Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna In Sri Aurobindo's Writings

A Special Number on the Occasion of
150th Birth Anniversary of Swami Vivekananda

CONTENTS

Sri Aurobindo on Swami Vivekananda
(Pages 5-44)

Sri Aurobindo on Sri Ramakrishna
(Pages 5-44)

Swami Vivekananda's Speech at Chicago
At the World's Parliament of Religions, September 1893
(Pages 45-48)

Guidance from Swami Vivekananda:
Be Like the Pearl Oyster — The Way to Success
(Page 48)

What was the message that radiated from the personality of Bhagawan Ramakrishna Paramhansa? What was it that formed the kernel of the eloquence with which the lion-like heart of Vivekananda sought to shake the world? It is this that in everyone of these three hundred millions of men from the Raja on his throne to the coolie at his labour, from the Brahmin absorbed in his *sandhya* to the Pariah walking shunned of men, GOD LIVETH. ... We are not, unless we choose, puppets dominated by Fate and Maya; we are facets and manifestations of Almighty Power.

(CWSA 6: 84) Sri Aurobindo





[1]

Swami Vivekananda

Vivekananda was a soul of puissance if ever there was one, a very lion among men .... We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not well how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving that has entered the soul of India and we say, "Behold, Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother and in the souls of her children."

[2]

His Mission

It seems certain that Ramakrishna expected him to be a great power for changing the world-mind in a spiritual direction and it may be assumed that the mission came to the disciple from the Master.

[3]

The Heroic Soul

The going forth of Vivekananda, marked out by the Master as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake not only to survive but to conquer.

Sri Aurobindo



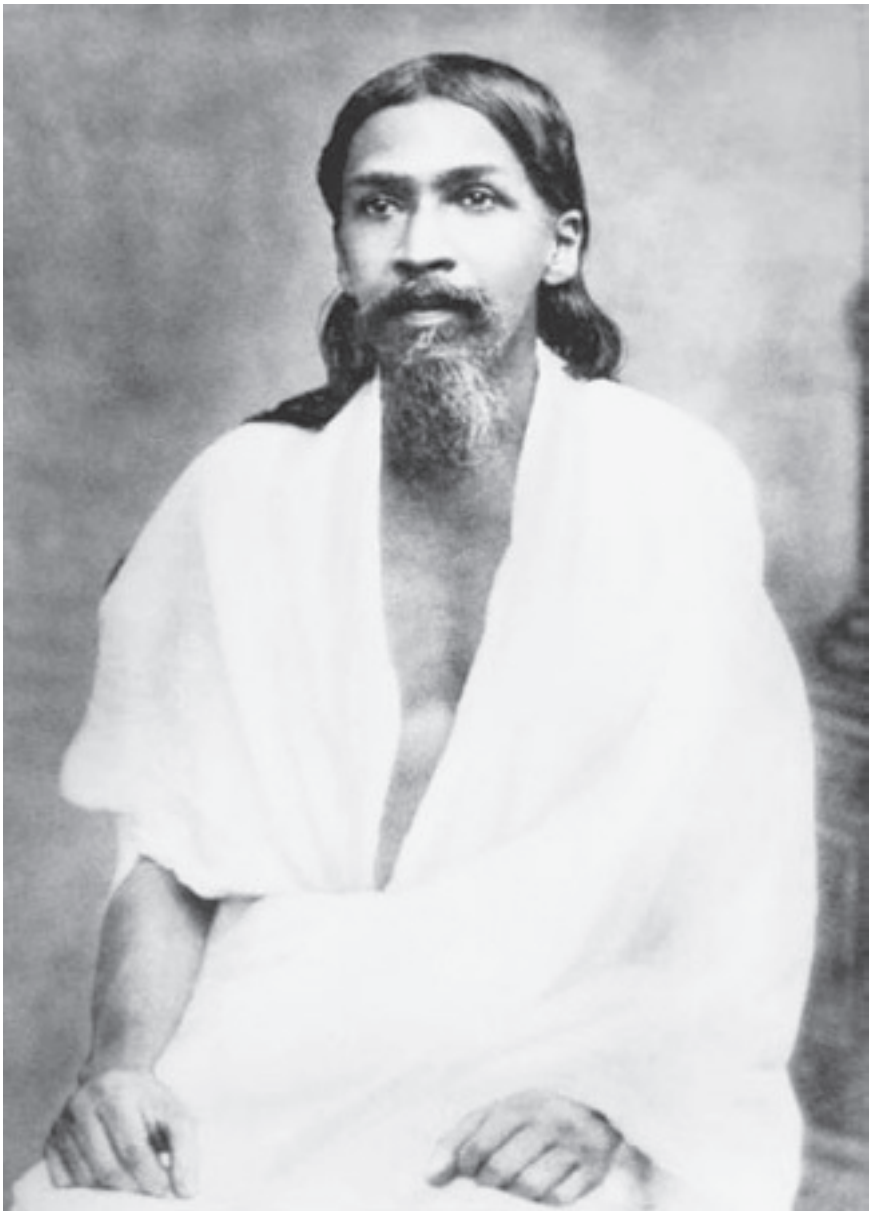
Sri Ramakrishna



[4]

Sri Ramakrishna

... in the life of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we see a colossal spiritual capacity, first driving straight to the divine realisation, taking, as it were, the kingdom of heaven by violence, and then seizing upon one Yogic method after another and extracting the substance out of it with an incredible rapidity, always to return to the heart of the whole matter, the realisation and possession of God by the power of love, by the extension of inborn spirituality into various experience and by the spontaneous play of an intuitive knowledge .... Its object was... to exemplify in the great and decisive experience of a master-soul the truth, now most necessary to humanity, towards which a world long divided into jarring sects and schools is with difficulty labouring, that all sects are forms and fragments of a single integral truth and all disciplines labour in their different ways towards one supreme experience.



Sri Aurobindo



Sri Aurobindo on Himself:

[5]

Swami Vivekananda's Voice Heard at the Jail

I began my Yoga in 1904 without a Guru; in 1908 I received important help from a Mahratta Yogi and discovered the foundations of my Sadhana; but from that time till the Mother came to India I received no spiritual help from anyone else. My Sadhana before and afterwards was not founded upon books but upon personal experiences that crowded on me from within. But in the jail I had the Gita and the Upanishads with me, practised the Yoga of the Gita and meditated with the help of the Upanishads; these were the only books from which I found guidance; the Veda which I first began to read long afterwards in Pondicherry rather confirmed what experiences I already had than was any guide to my Sadhana. I sometimes turned to the Gita for light when there was a question or a difficulty and usually received help or an answer from it ... It is a fact that I was hearing constantly the voice of Vivekananda speaking to me for a fortnight in the jail in my solitary meditation and felt his presence ... The voice spoke only on a special and limited but very important field of spiritual experience and it ceased as soon as it had finished saying all that it had to say on that subject.

[6]

Intellectual Influence in Early Life

As to Indian Philosophy ... I made no study of it, but knew the general ideas of the Vedanta philosophies, I knew prac-

tically nothing of the others except what I had read in Max Muller and in other general accounts. The basic idea of the Self caught me when I was in England. I tried to realise what the Self might be. The first Indian writings that took hold of me were the Upanishads and these raised in me a strong enthusiasm and I tried later to translate some of them. The other strong intellectual influence [that] came in India in early life were the sayings of Ramakrishna and the writings and speeches of Vivekananda, but this was a first introduction to India spiritual experience and not as philosophy. They did not, however, carry me to the practice of Yoga: their influence was purely mental.

[7]

3 Messages Received from Sri Ramakrishna

Diary Entry of Dec. 5, 1912:
(Record of Yoga)

... 18th October ... the third & last message from Sri Ramakrishna was received. The first message was in Baroda, the "Arabindo, mandir karo, mandir karo" & the parable of the snake Pravritti devouring herself. The second was given in Shanker Chetti's house soon after the arrival in Pondicherry, & the words are lost, but it was a direction to form the higher being in the lower self coupled with a promise to speak once more when the sadhan was nearing its close. This is the third message (18 Oct. 1912)

> "Make complete sannyasa of Karma.
> Make complete sannyasa of thought.
> Make complete sannyasa of feeling.
> This is my last utterance."

[8]

Contribution of Swami Vivekananda

Why are a certain class of Indians still hypnotised in all fields by European culture and why are we all still hypnotised by it in the field of politics? Because they constantly saw all the power, creation, activity on the side of Europe, all the immobility or weakness of a static inefficient defence on the side of India. But wherever the Indian spirit has been able to react, to attack with energy and to create with *éclat*, the European glamour has begun immediately to lose its hypnotic power. No one now feels the weight of the religious assault from Europe which was very powerful at the outset, because the creative activities of the Hindu revival have made Indian religion a living and evolving, a secure, triumphant and self-assertive power. But the seal was put to this work by two events, the Theosophical movement and the appearance of Swami Vivekananda at Chicago. For these two things showed the spiritual ideas for which India stands, no longer on the defence but aggressive and invading the materialised mentality of the Occident.

[9]

Preservation and Reconstruction of the Old

Side by side with this movement and more characteristic and powerful there has been flowing an opposite current. This first started on its way by an integral reaction, a vindication and re-acceptance of everything Indian as it stood and because it was Indian. We have still waves of this impulse and many of its influences continuing among us; for its work is not yet completed. But in reality the reaction

marks the beginning of a more subtle assimilation and fusing; for in vindicating ancient things it has been obliged to do so in a way that will at once meet and satisfy the old mentality and the new, the traditional and the critical mind. This in itself involves no mere return, but consciously or unconsciously hastens a restatement. And the riper form of the return has taken as its principle a synthetical restatement; it has sought to arrive at the spirit of the ancient culture and, while respecting its forms and often preserving them to revivify, has yet not hesitated also to remould, to reject the outworn and to admit whatever new motive seemed assimilable to the old spirituality or apt to widen the channel of its larger evolution. Of this freer dealing with past and present, this preservation by reconstruction, Vivekananda was in his life-time the leading exemplar and the most powerful exponent.

[10]

Endless Variety of Indian Religion

The endless variety of Indian philosophy and religion seems to the European mind interminable, bewildering, wearisome, useless; it is unable to see the forest because of the richness and luxuriance of its vegetation; it misses the common spiritual life in the multitude of its forms. But this infinite variety is itself, as Vivekananda pertinently pointed out, a sign of a superior religious culture. The Indian mind has always realised that the Supreme is the Infinite; it has perceived, right from its Vedic beginnings, that to the soul in Nature the Infinite must always present itself in an endless variety of aspects. The mentality of the West has long cherished the aggressive and quite illogical idea of a single

religion for all mankind, a religion universal by the very force of its narrowness, one set of dogmas, one cult, one system of ceremonies, one array of prohibitions and injunctions, one ecclesiastical ordinance. That narrow absurdity prances about as the one true religion which all must accept on peril of persecution by men here and spiritual rejection or fierce eternal punishment by God in other worlds.

[11]

Each Man to Have His Own Religion

... the Shastra of our Yoga must provide for an infinite liberty in the receptive human soul. A free adaptability in the manner and type of the individual's acceptance of the Universal and Transcendent into himself is the right condition for the full spiritual life in man. Vivekananda, pointing out that the unity of all religions must necessarily express itself by an increasing richness of variety in its forms, said once that the perfect state of that essential unity would come when each man had his own religion, when not bound by sect or traditional form he followed the free self-adaptation of his nature in its relations with the Supreme.

[12]

The Message that Radiates from India

What is it that so many thousands of holy men, Sadhus and Sannyasis, have preached to us silently by their lives? What was the message that radiated from the personality of Bhagawan Ramakrishna Paramhansa? What was it that formed the kernel of the eloquence with which the lion-like heart of Vivekananda sought to shake the world? It is this,

that in everyone of these three hundred millions of men, from the Raja on his throne to the coolie at his labour, from the Brahmin absorbed in his *sandhya* to the Pariah walking shunned of men, God Liveth. We are all gods and creators, because the energy of God is within us and all life is creation; not only the making of new forms is creation, but preservation is creation, destruction itself is creation. It rests with us what we shall create; for we are not, unless we choose, puppets dominated by Fate and Maya; we are facets and manifestations of Almighty Power.

[13]

India Must be Reborn, Because Her Rebirth Is Demanded by the Future of the World

India cannot perish, our race cannot become extinct, because among all the divisions of mankind it is to India that is reserved the highest and the most splendid destiny, the most essential to the future of the human race. It is she who must send forth from herself the future religion of the entire world, the Eternal Religion which is to harmonise all religion, science and philosophies and make mankind one soul. In the sphere of morality, likewise, it is her mission to purge barbarism (Mlechchhahood) out of humanity and to *aryanise* the world. In order to do this, she must first re-aryanise herself.

It was to initiate this great work, the greatest and most wonderful work ever given to a race, that Bhagawan Ramakrishna came and Vivekananda preached. If the work does not progress as it once promised to do it is because we have once again allowed the terrible cloud of Tamas to settle down on our souls — fear, doubt, hesitation, sluggishness. We have taken, some of us, the Bhakti which poured forth

from the one and the Jnana given us by the other, but from lack of Shakti, from the lack of Karma, we have not been able to make our Bhakti a living thing.

[14]

To Extend Spiritual Sway Over the World

... why should not India ... be the **first** power in the world? Who else has the undisputed right to extend spiritual sway over the world? This was Swami Vivekananda's plan of campaign. India can once more be made conscious of her greatness by an overmastering sense of the greatness of her spirituality. This sense of greatness is the main feeder of all patriotism. This only can put an end to all self-depreciation and generate a burning desire to recover the lost ground.

[15]

Life of Sri Ramakrishna: A Message of Hinduism

When scepticism had reached its height, the time had come for spirituality to assert itself and establish the reality of the world as a manifestation of the spirit, the secret of the confusion created by the senses, the magnificent possibilities of man and the ineffable beatitude of God. This is the work whose consummation Sri Ramakrishna came to begin and all the development of the previous two thousand years and more since Buddha appeared has been a preparation for the harmonisation of spiritual teaching and experience by the *Avatar* of Dakshineshwar.

The long ages of discipline which India underwent are now drawing to an end. A great light is dawning in the East, a light whose first heralding glimpses are already seen on

the horizon; a new day is about to break, so glorious that even the last of the avatars cannot be sufficient to explain it, although without him it would not have come. The perfect expression of Hindu spirituality was the signal for the resurgence of the East. Mankind has long been experimenting with various kinds of thought, different principles of ethics, strange dreams of a perfection to be gained by material means, impossible millenniums and humanitarian hopes. Nowhere has it succeeded in realising the ultimate secret of life. Nowhere has it found satisfaction. No scheme of society or politics has helped it to escape from the necessity of sorrow, poverty, strife, dissatisfaction from which it strives for an outlet; for whoever is trying to find one by material means must inevitably fail. The East alone has some knowledge of the truth, the East alone can teach the West, the East alone can save mankind. Through all these ages Asia has been seeking for a light within, and whenever she has been blessed with a glimpse of what she seeks, a great religion has been born, Buddhism, Confucianism, Christianity, Mahomedanism with all their countless sects. But the grand workshop of spiritual experiment, the laboratory of the soul has been India, where thousands of great spirits have been born in every generation who were content to work quietly in their own souls, perfect their knowledge, hand down the results of their experiments to a few disciples and leave the rest to others to complete. They did not hasten to proselytise, were in no way eager to proclaim themselves, but merely added their quota of experience and returned to the source from which they had come. The immense reservoir of spiritual energy stored up by the self-expression was the condition of this birth of *avatārs*, of men so full of God that they could not be satisfied with silent bliss, but poured it out on the world, not with the idea of proselytising but

because they wished to communicate their own ecstasy of realisation to others who were fit to receive it either by previous *tapasyā* or by the purity of their desires. Of all these souls Sri Ramakrishna was the last and greatest, for while others felt God in a single or limited aspect, he felt Him in His illimitable unity as the sum of an illimitable variety. In him the spiritual experiences of the millions of saints who had gone before were renewed and united. Sri Ramakrishna gave to India the final message of Hinduism to the world. A new era dates from his birth, an era in which the peoples of the earth will be lifted for a while into communion with God and spirituality become the dominant note of human life. What Christianity failed to do, what Mahomedanism strove to accomplish in times as yet unripe, what Buddhism half-accomplished for a brief period and among a limited number of men, Hinduism as summed up in the life of Sri Ramakrishna has to attempt for all the world. This is the reason of India's resurgence, this is why God has breathed life into her once more, why great souls are at work to bring about her salvation, why a sudden change is coming over the hearts of her sons. The movement of which the first outbreak was political, will end in a spiritual consummation.

[16]

The Glory of God in Man

Whoever is still under the influence of intellectual pride, is shocked when people depreciate the reason as the supreme guide. He asks how is it possible for a man of culture to depreciate the reason and exalt some extraneous influence like that which people call God? But these doubters are under the influence of European materialism which tries to confine man to his material portion and deny him the possibil-

ity of a divine origin and a divine destiny. When Europe left Christianity to the monk and the ascetic and forgot the teachings of the Galilean, she exposed herself to a terrible fate which will yet overtake her. God in man is the whole revelation and the whole of religion. What Christianity taught dimly, Hinduism made plain to the intellect in Vedanta. When India remembers the teaching she received from Shankaracharya, Ramanuja and Madhva, when she realises what Sri Ramakrishna came to reveal, then she will rise. Her very life is Vedanta.

If anyone thinks that we are merely intellectual beings, he is not a Hindu. Hinduism leaves the glorification of intellectuality to those who have never seen God. She is commissioned by Him to speak only of his greatness and majesty and she has so spoken for thousands of years. When we first received a European education, we allowed ourselves to be misled by the light of science. Science is a light within a limited room, not the sun which illumines the world. The Apara Vidya is the sum of science but there is a higher Vidya, a mightier knowledge. When we are under the influence of the lower knowledge, we imagine that we are doing everything and try to reason out the situation we find ourselves in, as if our intellect were sovereign and omnipotent. But this is an attitude of delusion and Maya. Whoever has once felt the glory of God within him can never again believe that the intellect is supreme. There is a higher voice, there is a more unfailing oracle. It is in the heart where God resides. He works through the brain, but the brain is only one of His instruments. Whatever the brain may plan, the heart knows first and whoever can go beyond the brain to the heart, will hear the voice of the Eternal.

[17]

"Abandon That You May Possess"

In all the events of the last year and a half the voice of the divine Teacher can be heard crying to us, "Abandon that you may possess; do my will and know yourselves, purify yourselves, cease to follow your fancies." He that has ears, let him hear. Knowledge will not come without self-communion, without light from within, not even the knowledge of the practical steps that can lead to success. Every step that is taken in the light of a lower wisdom will fail until the truth is driven home.

The work that was begun at Dakshineshwar is far from finished, it is not even understood. That which Vivekananda received and strove to develop, has not yet materialised.

[18]

Development of the Faculty of Direct Knowledge

The time has perhaps come for the Indian mind, long preoccupied with political and economic issues, for a widening of its horizon. Such a widening is especially necessary for Bengal.

The Bengali has always led and still leads the higher thought of India, because he has eminently the gifts which are most needed for the new race that has to arise. He has the emotion and imagination which is open to the great inspirations, the mighty heart-stirring ideas that move humanity when a great step forward has to be taken. He has the invaluable gift of thinking with the heart. He has, too, a subtle brain which is able within certain limits to catch

shades of meaning and delicacies of thought, both those the logic grasps and those which escape the mere logical intellect. Above all, he has in a greater degree than other races the yet undeveloped faculty of direct knowledge, latent in humanity and now to be evolved, which is above reason and imagination, the faculty which in Sri Ramakrishna, the supreme outcome of the race, dispensed with education and commanded any knowledge he desired easily and divinely. It is a faculty which now works irregularly in humanity, unrecognised and confused by the interference of the imagination, of the limited reason and of the old associations or *saṁskarās* stored in the memory of the race and the individual. It cannot be made a recognised and habitual agent except by the discipline which the ancient Indian sages formulated in the science of Yoga. But certain races have the function more evolved or more ready for evolution than the generality of mankind, and it is these that will lead in the future evolution. In addition, the race has a mighty willpower which comes from the long worship of Shakti ...

[19]
Parable of Two Birds in the Upanishads So Often Referred to by Swami Vivekananda

{Retold by Sri Aurobindo at a Swadeshi meeting held at Baruipur (W.B.) on 12.4.1908 and reproduced by him in the issue of the Bande Mataram*.]*

The speaker [Sri Aurobindo] dilated on the great efficacy of suffering in rousing the spirit from slumber by a reference to the parable of two birds in the Upanishads, so often referred to by the late Swami Vivekananda. The parable relates that there was a big tree with many sweet and bitter

fruits and two birds sat on the tree, one on the top of it and the other on a lower part. The latter bird looking upwards sees the other in all his glory and richness of plumage and is at times enamoured of him and feels that he is no other than his own highest self. But at other moments when he tastes the sweet fruits of the tree he is so much taken up with their sweetness that he quite forgets his dear and beloved companion. After a while there comes the turn of bitter fruits, the unpleasant taste of which breaks off the spell and he looks at his brilliant companion again. This is evidently a parable concerning the salvation of individual souls who, when they enjoy the sweets of the world, forget to look up- wards to the Paramatma who is really none else than their own highest self, and when they forget themselves in this way through the *Maya* of this world, bitterness comes to dispel the *Maya* and revive the true self-consciousness. The parable is equally applicable to national *mukti*. We in India fell under the influence of the foreigners' *Maya* which completely possessed our souls. It was the *Maya* of the alien rule, the alien civilisation, the powers and capacities of the alien people who happen to rule over us. These were as if so many shackles that put our physical, intellectual and moral life into bondage. We went to school with the aliens, we allowed the aliens to teach us and draw our minds away from all that was great and good in us. We considered ourselves unfit for self-government and political life, we looked to England as our exemplar and took her as our saviour. And all this was *Maya* and bondage. When this *Maya* once got its hold on us, put on us shackle after shackle, we had fallen into bondage of the mind by their education, commercial bondage, political bondage, etc., and we believed ourselves to be helpless without them. We helped them to destroy what life there was in India. We were under the protection

of their police and we know now what protection they have given us. Nay, we ourselves became the instruments of our bondage. We Bengalis entered the services of foreigners. We brought in the foreigners and established their rule. Fallen as we were, we needed others to protect us, to teach us and even to feed us. All these functions of human life, so utterly was our self-dependence destroyed, we were left unable to fulfil.

It is only through repression and suffering that this *Maya* can be dispelled, and the bitter fruit of Partition of Bengal administered by Lord Curzon dispelled the illusion. We looked up and saw that the brilliant bird sitting above was none else but ourselves, our real and actual self. Thus we found Swaraj within ourselves and saw that it was in our hands to discover and to realise it.

[20]

The Vivekananda Way

Since we made our remarks on the proposal of a Congress session in London, we have seen two reasons urged for this reactionary step. It is necessary, it seems, to prevent judgment going against us in England by default and also to win the sympathy of the civilised world. The former argument we have already answered in our last issue. Neither the speeches of a famous orator nor the conjoint speeches of many less famous will win for us the support of the British people for claims which go directly against their interests. Only a prolonged and steady campaign in England all the year round for several years can make any impression of a real and lasting kind and even that impression cannot in the nature of things be sufficient for the purpose ....

In a constitutional question between the present Gov-

ernment in India and the people we do not see what can be the place or mode of operation of the world's opinion or sympathy. An academical approval of our aims can be of no help to us. Nor is the sympathy of the world likely to be excited beyond such academical approval. . . . Even were it otherwise, a London session of the Congress would only awaken a passing interest. In that respect the visit of Swami Vivekananda to America and the subsequent work of those who followed him did more for India than a hundred London Congresses could effect. That is the true way of awaking sympathy, — by showing ourselves to the nations as a people with a great past and ancient civilisation who still possess something of the genius and character of our forefathers, have still something to give the world and therefore deserve freedom, — by proof of our manliness and fitness, not by mendicancy.

[21]

A Synthesis Embracing All Life and Action

... the word Vedanta is usually identified with the strict Monism and the peculiar theory of *māyā* established by the lofty and ascetic intellect of Shankara. But it is the Upanishads themselves and not Shankara's writings, the text and not the commentary, that are the authoritative Scripture of the Vedantin. Shankara's, great and temporarily satisfying as it was, is still only one synthesis and interpretation of the Upanishads. There have been others in the past which have powerfully influenced the national mind and there is no reason why there should not be a yet more perfect synthesis in the future. It is such a synthesis embracing all life and action in its scope that the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Vivekananda have been preparing. What is dimly be-

ginning now is a repetition on a wider stage of what happened once before in India, more rapidly but to smaller issues, when the Buddha lived and taught his philosophy and ethics to the Aryan nations. Then as now a mighty spirit, it matters not whether Avatar or Vibhuti, the full expression of God in man or a great outpouring of the divine energy, came down among men and brought into their daily life and practice the force and impulse of utter spirituality. And this time it is the full light and not a noble part, unlike Buddhism, which, expressing Vedantic morality, yet ignored a fundamental reality of Vedanta and was therefore expelled from its prime seat and cradle. The material result was then what it will be now, a great political, moral and social revolution which made India the Guru of the nations and carried the light she had to give all over the civilised world, moulding ideas and creating forms which are still extant and a living force.

[22]

Break the Mould that the Soul May Live

There are two Hinduisms; one which takes its stand on the kitchen and seeks its Paradise by cleaning the body; another which seeks God, not through the cooking pot and the social convention, but in the soul. The latter is also Hinduism and it is a good deal older and more enduring than the other; it is the Hinduism of Bhishma and Srikrishna, of Shankara and Chaitanya, the Hinduism which exceeds Hindusthan, was from of old and will be for ever, because it grows eternally through the aeons. Its watchword is not *kriyā*, but *karma*; not *śāstra*, but *jñānam*; not *ācāra*, but *bhakti*. Yet it accepts *kriyā*, *sastra* and *ācāra*, not as ends to be followed for their own sake, but as means to perfect *karma*, *jñānam*

and *bhakti* ....

The higher and truer Hinduism is also of two kinds, sectarian and unsectarian, disruptive and synthetic, that which binds itself up in the aspect and that which seeks the All. The first is born of *rajasic* or *tamasic* attachment to an idea, an experience, an opinion or set of opinions, a temperament, an attitude, a particular Guru, a chosen Avatar. This attachment is intolerant, arrogant, proud of a little knowledge, scornful of knowledge that is not its own. It is always talking of the *ku-saṁskāras*, superstitions, of others and is blind to its own; or it says, "My Guru is the only Guru, and all others are either charlatans or inferior," or, "My temperament is the right temperament, and those who do not follow my path are fools or pedants or insincere," or "My Avatar is the real God Himself and all the others are only lesser revelations;" or "My *iṣṭadevatā* is God, the others are only His partial manifestations." When the soul rises higher, it follows by preference its own ideas, experiences, opinions, temperament, Guru, *iṣṭa*, but it does not turn an ignorant and exclusive eye upon others. "There are many paths," it cries, "and all lead equally to God. All men, even the sinner and the atheist are my brothers in Sadhana and the Beloved is drawing them each in His own way to the One without a second." But when the full knowledge dawns, I embrace all experiences in myself, I know all ideas to be true, all opinions useful, all experiences and attitudes means and stages in the acquisition of universal experience and completeness, all Gurus imperfect channels or incarnations of the one and only Teacher, all *iṣṭas* and Avatars to be God Himself.

That is what Ramakrishna taught by His life and Sadhana and therefore is He the Avatar of the age, the One who prepares the future of humanity. But there is a danger of turning Him into the Guru of a sect, the incarnate God of a

dogmatic religion, to stultify His own life and teachings by making Him the object of a narrow attachment, an intolerant reverence, a sectarian worship. That must be avoided. It is the great curse which attends the organisation of religion. Let us have done with sects and churches and worship God only.

The destruction of bondage, the realisation of freedom, the trampling upon our fetters, that is the first need of the future. It was to give *mukti* that Ramakrishna came, not to impose a new bondage. Therefore was Vivekananda His Apostle to the Gentiles, a man who in all things asserted freedom. The soul of Hinduism languishes in an unfit body. Break the mould that the soul may live. Is it not the first teaching of Yoga to destroy the *dehātmaka-buddhi*, the blindness that identifies the soul with its temporary body? If the body were young, adaptable, fit, the liberated soul might use it, but it is decrepit, full of ill-health and impurity. It must be changed, not by the spirit of Western iconoclasm which destroys the soul with the body, but by national Yoga.

[23]

Two Aphorisms

Thus said Ramakrishna and thus said Vivekananda. Yes, but let me know also the truths which the Avatar cast not forth into speech and the prophet has omitted from his teachings. There will always be more in God than the thought of man has ever conceived or the tongue of man has ever uttered.

*

What was Ramakrishna? God manifest in a human being; but behind there is God in His infinite impersonality and His universal Personality. And what was Vivekananda? A

radiant glance from the eye of Shiva; but behind him is the divine gaze from which he came and Shiva himself and Brahma and Vishnu and OM all-exceeding.

[24]

Hints, Not Fetters

A philosophical or religious system is only a statement of that arrangement of existence in universe which God has revealed to us as our status of being. It is given in order that the mind may have something to stand upon while we act in Prakriti. But our vision need not be precisely the same in arrangement as the vision of others, nor is the form of thought that suits our mentality bound to suit a mentality differently constituted. Firmness, without dogmatism, in our own system, toleration, without weakness, of all other systems should therefore be our intellectual outlook.

You will find disputants questioning your system on the ground that it is not consistent with this or that Shastra or this or that great authority, whether philosophers, saints or Avatars. Remember then that realisation and experience are alone of essential importance. What Shankara argued or Vivekananda conceived intellectually about existence or even what Ramakrishna stated from his multitudinous and varied realisations, is only of value to you so far as you are moved by God to accept and renew it in your own experience. The opinions of thinkers and saints and Avatars should be accepted as hints but not as fetters. What matters to you is what you have seen or what God in His universal personality or impersonally or again personally in some teacher, Guru or path-finder undertakes to show to you in the path of Yoga.

[25]

Sannyasa and Vairagya

... Not for such ignoble purposes were these great things [Sannyasa and Vairagya] meant by the Rishis who disclosed them to the world. Beware of such weakness. क्लैब्यं मा स्म गमः पार्थ नैतत्त्वय्युपद्यते. [1] Truly is such base weakness unworthy of one who is no other than Brahman, the Eternal, the Creator, Protector and Destroyer of worlds. But on the other hand there is a true *vairāgya* of sorrow and disappointment; sometimes men have tried in their ignorance for ignoble things and failed, not from weakness but because these things were not in their nature, were unfit for them and below their true greatness and high destiny. The sorrow and disappointment were necessary to open their eyes to their true selves; then they seek solitude, meditation and Samadhi, not as a dram to drown their sorrow and yet unsated longing, but because their yearning is no longer for unworthy things but for the love of God or the knowledge of the Eternal. Sometimes great spirits enter the way of the Sannyasin, because in the solitude alone with the Eternal they can best develop their divine strength *(Brahmatej)* to use it for divine purposes. Once attained they pour it in a stream of divine knowledge or divine love over the world; such were Shankaracharya and Ramakrishna. Sometimes it is the sorrows and miseries of the world that find them in ease and felicity and drive them out, as Buddha and Christ were driven out, to seek light for the ignorant and help for sufferers in the depths of their own being. True Sannyasins are the greatest of all workers, because they have the most

1 *Klaibyaṁ mā sma gamaḥ Pārtha naitat tvayyupapadyate*: Fall not from the virility of the fighter and the hero, O Partha! it is not fitting in thee. (Gita 2.3)

unalloyed and inexhaustible strength and are the mightiest in God to do the works of God.

Whatever be the precise nature of the *vairāgya* or its immediate and exciting cause, if the thirst for the Eternal mingle in it, know that it is real *vairāgya* and the necessary impulse towards your salvation. You must pass through this stage if you are to reach the Eternal at all. For if you do not get weary of the phenomenal, your mind cannot turn to the Eternal; the attraction of the phenomenal keeps your eyes turned downward and not upward, outward and not inward. Welcome therefore the first inrush of *vairāgya* into your life, but remember it is a first stage on the road, not the goal. Swami Bhaskarananda was driven into Sannyasa by a keen and overmastering disgust of life in the world, but when he had attained *mukti*, the state of his mind so changed that if his wife had been living, he would have lived with her in the world as one in the world; an idea shocking to priestly and learned orthodoxy, but natural to the Jivanmukta. Sri Ramakrishna, when he had attained identity with the Lord, could not indeed return to the world as a householder or bear the touch of worldly things, — for he was the incarnation of utter Bhakti, — but he took as much delight in the Eternal manifested in phenomena and especially in man as in the pure actionless Brahman with whom he became one in Samadhi. The Karmamargin must pass through the condition of Vairagya but he will not abide in it. Or to speak more accurately he will retain the spiritual element in it and reject the physical. The spiritual element of *vairāgya* is the turning away from the selfish desire for phenomenal objects and actions; the physical element is the fear of and shrinking from the objects and actions themselves. The retention of the spiritual element is necessary to all Yogins; the retention of the physical element, though often a sign of great

physical purity and saintliness, is not essential to salvation.

[26]

Spiritual Oneness

As he [an individual] develops, he moves towards a spiritual freedom, but this freedom is not something entirely separate from all-existence; it has a solidarity with it because that too is the Self, the same spirit. As he moves towards spiritual freedom, he moves also towards spiritual oneness. The spiritually realised, the liberated man is preoccupied, says the Gita, with the good of all beings; Buddha discovering the way of Nirvana must turn back to open that way to those who are still under the delusion of their constructive instead of their real being, — or non-being; Vivekananda, drawn by the Absolute, feels also the call of the disguised Godhead in humanity and most the call of the fallen and the suffering, the call of the self to the self in the obscure body of the universe.

[27]

The True Salvation

Often, we see this desire of personal salvation overcome by another attraction which also belongs to the higher turn of our nature and which indicates the essential character of the action the liberated soul must pursue. It is that which is implied in the great legend of the Amitabha Buddha who turned away when his spirit was on the threshold of Nirvana and took the vow never to cross it while a single being remained in the sorrow and the Ignorance. It is that which underlies the sublime verse of the Bhagavata Purana, "I desire not the supreme state with all its eight siddhis nor the

cessation of rebirth; may I assume the sorrow of all creatures who suffer and enter into them so that they may be made free from grief." It is that which inspires a remarkable passage in a letter of Swami Vivekananda, "I have lost all wish for my salvation," wrote the great Vedantin, "may I be born again and again and suffer thousands of miseries so that I may worship the only God that exists, the only God I believe in, the sum-total of all souls, — and above all, my God the wicked, my God the miserable, my God the poor of all races, of all species is the special object of my worship. **He who is the high and low, the saint and the sinner, the god and the worm, Him worship, the visible, the knowable, the real, the omnipresent; break all other idols. In whom there is neither past life nor future birth, nor death nor going nor coming, in whom we always have been and always will be one, Him worship; break all other idols."**

The last two sentences contain indeed the whole gist of the matter. The true salvation or the true freedom from the chain of rebirth is not the rejection of terrestrial life or the individual's escape by a spiritual self-annihilation, even as the true renunciation is not the mere physical abandonment of family and society; it is the inner identification with the Divine in whom there is no limitation of past life and future birth but instead the eternal existence of the unborn Soul. He who is free inwardly, even doing actions, does nothing at all, says the Gita; for it is Nature that works in him under the control of the Lord of Nature. Equally, even if he assumes a hundred times the body, he is free from any chain of birth or mechanical wheel of existence since he lives in the unborn and undying spirit and not in the life of the body. Therefore attachment to the escape from rebirth is one of the idols which, whoever keeps, the Sadhaka of the integral Yoga must break and cast away from him. For his

Yoga is not limited to the realisation of the Transcendent beyond all world by the individual soul; it embraces also the realisation of the Universal, "the sum-total of all souls", and cannot therefore be confined to the movement of a personal salvation and escape. Even in his transcendence of cosmic limitations he is still one with all in God; a divine work remains for him in the universe.

*

(In reply to a query of a Sadhak, Sri Aurobindo explained the above text as under:)

As to the extract about Vivekananda, the point I make there does not seem to me humanitarian. You will see that I emphasise there the last sentences of the page quoted from Vivekananda, not the words about God the poor and sinner and criminal. The point is about the Divine in the world, the All, *sarva-bhūtāni* of the Gita. That is not merely humanity, still less, only the poor or the wicked; surely, even the rich or the good are the part of the All and those also who are neither good nor bad nor rich nor poor. Nor is there any question (I mean in my own remarks) of philanthropic service; so neither *daridrer sevā* is the point. I had formerly not the humanitarian but the humanity view — and something of it may have stuck to my expressions in the *Arya*. But I had already altered my viewpoint from the "Our yoga for the sake of humanity" to "Our yoga for the sake of the Divine". The Divine includes not only the supracosmic but the cosmic and the individual — not only Nirvana or the Beyond but Life and the All. It is that I stress everywhere.

(In yet another letter Sri Aurobindo states:)

His ideal of *sevā* was a need of his nature and must have

helped him — it does not follow that it must be accepted as a universal spiritual necessity or ideal.

[28]

Avatars, Vibhutis

Avatarhood would have little meaning if it were not connected with the evolution. The Hindu procession of the ten Avatars is itself, as it were, a parable of evolution. First the Fish Avatar, then the amphibious animal between land and water, then the land animal, then the Man-Lion Avatar, bridging man and animal, then man as dwarf, small and undeveloped and physical but containing in himself the godhead and taking possession of existence, then the raja sic, sattwic, nirguna Avatars, leading the human development from the vital rajasic to the sattwic mental man and again the overmental superman. Krishna, Buddha and Kalki depict the last three stages, the stages of the spiritual development — Krishna opens the possibility of overmind, Buddha tries to shoot beyond to the supreme liberation but that liberation is still negative, not returning upon earth to complete positively the evolution; Kalki is to correct this by bringing the Kingdom of the Divine upon earth, destroying the opposing Asura forces. The progression is striking and unmistakable.

As for the lives in between the Avatar lives, it must be remembered that Krishna speaks of many lives in the past, not only a few supreme ones, and secondly that while he speaks of himself as the Divine, in one passage he describes himself as a Vibhuti, *vṛṣṇīnām vāsudeveḥ*. We may therefore fairly assume that in many lives he manifested as the Vibhuti veiling the fuller Divine Consciousness. If we admit that the object of Avatarhood is to lead the evolution,

this is quite reasonable, the Divine appearing as Avatar in the great transitional stages and as Vibhutis to aid the lesser transitions.

*

An Avatar, roughly speaking, is one who is conscious of the presence and power of the Divine born in him or descended into him and governing from within his will and life and action; he feels identified inwardly with this divine power and presence.

A Vibhuti is supposed to embody some power of the Divine and is enabled by it to act with great force in the world, but that is all that is necessary to make him a Vibhuti: the power may be very great, but the consciousness is not that of an inborn or indwelling Divinity. This is the distinction we can gather from the Gita which is the main authority on this subject. If we follow this distinction, we can confidently say from what is related of them that Rama and Krishna can be accepted as Avatars; Buddha figures as such although with a more impersonal consciousness of the Power within him. Ramakrishna voiced the same consciousness when he spoke of Him who was Rama and who was Krishna being within him. But Chaitanya's case is peculiar; for according to the accounts he ordinarily felt and declared himself a bhakta of Krishna and nothing more, but in great moments he manifested Krishna, grew luminous in mind and body and was Krishna himself and spoke and acted as the Lord. His contemporaries saw in him an Avatar of Krishna, a manifestation of the Divine Love. Shankara and Vivekananda were certainly Vibhutis; ... as Vibhutis they were very great.

*

Vivekananda's experience: it was exactly the realisation

which is described in the Upanishads as a supreme experience of the Self. It is not a fact that an experience gained in samadhi cannot be prolonged into the waking state.

[29]

The Great Past to be followed by a Greater Future

Ramakrishna himself never thought of transformation or tried for it. All he wanted was bhakti for the Mother and along with that he received whatever knowledge she gave him and did whatever she made him do. He was intuitive and psychic from the beginning and only became more and more so as he went on. There was no need in him for the transformation which we seek; for although he spoke of the divine man (Ishwarakoti) coming down the stairs as well as ascending, he had not the idea of a new consciousness and a new race and the divine manifestation in the earth-nature.

*

Ramakrishna's yoga was also turned only to an inner realisation of the inner Divine, — nothing less, but also nothing more. I believe Ramakrishna's sentence about the claim of the sadhak on the Divine for whom he has sacrificed everything was the assertion of an inner and not an outer claim, on the inner rather than on any physically embodied Divine: it was a claim for the full spiritual union, the God-lover seeking the Divine, but the Divine also giving himself and meeting the God-lover. There can be no objection to that; such a claim all seekers of the Divine have; but as to the modalities of this divine meeting, it does not carry us much farther. In any case, my object is a realisation on the physical plane and I cannot consent merely to repeat Ramakrishna. I seem to remember too that for a long time he

was withdrawn into himself, all his life was not spent with his disciples. He got his siddhi first in retirement and when he came out and received everyone, well, a few years of it wore out his body. To that, I suppose, he had no objection; for he even pronounced a theory, when Keshav Chandra was dying, that spiritual experience ought to wear out the body. But at the same time, when asked why he got illness in the throat, he answered that it was the sins of his disciples which they threw upon him and he had to swallow. Not being satisfied, as he was, with an inner liberation alone, I cannot accept these ideas or these results, for that does not sound to me like a successful meeting of the Divine and the sadhak on the physical plane, however successful it might have been for the inner life. Krishna did great things and was very clearly a manifestation of the Divine. But I remember a passage of the Mahabharata in which he complains of the unquiet life his followers and adorers gave him, their constant demands, reproaches, their throwing of their unregenerate vital nature upon him. And in the Gita he speaks of this human world as a transient and sorrowful affair and, in spite of his gospel of divine action, seems almost to admit that to leave it is after all the best solution. The traditions of the past are very great in their own place, in the past, but I do not see why we should merely repeat them and not go farther. In the spiritual development of the consciousness upon earth the great past ought to be followed by a greater future.

*

... both [Sri Chaitanya and Sri Ramakrishna] exercised an extraordinary influence and did something supreme in their own sphere.

*

Ramakrishna [spoke] constantly from a swift and luminous spiritual intuition.

[30]

Sri Ramakrishna's Great Contribution

We can know God, we can become the Brahman.

This promise long confined to the few, to the initiates in India, is once more being placed before the whole world for its acceptance. Of this supreme offer a life recently lived in an obscure corner of the earth seems to me to be the very incarnation and illuminating symbol, — the life of the Paramhansa Ramakrishna of Dakshineswar. Not for any body of teachings that he left behind, not for any restricted type of living, peculiar system of ethics or religious panacea for the ills of existence, — but because it brought once more into the world with an unexampled thoroughness and liberality the great Vedantic method of experience and inner revelation and showed us its possibilities. An illiterate, poor and obscure Bengali peasant, one who to the end of his life used a patois full of the most rustic forms and expressions, ignorant of Sanskrit, of any language but his own provincial dialect, ignorant of philosophy and science, ignorant of the world, yet realised in himself all the spiritual wisdom of the ages, shed in his brief sayings a light so full, so deep on the most difficult profundities of our inner being, the most abstruse questions of metaphysics that the most strenuous thinkers and the most learned Pandits were impressed by his superiority. By what process did he arrive at this great store of living knowledge? Never by any intellectual process, by any steps of reasoning. In all the things of the intellect, even the most elementary, he was as simple as a child, more unsophisticated than the most ignorant peasant of his native

village. He could turn indeed an eye of infallible keenness on the hearts' and intentions of men, but it was the eye of vision, not the eye of thought. Never indeed, in modern times or since the intellectualising of mankind began were reasoning and intellectual processes so rigidly excluded from the process of knowledge with such astonishing results. The secret of his success was that always he lived and saw; where most men only reason and translate thought into sentiment, feel and translate emotion into terms of thinking, he saw with the heart or a higher faculty and threw out his vision into experience with a power of realisation of which modern men have long ceased to be capable; thus living everything to its full conclusion of mental and physical experience his soul opened more and more to knowledge, to direct truth, to the Satyam in things, until the depths hid nothing from him and the heights became accessible to his tread. He first has shown us clearly, entirely and without reserve or attenuating circumstance the supreme importance of being over thinking, but being, not in terms of the body and life merely, like the sensational and emotional man or the man of action, but in the soul as well and the soul chiefly, in the central entity of this complex human symbol. Therefore he was able to liberate us from the chains imposed by the makeshifts of centuries. He broke through the limitations of the Yogic schools, practised each of them in turn and would reach in three days the consummation which even to powerful Yogins is the accomplishment of decades or even of more lives than one; broke through the limitations of religion and fulfilled himself in experience as a worshipper of Christ and of Allah while all the time remaining in the individual part of him a Hindu of the sect of the Shaktas; broke through the limitations of the Guruparampara, and, while using human teachers for outward process and discipline, yet received his

first and supreme initiation from the eternal Mother herself and all his knowledge from the World-Teacher within; broke through the logical limitations of the metaphysical schools and showed us Dwaita and Adwaita inextricably yet harmoniously one in experience, even as they are shown to us in Veda and Vedanta. All that at the time still governed our spiritual life he took typically into his soul and into his mental and physical experience, swallowed up its defects and imperfections in the infinite abyss of his personality and brought out through these masks and forms always the something beyond that is perfect and supreme. Thus establishing experience and inward revelation as the supreme means of the highest knowledge, his became one of the seed-lives of humanity; and the seed it held was the loosening of the bonds of the rational intellect and the return of humanity's journey from its long detour on the mid-plateaus of reason towards the footpath that winds up to the summits of the spirit.

[31]

Sunlit Path — The Quicker Way

Peace was the very first thing that the yogis and seekers of old asked for and it was a quiet and silent mind — and that always brings peace — that they declared to be the best condition for realising the Divine. A cheerful and sunlit heart is the fit vessel for the Ananda and who shall say that Ananda, or what prepares it, is an obstacle to the Divine union? As for despondency, it is surely a terrible burden to carryon the way. One has to pass through it sometimes, like Christian of *The Pilgrim's Progress* through the Slough of Despond but its constant reiteration cannot be anything but an obstacle. The Gita specially says, "Practise the yoga with an unde-

spondent heart — *aṇṇirviṇṇacetasā*." I know perfectly well that pain and suffering and struggle and accesses of despair are natural — though not inevitable on the way — not because they are helps but because they are imposed on us by the darkness of this human nature out of which we have to struggle into the Light. I do not suppose Ramakrishna or Vivekananda would have recommended the incident, you allude to as an example for others to follow — they would surely have said that faith, fortitude, perseverance were the better way. That after all was what they stuck to in the end in spite of these bad moments .... At any rate Ramakrishna told the story of Narada and the ascetic yogi and Vaishnava Bhakta with approval of its moral. I put it in my own language but keep the substance: Narada on his way to Vaikuntha met a yogi practising hard tapasya on the hills. "O Narada," cried the yogi, "you are going to Vaikuntha and will see Vishnu. I have been practising terrific austerities all my life and yet I have not even now attained to him. Ask him at least for me when I shall reach him." Then Narada met a Vaishnava, a bhakta who was singing songs to Hari and dancing to his own singing, and he cried also: "O Narada, you will see my Lord Hari. Ask him when I shall reach him and see his face." On his way back Narada came first to the yogi. "I have asked Vishnu," said the sage, "you will realise him after six more lives." The yogi raised a cry of loud lamentation: "What! So many austerities! Such gigantic endeavours! And how hard to me is the Lord Vishnu!" Next Narada met again the bhakta and said to him: "I have no good news for you. You will see the Lord but only after a lakh of lives." But the bhakta leapt up with a great cry of rapture: "Oh, I shall see my Lord Hari! After a lakh of lives I shall see my Lord Hari! How great is the grace of the Lord!" And he began dancing and singing in a renewed ecstasy. Then

Narada said, "Thou hast attained. Today thou shalt see the Lord." Well, you may say: "What an extravagant story and how contrary to human nature!" Not so contrary as all that and in any case hardly more extravagant than the stories of Harishchandra and Shivi. Still, I do not hold up the bhakta as an example, for I myself insist on the realisation in this life and not after six or a lakh of births more. But the point of these stories is in the moral and surely when Ramakrishna told it, he was not ignorant that there was a sunlit path of yoga. He even seems to say that it is the quicker way as well as the better.

[32]
The Vakalam (Delegation of Authority) of which Sri Ramakrishna Speaks

There are some who sit watching for an *ādeś* and, until the *ādeś* comes, are resolved not to act. But to such the command will always be denied. It is those who act, who are sure to find a solitude created within them in which they are alone with God and come face to face with Reality. Moments of physical loneliness, periods of meditative retirements are needed, but they are subordinate and auxiliary. Action done as a Sadhana, as a sacrifice to God, done first without attachment to the results and then without attachment to the action itself, is the indispensable condition. And it must be action done with Shraddha, with faith, whatever action it may be; it is not only for God but from God. There will be errors, there will be stumblings, but this is the *viramārga*, the way of the heroes, and in it one must be afraid of nothing, still less afraid of errors and stumblings. Only if we rely upon our own strength in the action, we shall go on stumbling to the end of the chapter. There must be the Shraddha

that God leads, that He has taken the burden of our Sadhana upon Himself, and that every error and stumbling is from Him and intended to prepare an unfaltering and instructed strength. This is the Vakalam, of which Ramakrishna always spoke. The nation, too, has gone on stumbling, but progressing, exhausting its errors, its sins, and the possibility of calamity and defeat, taking swiftly and intensely the remnants of its evil Karma, ever since it began its Sadhana of action. And because it took the Name on its lips when it started, the Eternal Mother will not abandon it. For the name, even when taken in vain, inadvertently, or by accident, saves alive. Much more when it is taken with heart and soul and made the foundation of the Sadhana.

[33]

The Method of Baby-Cat

If one wanted the Divine, the Divine himself would take up the purifying of the heart and develop the sadhana and give the necessary experiences; it can and does happen in that way if one has trust and confidence in the Divine and the will to surrender. For such a taking up involves one's putting oneself in the hands of the Divine rather than relying on one's own efforts alone and this implies one's putting one's trust and confidence in the Divine and a progressive self-giving. It is in fact the principle of sadhana that I myself followed and it is the central process of yoga as I envisage it. It is, I suppose, what Sri Ramakrishna meant by the method of the baby-cat in his image. But all cannot follow that at once; it takes time for them to arrive at it — it grows most when the mind and vital fall quiet.

What I mean by surrender is this inner surrender of the mind and vital. ...

The core of the inner surrender is trust and confidence in the Divine.

[34]

It Is Not Egoism

As for the sense of superiority, that too is a little difficult to avoid when greater horizons open before the consciousness, unless one is already of a saintly and humble disposition. There are men like Nag Mahashoy in whom spiritual experience creates more and more humility, there are others like Vivekananda in whom it erects a giant sense of strength and superiority — European critics have taxed him with it rather severely; there are others in whom it fixes a sense of superiority to men and humility to the Divine. Each position has its value. Take Vivekananda's famous answer to the Madras Pundit who objected to one of his assertions, "But Shankara does not say so." To which Vivekananda replied, "No, Shankara does not say so, but I, Vivekananda, say so", and the Pundit sank back amazed and speechless. That "I, Vivekananda" stands up to the ordinary eye like a Himalaya of self-confident egoism. But there was nothing false or unsound in Vivekananda's spiritual experience. This was not mere egoism, but the sense of what he stood for and the attitude of the fighter who, as the representative of something very great, could not allow himself to be put down or belittled. This is not to deny the necessity of non-egoism and of spiritual humility, but to show that the question is not so easy as it appears at first sight. For if I have to express my spiritual experiences, I must do it with truth — I must record them, their *bhāva*, the thoughts, feelings, extensions of consciousness which accompany them. What can I do with the experience in which one feels the

whole world in oneself or the force of the Divine flowing in one's being and nature or the certitude of one's faith against all doubts and doubters or one's oneness with the Divine or the smallness of human thought and life compared with this greater knowledge and existence? And I have to use the word "I"— I cannot take refuge in saying "this body" or "this appearance", — especially as I am not a Mayavadin. Shall I not inevitably fall into expressions which will make X shake his head at my assertions as full of pride and ego? I imagine it would be difficult to avoid it.

[35]

Yoga and Evolution

... all life, when we look behind its appearances, is a vast Yoga of Nature who attempts in the conscious and the sub-conscious to realise her perfection in an ever-increasing expression of her yet unrealised potentialities and to unite herself with her own divine reality. In man, her thinker, she for the first time upon this Earth devises self-conscious means and willed arrangements of activity by which this great purpose may be more swiftly and puissantly attained. Yoga, as Swami Vivekananda has said, may be regarded as a means of compressing one's evolution into a single life or a few years or even a few months of bodily existence.

Sri Aurobindo

Appendix:

Swami Vivekananda's Speech at Chicago At the World's Parliament of Religions, Sept. 1893

(Hundred and Twenty Years Ago)

Swami Vivekananda spoke at the World's Parliament of Religions, held at Chicago, on 11, 1, 19, 20, 26 and 27 Sept., 1893.

At the opening session he said:

"Sisters and Brothers of America. [*At this moment came the three minute standing ovation from the audience of 7,000]* It fills my heart with joy unspeakable to rise in response to the warm and cordial welcome which you have given us. I thank you in name of the most ancient order of monks in the world; I thank you in the name of the mother of religions; and I thank you in the name of millions and millions of Hindu people of all classes and sects.

"My thanks also to some of the speakers on this platform who, referring to the delegates from the Orient, have told you that these men from far-off nations may well claim the honor of bearing to different lands the idea of toleration.

"I am proud to belong to a religion which has taught the world both tolerance and universal acceptance. We believe not only in universal toleration but we accept all religions as true. I am proud to belong to a nation which has sheltered the persecuted and the refugees of all religions and all nations of the earth. I am proud to tell you that we have gathered in our bosom the purest remnant of the Israelites who came to Southern India and took refuge with us in very year in which their holy temple was shattered to pieces by Roman tyranny. I am proud to belong to the religion which

has sheltered and is still fostering the remnant of the grand Zoroastrian nation.

"I will quote to you brethren a few lines from a hymn which I remember to have repeated from my earliest childhood, which is every day repeated by millions of human beings: 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'

"The present convention, which is one of the most august assemblies ever held, is in itself a vindication, a declaration to the world of the wonderful doctrine preached in the Gita: 'Whosoever comes to me, though whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.'

"Sectarianism, bigotry, and it's horrible descendant, fanaticism, have long possessed this beautiful Earth. They have filled the earth with violence, drenched it often and often with human blood, destroyed civilization, and sent whole nations to despair. Had it not been for these horrible demons, human society would be far more advanced than it is now.

"But their time is come; and I fervently hope that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending their way to the same goal."

At the Concluding Session he said:

The seed is put in the ground, and earth and air and water are placed around it. Does the seed become the earth, or the air, or the water? No. It becomes a plant. It develops after

the law of its own growth, assimilates the air, the earth, and the water, converts them into plant substance, and grows into a plant.

Similar is the case with religion. The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.

If the Parliament of Religions has shown anything to the world, it is this: It has proved to the world that holiness, purity and charity are not the exclusive possessions of any church in the world, and that every system has produced men and women of the most exalted character. In the face of this evidence, if anybody dreams of the exclusive survival of his own religion and the destruction of the others, I pity him from the bottom of my heart, and point out to him that upon the banner of every religion will soon be written in spite of resistance: "Help and not fight," "Assimilation and not Destruction," "Harmony and Peace and not Dissension."

*

(Swami Vivekananda spoke at 6 sessions totally, on 11, 15, 19, 20, 26 and 27 September 1893.

And his call went right into the hearts of those who listened to him. People had been stirred to their depths. There was general applause and hundreds flocked round him for light and knowledge.

The message spread from country to country — the message of hope and light amidst the encircling gloom, the message of love and compassion pledged to defeat hatred, intolerance and narrowness, the message that bore the imprint of eternal life.)

Guidance from Swami Vivekananda:

Be Like the Pearl Oyster — The Way to Success

Be like the pearl oyster. There is a pretty Indian fable to the effect that if it rains when the star Swāti is in the ascendant, and a drop of rain falls into an oyster, that drop becomes a pearl. The oysters know this, so they come to the surface when the star shines, and wait to catch the precious raindrop. When a drop falls into them, quickly the oysters close their shells and dive down to the bottom of the sea, there to patiently develop the drop into the pearl. We should be like that. First hear, then understand, and then, leaving all distractions, shut your minds to outside influences, and devote yourselves to developing the truth within you. There is the danger of frittering away your energies by taking up an idea only for its novelty, and again giving it up for another that is newer. Take one thing up and do it, and see the end of it, and before you have seen the end, do not give it up. He who can become mad with an idea, he alone sees light. Those that only take a nibble here and a nibble there will never attain anything. They may titillate their nerves for a moment, but there it will end. They will be slaves in the hands of nature, and will never get beyond the senses.

Those who really want to be Yogis must give up, once for all, this nibbling at things. Take up one idea. Make that one idea your life — think of it, dream of it, live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of your body be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success...

— Swami Vivekananda

(The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda, Mayavati, 1977 ed., Vol. 1. 177)

Sources of the Passages Published Here:

[Serial No.1] SABCL Vol. 17, p. 332 (CWSA Vol. 1, p. 662) **[2]** SABCL 22: 150 (CWSA 35: 163) **[3]** SABCL 2: 37 (CWSA 8: 62) **[4]** SABCL 20: 36 (CWSA 23: 41) **[5]** SABCL 26: 68 (CWSA 36: 98-99) **[6]** CWSA 36: 112-13 **[7]** CWSA 10: 128 **[8]** SABCL 14 : 8 (CWSA 20: 62-63) **[9]** SABCL 14: 415 (CWSA 20: 21-22) **[10]** SABCL 14: 129, (CWSA 20: 186-87) **[11]** SABCL 20: 51 (CWSA 23: 57) **[12]** SABCL 1: 666 (CWSA 6: 84) **[13]** SABCL 1: 66-67 (CWSA 6: 84-85) **[14]** SABCL 1: 427-28 (CWSA 6: 513) **[15]** SABCL 1: 799-801 (CWSA 7: 977-878) **[16]** SABCL 1: 714-15 (CWSA 7: 891-92) **[17]** SABCL 2: 412 (CWSA 8: 465) **[18]** SABCL 3: 327 (CWSA 1: 365-66) **[19]** SABCL 1: 855-57 (CWSA 6: 1034-36) **[20]** SABCL 20: 170-71 (CWSA 8: 192-93) **[21]** SABCL 2: 344 (CWSA 13: 10-11) **[22]** SABCL 2: 461-63, (CWSA 1: 551-53) **[23]** SABCL 17: 98 (CWSA 12: 442-43) **[24]** SABCL 17: 67-68 (CWSA 12: 105-06) **[25]** CWSA 17: 197-98 **[26]** SABCL 19: 1050 (CWSA 22: 1087) **[27]** SABCL 20: 257-58; 22 :149; 22: 150 (CWSA 23: 269-71; 35: 94-95; 35: 163) **[28]** SABCL 22 : 401-02; 22: 406-07; 23: 619-20 **[29]** SABCL 22: 94; 22: 87-88; 22: 407; 22: 423 **[30]** CWSA 17: 588-90 **[31]** SABCL 23: 789-90 **[32]** SABCL **2:** 431-32 **[33]** SABCL 23: 586-87 **[34]** SABCL 24: 1388-89 (CWSA 32: 133) **[35]** SABCL 20: 2 (CWSA 23:6)

With the best compliments of :

RAHEJA UNIVERSAL
THE WORLD TO COME

Raheja Centre-Point, 294, C.S.T. Road, Kalina, Santacruz (E),
Mumbai - 400 098. Tel: + 91-22-66414141
e-mail: raheja@rahejauniversal.com
Web: www.rahejauniversal.com