual), has affected the political destiny of Hindu India is a point that need not be laboured. Fighting was the duty only of the 'Kṣatriya' (or the military) caste from whom the members of the army were drawn and when they were defeated in battle, the whole kingdom fell into the hands of the victor. Ploughshares were rarely turned into swords; the normal life of the masses, in the autonomous village system which could thrive only in an agricultural country, was not, as a rule, disturbed; the priests remained pre-occupied with their ritual and studious routine and spiritual interests. The *Shūdras* went on serving and the vast number of ascetics and monks—the adherents of the fourth (*Sannyāsa*) *Āshrama*—did not turn a hair, war or no war. A hot climate is not conducive to the zeal, restless physical energy, and urge for material advancement by scientific inventions as in the West.<sup>4</sup> That 'mother of invention', necessity, did not exist in India, because beneficent nature provided the inhabitants with all the necessities of life such as food and clothing;

<sup>4</sup> In spite of the enervation (not unreasonably supposed to be) induced by a tropical climate, sections of Indians like the Sikhs, the Marathas, and the Rajputs have earned a reputation in history as brave and sturdy fighters. The cause of the subjugation of Indians must, therefore, be traced to factors other than the so-called lack of physical strength. (See section on 'Isolation', second para, above.)



and normal life did not involve a struggle with the forces of nature such as a trying climate, inclement weather, cyclones, or earthquakes. Vegetarianism came naturally to most Indians, because there was a large variety of delicious fruits and greens and roots in enormous quantity to suit all tastes, and because meat and fish were neither indispensable for nourishment nor could keep well in the hot climate. Neither was killing of animals for their furs called for. Vegetarianism induces a mild temper, though it does not sap physical strength and courage. What, however, was a handicap to advancement on the material plane was a blessing in the field of religion.

#### THE FLORA

In Vedic literature, plants, herbs, and trees figure as divinities for their healing qualities and other beneficent uses. There is one entire hymn in the *Rig-Veda* devoted to the praise of the 'Forest' (*Aranyāni*). Nature has always been worshipped in Vedic and post-Vedic literature in its benign and beautiful as well as in its grand and terrific aspects. The flora has not only inspired India's poetry, but has coloured its religion also. In the hot climate of India shady trees like the Nyagrodha or Vaṭa (the banyan or fig-tree) and the Pippala (*ficus religiosa*) or the celebrated Bo-tree, with their branches rooting themselves over large areas and thus growing upwards as well as downwards, are great boons and as such came early to be almost deified in all the great religions that arose on Indian soil. (The 'tree-genius' incarnation of the Buddha may be noted in this connection.) Although the beauties of nature have inspired poets in all countries and flowers have entered into the ritual of many a religion, there is something unique in the Indian appreciation of flora and nature in general. It is not just 'the communion of nature with man' in Indian poetry; trees and plants are living entities with human feelings, sensibilities, and sensitivities. In the sphere of art, the luxuriant richness of the vegetation seems to have suggested many an art-form to the artists and the architects, e.g.

the lofty palms seem to have been recreated in the lofty and graceful pillars and minarets of India.

#### THE FAUNA

Among the fauna, the cow claims our attention first. Even in the earliest age (that of the *Rig-Veda*) when the eating of flesh was common and that of beef was not forbidden, the cow—the symbol of plenty—was marked out as *aghnya* ('not to be slain', as far as possible). The cow who played such a vital part in the agricultural and pastoral life of the people in a monsoon country like India, very naturally gathered around herself a halo of divine splendour. The reverence of the Hindus for the cow may be said to have made history in the sense that it led to the complete nonplussing on the battle-field of the soldiers of the Vijayanagar kingdom in the South, at the sight of a line of cows tied up together to form a covering front-line for the soldiers of the enemy marching behind them.

The snake is another animal that has attained to divine honours in India. Whether the pre-Aryan cult of serpent-worship was taken over by the Aryans from the original inhabitants or whether they merely developed it after coming to India (the latter assumption finds support in the serpent form in which Vṛitra, the wily leader of the forces of Darkness, is envisaged in the *Rig-Veda*), there are (it must be recognized) ingredients in the make-up of the serpent, impressive enough to elevate it to semi-divine status. For example, its mysterious movements, its almost magic power of rejuvenation by casting off its slough and its deadly venom are awe-inspiring enough to explain such a consummation.

#### THE MINERALS

With respect to iron ores and coal (the easy availability in large quantities whereof is a great incentive to industrial development, as in Europe and America) India is not very fortunate. These important minerals lie hidden in the surrounding mountains like the Himalayas or in the tablelands of the penin-



sula. Coal, for example, is found in the Gondwana rocks and deep down in the Tertiary rocks in the area from Kashmir to Sind and in Assam. Naturally there was not much advance in manufactures, commerce, mining, and transportation, until coal-mining and metal-smelting were developed much later under British rule, simultaneously with the introduction of railways and the construction of good roads. As regards the other type of minerals—the precious stones—India was once a veritable 'gold mine'. Not only gold, but diamonds, rubies, and sapphires also abounded. This physical feature, namely the 'mineral wealth' of precious stones has affected the course of Indian history by tempting many a foreign invader (such as Mahmud of Ghazni) and by inspiring early explorers like Columbus and Vasco de Gama—the latter alone succeeding in making his epoch-making landing at Calicut in 1498 and inaugurating, as it were, the sea-route from Europe to India, with far-reaching consequences for the subsequent history of India. Marble and (a very different category of precious finds) ivory are plentiful and have left their mark in the innumerable magnificent edifices and superb temples with beautiful decorations that are found (each in its own isolated grandeur) throughout the length and

breadth of India. Here is a clear instance of how physical features make all the difference in the world, in the field of architecture. The paucity of good building-stone is responsible for the comparatively poor architecture of Babylon, whereas the architecture of India, with its rock-cut caves and lovely temples and mausoleums (the most famous among the latter—the Taj Mahal of Agra—is one of the wonders of the world) may be said to have grown out of the very soil of India.

#### EPILOGUE

We close this survey by adding one important qualification to our estimate of the influence of physical features on history—a qualification valid only for modern times. Man is engaged unceasingly in bending nature to his will but his efforts are bearing appreciable fruit only in modern times. Elemental forces, one by one, are being conquered and harnessed to the service of man. Distances are being well-nigh annihilated and we may truly exclaim today 'It is a small, small world indeed!' Efforts are being made to master physical features, lest they should master us. It is difficult to predict when a complete mastery will be achieved or whether it will be achieved at all.

(Concluded)

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### NOTES AND COMMENTS

'Meditation' by Swami Vivekananda is, like 'Concentration' published in the April issue, a transcription by Ida Ansell from her imperfect stenographic notes. The portions

within square brackets have been supplied by the Editor of the *Vedanta and the West*, by whose courtesy the article is reproduced in this issue.

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### REVIEWS AND NOTICES

ESSAY IN POLITICS. BY SCOTT BUCHANAN. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N.Y., U.S.A. Pages 250. Price \$ 3.75.

In this compact volume, the author makes a

vivid analysis of the current crisis in democracy. Whether the conception of the government of the people, by the people, and for the people can long endure in the face of the threatening shadows of communism, capitalism, and fascism is the supreme



question which now confronts every lover of political liberty. The principles of human quality and the consent of the governed which inspired the visions of the pioneers of the 18th-century revolutionary movements are now being questioned by new and challenging ideologies.

The author takes the reader easily over the whole ground of political thought in relation to the concept of democracy, and he is on sure ground when he holds that of fascism, communism, and democracy there is no way for 'an honest human being' either to accept or reject any one or any combination of them. His contention is equally sound when he makes out that our consent to the traditional visions of democracy is being jeopardized by the growing acquiescence to many unrecognized governments like private and quasi-public corporations of various types. He also argues cogently that we must recognize those invisible governments and give them the federal republican forms of government, thereby assuring a new political liberty through the new ways of consent. His correct interpretation of Gandhi's non-cooperation movement will be read with interest by Indian readers, for he has rightly emphasized what the Western critics often fail to notice that Gandhi's experiments with truth could yield an effective basis upon which a government by consent may be built.

There are, however, certain questions which the author has not satisfactorily answered. These compelling questions cannot be evaded anyway. Firstly, whether the spectre of a universal government, which haunts the present-day world, will frustrate the very principle of democracy. Secondly, whether the Marxian analysis of history is applicable to European affairs alone. Thirdly, whether communist society is in reality, to use the words of the author, 'an aborted civilization', its science 'a fanatical dogma', its technology a mechanical dictator', and its policies 'an impostor'. Lastly, whether a world federation based on the principle of democracy is at all feasible or even desirable.

The book must be commended for what it claims to be a speculation on the question, 'What is going on in the world?' It deserves to be taken seriously, for it calls forth from the reader his most profound thought.

DR. NANDALAL CHATTERJI

POPULAR ESSAYS IN INDIAN PHILOSOPHY. BY PROF. M. HIRIYANNA. Published by Kavyalaya, Publishers, Krishnamurtipuram, Mysore. Pages 122. Price Rs. 5 or 7s. 6d.

This work consists of seventeen brief essays on different topics of Indian philosophy by the late renowned scholar Prof. M. Hiriyanna of Mysore, who was well known as one of the leading philo-

sophers of India in recent times. The essays appeared in various journals and other publications and have now been given to the public in a collected form. They cover all the important aspects and problems of Indian philosophy.

In the eleventh essay, which forms his Commemoration Address on the Founder's Day of the Madras Sanskrit College, delivered in 1940, he has shown how Sanskrit literature enshrines our ancient ideal of life, how sublimation and synthesis form its essence, and how unselfishness, love of all beings, and love of God are shown in it as a trinity in unity and a unity in trinity. In the essay on *The Upanishads*, he has specially stressed the teachings of Jñāna and Vairāgya prominent in them.

In other essays he describes many vital cultural ideas of Indian thought. The key-idea of the Four Purushārthas (aims of life) is elaborated in the ninth essay. Artha and Kāma are material values and must be in consonance with Dharma. Dharma and Moksha are spiritual value and Moksha is the supreme aim of life (*parama-puruṣārtha*). In *The Twofold Way of Life*, he describes Pravritti and Nivritti and points out how, in a sublimated conception of both, Pravritti, purified by Nivritti and bereft of egoism, results in a higher Pravritti for universal welfare. In *Karma and Free Will*, he points out how, while the doctrine of Karma extends the principle of causation to human action, there is scope for free will and self-determination. The essay on *Reincarnation* shows how transmigration is true but could be terminated in Moksha.

Some of the other essays relate to various aspects of the Indian philosophical systems. In India, as Prof. Hiriyanna rightly observes, philosophy is both a way of life and a way of thought, resulting in Jivan-mukti as an *anubhava* (experience) here and now. (His essay on *The Aim of Indian Philosophy*). In *Types of Indian Thought*, he refers to the Materialism of Chārvāka, the Nyāya, the Sāṅkhya, and the Jaina systems which base themselves on intuition (*yogaja-pratyakṣa*) and the Mimāṃsā system based on Shruti. In *The Sankhya System*, he describes briefly but lucidly the Sankhya doctrines. In *Six Points of View and Indian Philosophy*, the last two essays in this collection, the author shows that Nyaya and Vaiśeṣika, and Mimamsa are pluralistic, and Sankhya and Yoga are dualistic, whereas the Vedanta is monistic.

The remaining essays relate particularly to the Vedanta. In the first essay (*The Training of the Vedantin*), he discusses the Vedanta as an art of right living rather than as a system of philosophy. The Vedanta aims at transforming 'man into a wholly spiritual being by killing the animal in him'.



(p. 3). It does so by social morality, practice of duty, meditation, and renunciation. In the essays on *The Ethics of Advaita* and on *Maya*, the learned Professor gives us a lucid exposition of Maya and the Advaitic basis of ethics. Maya is factual but unreal and hides Brahman and projects the world. The realization of the One Universal Self is achieved through Jnana, and love as an ethical principle follows from the basic oneness of all beings. In *Knowledge and Devotion*, he presents the great and fruitful idea of the fusion of these two. He says that 'Bhakti in the sense of absolute self-surrender is indispensable for acquiring Jnana, and that Jnana in its two phases of mediate knowledge and immediate experience is, in its turn, the condition necessary for Bhakti to reach its fullest development in love. . . . Knowledge without devotion is as futile as devotion without knowledge'. The entire work is pervaded by a ruling mood of synthesis and is full of ripe scholarship and high wisdom.

K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

#### RECOLLECTIONS AND REMINISCENCES.

BY HAR BILAS SARDA. *Published by Bhagwan Swarup, Vedic Yantralaya, Ajmer. Pages 192. Price Rs. 5.*

Sri Har Bilas Sarada, of Ajmer, whose autobiographical recollections and reminiscences form the contents of this book, is a well-known figure in Indian social and political life. His interests were many and varied and ranged from politics and social reform to education and philosophy. He has distinguished himself as a historian of Rajasthan, and especially as the member of the Central Legislative Assembly (of his days) who sponsored and ably championed the Child Marriage Restraint Act—popularly known as the 'Sarda Act'.

This book records and reveals valuable facts of the author's life and activities. The events and incidents, many of them partially known and unknown to the public, remind one of the then contemporary history of India's chequered social, political, and cultural pattern. Sri Sarada had the privilege of meeting Swami Vivekananda, before the latter became well known all over India, i.e. prior

to the Swami's visit to the West. They met at Mt. Abu in 1889, and again at Ajmer in 1891 when the Swami stayed as Sri Sarada's guest for a couple of days and later as the guest of a common friend, Shyamji Krishna Varma. Referring to Swami Vivekananda Sri Sarada records: 'He had large luminous eyes and discoursed eloquently on religious and philosophical subjects. I was charmed by Vivekananda's songs and admired his eloquence and patriotism. We had long conversations and talks on various subjects during the day and during our afternoon walks. . . . But what delighted me was Vivekananda's singing. He had a musical and melodious voice and I was entranced by his songs'.

The book contains extracts from Sri Sarada's diary for November-December 1891, which show the nature of the conversations he had with the Swami almost everyday. One diary entry states: 'His (the Swamiji's) discourses are most interesting to me. I greatly like him. He is a most pleasant companion. He will be something in the world if I err not greatly'.

There are not a few printing mistakes in the book. On page 18, the year of the Chicago Parliament of Religions should be 1893, not 1895. On page 23, the author says that Swami Vivekananda gave him his pre-monastic name as 'Manmathnath Dutt'. We are not sure if the correct name, 'Narendranath Datta', which the Swami may have given, has not slipped the author's memory. The book will prove of much historical interest to posterity.

GLIMPSES OF DIVINE LIGHT. BY S. K. DAS. *Published by the Study Circle, Tandon Bhawan, Central Town, Jullunder City. Pages xii+120. Price Rs. 2.*

The author, who has a genuine turn for things spiritual, has collected in this book some of his more important writings, contributed to various periodicals in India and abroad. The main aspects of religion and spiritual life, discussed herein from a broad and universal point of view, are intended to awaken the readers to the consciousness of their rich spiritual heritage.

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### CELEBRATION OF THE BIRTH CENTENARY OF HOLY MOTHER IN SAN FRANCISCO, BERKELEY, AND SACRAMENTO, U.S.A.

The first birth centenary of Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi was celebrated by the San Francisco and Berkeley centers of the Vedanta Society of Northern California on three occasions—the first on

the centenary day itself, December 27, 1953, the second on June 26, 1954, and the third on December 16, 1954.

Although Holy Mother's centenary fell on a Sunday, when ordinarily the auditorium of the San Francisco Temple is open to the public, the usual morning services were cancelled and only the



members of the Society and devotees were invited. By ten o'clock the auditorium was filled to overflowing, and the vibrant stillness of worship pervaded the hall. Flowers were on all the altars, and Holy Mother's was, of course, specially decorated. In front of it were bowls of fruit, cakes, nuts and candies and, on this auspicious day, a chest containing the sacred relics of Sri Ramakrishna and Holy Mother was brought down from the monastery chapel and placed on the main altar.

After a short meditation, Swami Ashokananda performed the worship. Then, following an interlude of devotional music, he gave a talk on the life of Holy Mother, speaking not from the lecture platform, as is customary at Sunday morning services, but, out of reverence on this sacred occasion, from the floor of the auditorium. His talk conveyed to the devotees the wonder and miracle of Holy Mother's unfathomable love and compassion, and seemed to bring her living and all-gracious presence even more vividly into the hall. Following the Swami's talk, the worship came to a close with two songs to the Mother, specially composed for the occasion. *Prasāda* was then served to all.

After the service was concluded a large number of the devotees crossed the San Francisco Bay Bridge to Berkeley, where at three o'clock Swami Shantaswarupananda conducted the second worship of the day. An adaptation for five voices of an Indian *rāga*, composed for Holy Mother, opened the service, and after a meditation the Swami, seated before the altar against which flowers were banked in profusion, offered perfume, flowers, incense, light, fruits and cakes. Following this the devotees made individual offerings of flowers, while the chanting of Sanskrit hymns by the Swami was alternated with instrumental music performed by devotees. *Prasāda* was then served and the devotees felt blessed for having participated in so sacred a day.

The second occasion on which the centenary was celebrated by the Vedanta Society of Northern California took place on an evening in June, 1954, at the Temple in Berkeley. For several years past it has been the custom for the members of both centres of the Society to meet at the Berkeley Temple when the lectures there come to a close and the summer recess begins. This year the evening was dedicated to Holy Mother and the program was directly related to her.

While these annual gatherings at Berkeley have always been a source of intellectual and spiritual stimulation to all who attend them, the evening of June 26, 1954, was particularly so, for, dedica-

ted as it was to Holy Mother, it had the quality of a special festival. The paper read was devoted to a colourful account of Holy Mother's life from her early childhood days in Jayrambati to her last years of spiritual ministry in Calcutta, during which she gave initiation to so many hundreds of people. The extraordinary quality of her life and character was revealed by well-chosen incidents and the story flowed easily and absorbingly, holding even those who knew it well in rapt attention.

The discussion following the paper bore on the significance of Holy Mother's life for Western women. Both Swami Ashokananda and Swami Shantaswarupananda gave talks which clarified this all-important topic and which emphasized the fact that Holy Mother was far more than an exemplar to women, for her life was lived in divine heights to which few can attain. The significance of such a life, it was pointed out, is not merely to set an example, but to generate spiritual power in others and to serve as an inexhaustible source of inspiration and spiritual upliftment to all mankind. At the conclusion of Swami Ashokananda's talk which brought the discussion period to a close, he said:

'You do not know what love is until you have tasted such divine love as Holy Mother's. How many of us can say we have known love? There is somewhere an infinitely loving Mother Heart that broods over this universe. Holy Mother was the embodiment of that. She was the Madonna idea personified. It is only in rare cases that such love manifests itself in human form, and only those who have known such divine love can understand its meaning. . . . Her love is still here ready to answer our call. Turn to that love, for in such turning you will become as pure and innocent as a child.'

Devotional music and the serving of *prasāda* concluded the evening program, but the devotees lingered on. Until late, their talk and laughter filled the auditorium, for the tangible sense of blessedness and festivity, the vivid sense of the Mother's presence, made many reluctant to leave. It was during this summer evening that the devotees expressed an eager wish to make contributions to Holy Mother's centenary in India.

The third and last celebration in honour of Holy Mother took place on her 1954 birthday, December 16, and rounded out the centennial year. On this occasion her worship was performed in the Berkeley Temple in the same way as on the previous year, and was attended by devotees from both the centres.

The centenary was also observed in the Vedanta Center, Sacramento, California.