SWAMI VIVEKANANDA:
A RATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
(Rationality as propounded by Bertrand Russell)

A dissertation submitted to the Vinayaka Missions University for the award of the degree of

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Declaration

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SWAMI VIVEKANANDA: A RATIONAL PERSPECTIVE
(Rationality as Propounded by Bertrand Russell) submitted for the
award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of Vinayaka Missions
University has been carried out by me under the supervision and
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any part thereof has not been previously submitted for any degree or
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under my guidance and supervision and submitted to Vinayaka Missions
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that this work is has not formed the basis for the award of any degree,
diploma, associateship, fellowship or any other titles in this university or any
other university or institution of higher learning.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 INTRODUCTION

It may not seem mandatory to justify the inclusion of 'The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda' in the genre of Indian writing in English, unless some conservative fundamentalists with a myopic view of literature raise their brows.

Nevertheless, a modest effort is made, at the outset, to justify the stand.

*Webster's New World College Dictionary*, defines the term Literature as (1) the profession of an author; production of writings especially of imaginative prose or verse etc; (2) all writings in prose or verse, especially those of an imaginative or critical character, often distinguished for scientific writing, news reporting etc. (3) all of such writings considered as having permanent value because of their beauty, excellence of form, great emotional effect etc.

The works of Bertrand Russell and Swami Vivekananda fit into this definition.
Bertrand Russell was awarded Nobel Prize for Literature in 1950 though a large bulk of his works is philosophically oriented. Similarly, Sri Aurobindo and Swami Vivekananda are some of the earliest Indian writers in English. They stand tall in the Indian literary history for their chaste language and profound philosophy. Some of the poems and essays of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Aurobindo find a place in the English academic curricula of several Universities. The writings of Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and Dr. Radhakrishnan, though they are either philosophical or political in outlook, have already been accepted in the main stream of Indian writing in English.

The thesis intends to analyse *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* to prove that he is a rationalist. Swami Vivekananda is one of the great religious leaders and spiritual savants of the world. Bertrand Russell says that religion is a product of fear, superstition and even ignorance. Many people endorse this opinion of Bertrand Russell.

This thesis is intended to prove that religion is not a product of fear and ignorance and that the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda, who is the greatest representative of Hindu religion, is rational.

Bertrand Russell is one of the most representative philosophers of the West. The thesis looks up to his definition of rationality to analyse *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*.

This thesis is intended to analyze *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* and present his arguments in a rational way. Most of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* contains to a large extent the speeches
of Swami Vivekananda made in the West. And most of his arguments are rational in order to convince the Western mind. The fundamental laws of religion are the fundamental laws of spirituality and they are not irrational.
1.2 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

There are quite a few books on Swami Vivekananda which have been published. Most of them have been published by the Ramakrishna Mutt and Mission. Most of them are based on the various biographies of Swami Vivekananda. They praise his personality. They praise him for his knowledge, memory and the influence he had over the Western audiences. They describe his love and devotion to his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

However, an analysis of the complete works of Swami Vivekananda has not been attempted till now.

So primary source, i.e., the eight volumes of *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* becomes the foundation of this thesis. The primary source is thoroughly analyzed and interpreted based on the personal, logical and scientific perspective of the research scholar. However this thesis has made use of some secondary resources which is acknowledged.

This thesis is an original and pioneering effort made to analyze and interpret *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* as a rationalist. All the observations, interpretations and analysis made in the course of the thesis are based on personal, logical and scientific perspective of the research scholar.

In India, when a disciple accepts that he will follow the instructions given by his master, he shows great humility towards him and surrenders totally to him. Books on Swami Vivekananda normally advocate its devotees
to practice devotion and meditation. Such books could be devoid of a balanced view.

Many find it rationally difficult to accept a God and find devotion to God a meaningless business. They also explain that the supreme goal of meditation is to attain a pure consciousness. This is something which only a mystic can understand. Rationality seems to have no business here.
1.3 NEED FOR THE STUDY

The review of the books published so far on Swami Vivekananda reveals that no attempt has been made to view *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in a scientific and logical perspective. There is a need for a logical process which this thesis intends to fulfill.

A host of Eastern and Western philosophers have written on reason scepticism, logic and rationality. These doctrines remain outside the purview of the intended research. Bertrand Russell of the 20th century imbibed in his works the spirit of Western Philosophy. His books like *The sceptical essays* and *History of Western Philosophy* bear ample testimony to his mental prowess, logical thinking and rationality. For the purpose of this thesis Bertrand Russell's definition of rationality is of vital importance because his is the voice of a tradition – a tradition of logical thinking in the West.
1.4.1 OBJECTIVES AND HYPOTHESES

The main objective of this thesis is to analyse *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* in the light of rationality as propounded by Bertrand Russell.

It is necessary to consider the views of Bertrand Russell on rationality and the views of Swami Vivekananda and hypothesize what can be done in the thesis.

In broad terms rationality is a philosophy where behaviour, ideas, opinions, actions etc. are based on reason and logic rather than on emotions. They are based on evidence and facts; not on blind belief.\(^5\)

A man is rational in proportion as his intelligence informs and controls his desires. It is believed that the control of one's acts by his intelligence is ultimately most important. When Bertrand Russell speaks of controlling desires, he is in the realm of religion in a larger sense of the term.

Swami Vivekananda says that Science has proved that the sum total of cosmic energy is always the same. In other words man can neither create nor destroy either matter or energy. So one has to look up to a creator who has created all this matter and energy we see around. The universe has a creator and he can be called God. Through scientific and rationalistic approach one can also study the attributes of this creator called God.

This intensive study of Science only makes one conclude that there is some Reality behind this appearance. Known reality, they suggest is mere
phenomenon or appearance but behind the appearance there must be a real essence; behind the phenomenal manifestation there must be an ultimate force.

Thus views of Swami Vivekananda can be analyzed and shown that they are scientific and rational.
1.4.2 THE VIEWS OF BERTRAND RUSSELL

When the thesis speaks of Rationality in Swami Vivekananda, it is to Bertrand Russell's definitions of rationality that is looked up to.

Bertrand Russell says that the definitions of Rationality has two faces - theoretical and practical. It means that it has to be ascertained what is a rational opinion in a theoretical sense and what is rational conduct in a practical sense.

"To begin with, Rationality in opinion – I should define it merely as the habit of taking into account of all relevant evidence in arriving at a belief. Where certainty is unattainable, a rational man will give most weight to the most probable opinion, while retaining others, which have an appreciable probability in his mind as hypotheses which subsequent evidence may show to be preferable. This, of course, assumes that it is possible in many cases to ascertain facts and probabilities by an objective method – i.e., a method which will lead any two careful people to the same result."  

This doctrine of Bertrand Russell holds ground when exact sciences like Mathematics and Physics are discussed. In most of the cases two scientists solve a mathematical equation and put forth same results. This can also happen in social sciences, religion and philosophy; only the arguments should be logical; the opinions should appeal to the intellect, sense of justice and common sense. Otherwise there wouldn't be so many bestsellers in the field of social sciences, philosophy and religion. Even scientists could have two
opinions on the same subject especially when they define abstract concepts of pure physics and pure mathematics. But this thesis cannot digress into that field now.

There are people who advocate religion and at the same time speak about the limitations of the intellect itself. But it is through intellect we understand things logically. Even mystic and metaphysical knowledge can be scrutinized by the intellect. Infact people with a limited intellect find it easy to condemn religion for its certain local and irrational practices and rituals while an intellect with a broader horizon can even discern the rationality behind the doctrines of such mystics as Jesus Christ, Buddha and Swami Vivekananda.

This whole proposal of Bertrand Russell is better understood when explained from a different angle. Irrationalism means disbelief in objective fact. It arises from the desire to assert something for which there is no evidence or to deny something for which there is very good evidence. The evidence and facts have to be objective. In case the evidence is insufficient or not objective judgement has to be suspended. This brings a man to Bertrand Russell's idea of being an agnostic. It is different from being an atheist. He neither believes in God nor does he disbelieve. He suspends judgement because of insufficient evidence. A rationalist in opinion is also a sceptic because both demand sufficient evidence before they accept any doctrine. Bertrand Russell was both a rationalist and a sceptic.

He says, "I wish to propose for the reader's favourable consideration a doctrine which may, I fear, appear wildly paradoxical and subversive. The
doctrine in question is this, that it is undesirable to believe a proposition when there is no ground whatever for supposing it true. I must of course admit that if such an opinion became common it would completely transform our social life and our political system; since both are at present faultless, this must weigh against it. I am also aware (what is more serious) that it would tend to diminish the incomes of clairvoyants, book makers, bishops and others who live on the irrational hopes of those who have done nothing to deserve good fortune here or hereafter.”

Bertrand Russell might diminish the incomes of clairvoyants and bishops with his proposal. He might even dismiss the church. But he cannot dismiss the personality of Jesus Christ and the wisdom and rationality of the Sermon on the mount.

Bertrand Russell himself feels that certain ordinary beliefs of common sense have to be accepted. He gives the example of an eclipse. When expert scientists announce that there is going to be an eclipse on such and such a date it is better to believe them and watch out for one. If a person who lives in India, has not been to Europe and if he is told about its existence, it would be better to believe. Every Indian need not necessarily go to Europe and see to believe in its existence. He can believe his teachers, textbooks and maps. But this belief has a rational basis. He believes in a system. It is a belief of common sense.
Again it is very sensible to believe in an expert's opinion. Bertrand Russell himself gives the example of Albert Einstein who would have been rejected by a panel of experts of an earlier generation. There are other matters about which experts are not agreed. Even when the experts all agree they may well be mistaken. Einstein's view as to the magnitude of the deflection of light by gravitation would have been rejected by all experts not many years ago, yet it proved to be right.

"Nevertheless the opinion of experts, when it is unanimous, must be accepted by non-experts, as more likely to be right than the opposite opinion. The scepticism that I advocate amounts only to this: (1) that when the experts are agreed, the opposite opinion cannot be held to be certain; (2) that when they are not agreed, no opinion can be regarded as certain by a non-expert; (3) that when they all hold that no-sufficient grounds for a positive opinion exist, the ordinary man would do well to suspend his judgement."\textsuperscript{10}

This is again a tricky situation because to define an expert and a non-expert is never easy.

Now the bone of contention is – Can Swami Vivekananda be considered an expert in Hindu philosophy? Does he provide a rational basis, logical evidences and acceptable arguments for his knowledge? The thesis will have to scrutinize the complete works of Swami Vivekananda and inquire for logical arguments which support his philosophical knowledge. This is precisely what is done in the forthcoming pages.
Till now theoretical rationality or rationality in opinion is discussed. This brings us a man to rationality in conduct or rationality in practice. Man's behaviour and conduct are controlled by his desire. Without a desire no man acts; whether he eats, drinks, travels, earns money, marries, even breathes, any act – he does it driven by an inner desire.

So, practical rationality has something to do with a man's desire and his behaviour. People with different desires dispute over differences in opinion and their different wants.

In the words of Bertrand Russell, "So far we have been considering only the theoretical side of rationality. The practical side to which we must turn our attention, is more difficult. Differences of opinion on practical questions spring from two sources; first, differences between the desires of the disputants; secondly differences in their estimates for the means for realizing their desires. Differences of the same kind are really theoretical and only derivatively practical. For example, some authorities hold that our first line of defence should consist of battle-ships, others that it should consist of aeroplanes. Here there is no difference as regards the end proposed, namely national defence, but only as to the means. The argument can therefore be conducted in a purely scientific manner, since the disagreement which causes the dispute is only as to facts, present or future, certain or probable. To all such cases, the kind of rationality which is called theoretical applies, in spite of the fact that a practical issue is involved."
So we have no problem with the 'second source' of difference of opinion as it is governed by theoretical rationality.

The 'first source' - differences between the desires of the disputants is again taken up. They present difficulties in asserting what is rationality. The example of a gambler is quoted. He will come out with very 'rational' arguments to convince his disputants that it is the 'right' thing to do worse, a group of people rationalize that their political party is better than the other. Their disputants in turn present equally 'rational' assertions to prove that their political party is far superior to the other one. There are religious fanatics who want to prove, rationally that their religion is superior to the others. This has led some people to maintain and many more to believe practically, that in such matters it is impossible to be objective, and that no method is possible except a tug-of-war between classes with opposite bias. Bertrand Russell feels that here psycho-analysis is particularly useful since it enables men to become aware of a bias which has hitherto been unconscious, combined with a scientific outlook. This method helps one to understand himself better. There however remains a residuum which cannot be treated by purely intellectual methods. The desires of one man by no means harmonize completely with those of another. With all this in view, Bertrand Russell has this to say –

"Rationality in practice may be defined as the habit of remembering all our relevant desires, and not only the one which happens at the moment to be the strongest."\(^{12}\)
It is analyzed with an example. There is a student in a University. He has a great desire to do well in the University examinations and secure distinction. He also has a desire to gamble with friends. It is his habit. He rationalizes the importance of both his desires. One can understand the rationale behind doing well in university examinations. He also has an argument to offer regarding his desire to gamble. He says that it refreshes his mind and cheers him up. But in the long run his desire for gambling might ruin his desire to do well in the examinations. It is a possibility. At the time of gambling he might have felt that it was quite a harmless thing to do. In fact, according to him, he did it to refresh himself and cheer him up. But it did not work that way. It might have consumed a lot of his time and disturbed his mind too. He is irrational because he forgets that, by indulging in the desire to gamble which he happens to feel most strongly at the moment, he will thwart other desires which in the long run are more important to him. If men were rational, they would take a more correct view of their self-interest and they would help themselves better and society too.

Bertrand Russell has similar arguments and illustrations to put forth and finally concludes that rationality in practice is only a matter of degree. He says that, "A man is rational in proportion as his intelligence informs and controls his desires. I believe that the control of our acts by our intelligence is ultimately of utmost importance and that alone will make social life remain possible as science increases the means at our disposal for injuring others."13
When Bertrand Russell speaks of controlling desires, he is in the realm of religion in a larger sense of the term. Jesus Christ says that a man cannot serve both God and Mammon\textsuperscript{14}. In recent translations of the Bible, the word money is used instead of Mammon. Obviously Jesus Christ means that if a man is overpowered by the desire to become rich and powerful in the worldly sense, he cannot follow God. In other words desire for riches must be controlled in order to pursue God. Buddha has directly remarked that desire is the root cause of all the misery in the world. His injunction is that desires have to be controlled rationally.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa (the spiritual teacher of Swami Vivekananda) also says\textsuperscript{15} that a person should control his desire for money and sex if he wants to succeed in spiritual life. The voice of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is the voice of Vedanta which is the voice of reason also.

Bertrand Russell's rationality is all about enquiry. He seeks evidence if not physical, at least intellectual, before he arrives at any opinion. Here all arguments are investigated which support Swami Vivekananda's philosophy. It is analyzed on an intellectual and logical level.

One might wonder how Bertrand Russell who had four wives had anything in common with Swami Vivekananda, a monk. Certainly they both have one thing in common. The essence of Bertrand Russell's rationality is, he does not accept anything before he verifies it. This is Swami Vivekananda's principle too. They both were rationalists. As for as marrying four times is
concerned, Swami Vivekananda would not rejoice at such an idea. But he says that if a man has desires, he should fulfill them before he thinks of a spiritual life. For a man to have desires within and think of God, Yoga and a spiritual life without is hypocrisy. He condemns hypocrisy and not marrying four times.
1.4.3 VIEWS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

With these ideas of rationality and scepticism in the background, the thesis begins an analysis of the complete works of Swami Vivekananda, in Eight volumes, published by Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati, Pitorgarh.

The first volume has four main chapters

1) Addresses at the Parliament of Religions.
2) Karma Yoga
3) Raja Yoga
4) Lectures and Discourses

Swami Vivekananda's address at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago on the 13\textsuperscript{th} of September 1893, made him famous for the first time on a vast scale. He addresses the people of America as 'Brothers and Sisters' which made the entire audience applaud for two full minutes. It is a brief address where he thanks all the delegates and authorities. He expresses pride in representing India and Hinduism. He translates a prayer from Sanskrit which says that all religious paths lead to the same goal. In the end, like a true rationalist, he condemns sectarianism, bigotry and its horrible descendent fanaticism. He hopes fervently that the bell that tolled on that morning, in honour of that 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. Swami Vivekananda is the last person to accept any fanaticism and consequent conflicts and fight
between religions. He feels that every religion has the same goal to attain. In another short address delivered on 15th of September, Swami Vivekananda explains how each person professing fanatically a particular religion is like a frog in a well. He has no contact with the outer world. He cannot think rationally as he is immersed in the 'greatness' of his own religion. He cannot understand the vastness and depth of the universal truth which is like the ocean. He mistakes his well to be the ocean! If a man wants to reach the ultimate and universal truth he has to break open his narrow confines and seek the universality in all religions. Obviously every religion has two layers. In the outer and superficial layer it has only rituals which differ from religion to religion. But the inner hardcore of every religion is same—it seeks to make its followers pure in heart, mind and body so that they lead a good life, and become fit to realize the ultimate truth. This hardcore of all religions is the spiritual part. It ordains a journey of life based on spiritual injunctions.

The intellect should be used not to condemn the outer and superficial rituals, but to discern and appreciate, if possible follow, the inner hardcore. Swami Vivekananda is certainly a rationalist enough to see this.

Next comes the most important among his addresses, "The Paper on Hinduism". He mentions that three religions have come down to us from pre-historic times – Hinduism, Zoroastrianism and Judaism. They all have received tremendous shocks and all of them prove by their survival their inner strength. Judaism failed to absorb Christianity and Zoroastrianism is practised today by only a handful of Parsees who remain to tell the tale of their grand
religion. But sect after sect arose in India and seemed to shake the religion of
the Vedas to its very foundation, but Hinduism absorbed all of them. From the
high spiritual flights of Vedanta philosophy, which even the latest discoveries
of science reflects, to the low ideas of idolatory and mythology, the
agnosticism of the Buddhists and atheism of Jains, each and all have a place in
the Hindu's religion.

The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. They hold that Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound
ludicrous to this audience, how a book can be without beginning or end. But
by Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of the
spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the
law of gravitation existed before its discovery and would exist if all humanity
forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world19

The Vedas declare that man is not just the body. 'I' living in the body is a
soul, a spirit. The body might die, but the soul does not. It was not created. It
has no beginning and no end. It is eternal. It is immortal, perfect and infinite.
Death means only a change of centre from one body to another. The soul, or
simply 'It' is everywhere, the pure and formless one. It is Almighty and All-
powerful. It is All-merciful as well. It is the essence behind all creation. It is
the 'reality' behind matter. The soul in a man is nothing but a part of the
universal soul. Swami Vivekananda would have agreed that the soul in a
Mr. John and a Mr. Peter and even in a worm or a stone are part of the same
source 'IT'. In Hinduism IT is referred to as BRAHMAN. In modern
philosophy IT is also referred to as SELF. The difference among them is only in the degree of manifestation. He says that the entire universe is a manifestation of 'IT'. In fact, Swami Vivekananda uses the word 'manifestation' instead of 'creation'. 'IT' was not created for creation means a combination which must die or get destroyed in future.

The Vedas also teach that this creation (manifestation) is without beginning or end. Swami Vivekananda says, "The Vedas teach us that creation is without beginning or end. Science is said to have proved that the sum total of cosmic energy is always the same. Then, if there was a time when nothing existed, where was all this manifested energy? (God as the creator of energy or matter is something which Bertrand Russell also does not refute) Some say it was in a potential form in God. In that case, God is sometimes potential and sometimes kinetic, which would make Him mutable. Everything mutable is a compound, and everything compound must undergo that change which is called destruction. So God would die, which is absurd.

Therefore there never was a time when there was no creation. If I may be allowed to use a simile, creation and creator are two lines, without beginning and without end, running parallel to each other. God is the ever active Providence, by whose power systems after systems are being evolved out of chaos, made to run for a time and again destroyed." God is not affected by this process. It means that God is not just that cosmic energy but He is the source of that cosmic energy which is manifested as Universe. God is something more than cosmic energy. He is 'It'. The
reader might feel that there are any number of loose ends in what is put forth here. This subject of Soul, God and Creation will be dealt with in greater detail in the chapter where Swami Vivekananda's 'Jnana Yoga' will be the subject of my analysis.

Next Swami Vivekananda comes to the ultimate question – "why was this universe created?" Swami Vivekananda represents the Hindus when he says, "I do not know, I do not know how the perfect being, the soul, came to think of itself as imperfect, as joined to and conditioned by matter." Like a true rationalist he suspends judgement.

But this suspension of judgement does not prevent a man's spirit from seeking freedom from the bondage of matter; from the bondage of death, pain and sorrow. The experience of Man in general is, as he goes through the dual throng of pain and pleasure, he seeks liberation from such a bondage of pleasure and pain. The rest of the 'Paper on Hinduism' is devoted to various methods of attaining this freedom called 'Mukti' in Sanskrit. In fact Vedanta is about the various methods man has evolved to attain 'Mukti'.

To Swami Vivekananda religion is not just a doctrine. It is a process. All the doctrines and injunctions in a religion (especially Hinduism) is an exercise. By that exercise man becomes perfect. The exercise stops when a person adheres to blind following of rituals. Our practice of religion ought to be one of constant enquiry. Also we must verify the doctrines of religion, by constant practice of the doctrines themselves. We have to see if they produce the desired results.
According to Swami Vivekananda, the goal of religion is to find the unity in diversity; 'Him' who is the constant basis of an everchanging world; the soul of which everything is but delusive manifestation; and to understand that principle through which everything else is understood in the universe.

Is there a man who does not want religion, who does not want 'Mukti' (liberation) and who wants to continue pursuing only the riches of the world and pleasures of the senses? To him, Swami Vivekananda would only say 'Go ahead' because he is a rationalist. He clearly says that it is better to be an atheist than be a hypocrite. And he also knows that pursuing only pleasures of life is pursuing also the pain and misery of life ultimately. If not today man will realize the impermanence of pleasures in life and the impermanence of life itself some other day.

Swami Vivekananda said to one of his Western disciples who had been teased by a friend because of her doubts, scruples and hesitations to believe, "Let none regret that they were difficult to convince! I fought my Master (Ramakrishna Paramahamsa) for six long years, with the result that I know every inch of the way."
1.5 METHODOLOGY ADOPTED

By and large the thesis employs the descriptive method of research. However each chapter requires a different methodology to substantiate the view. The critical, analytical and exploratory approaches are also made use of for different chapters.

The primary resource of the thesis comprises of all The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda in eight volumes. These volumes contain a series of lectures, poems and letters on Hinduism in general covering the areas of Jnana Yoga, Bhakthi Yoga, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga which have been categorized and analyzed under different heads in each chapter. The chapters are organized in accordance with the chapters in the primary source.

Bhakthi Yoga is viewed with a critical eye. The very basis of Bhakthi Yoga is love of God. It is only after the logical arguments of Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga that Bhakthi Yoga is appreciated.

The arguments in Jnana Yoga are analytical. The statements of Bertrand Russell are taken into account.

Bertrand Russell's Neutral Monism means that neither mind nor matter is a primitive constituent of the universe but both are derived from a more fundamental homogeneous stuff, the difference between them being ultimately reducible between different forms of arrangement of that fundamental stuff. What science has admittedly done is to revise its account of the universe so as
to atleast provide for the possibility of religion being true. In fact science has cleared the boards of the Universe for religion.

In an attempt to explore all the possibilities in finding a scientific and rational basis for religion based on evolutionary theory, during the course of the thesis, the methodology becomes exploratory as well.

Every evolution presupposes an involution. Something cannot come out of nothing. Science tells us that matter and energy can neither be created nor be destroyed. So, if man is an evolution of the mollusc, then even the greatest of men like Christ, Buddha and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa are a product of this evolved mollusc. That energy which manifests itself slowly through various stages until it becomes a perfect man like Christ or Paramahamsa cannot come out of nothing. It came out of that 'something' or 'force' or 'energy'. It existed somewhere. And if the mollusc or the protoplasm is the first point to which modern science can trace, then that mollusc or protoplasm must have contained that energy of Buddha and Christ.
END NOTES:

2. Ibid, P. 49.
3. Ibid, P. 49.
10. Ibid, P. 12.
12. Ibid, P. 41.
13. Ibid, P. 42.
17. Ibid, P. 3.
18. Ibid, P. 4-5.


Results

and

Discussions
CHAPTER TWO

KARMA YOGA

2.1 KARMA AND ITS EFFECT ON CHARACTER

Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship or psychic control or philosophy – by one, or more, or all of these – and be free. This is the whole of religion Doctrines or Dogmas or rituals or books or temples or forms are but secondary details.\(^1\)

– Swami Vivekananda

In the previous chapter it was mentioned that 'Mukti' (liberation) is the goal of Hindu religion. This mukti is obtaining the ultimate 'knowledge' that man is not the body but the 'soul'. This soul is divine and part of the 'Brahman' (SELF). To manifest this divinity is attaining 'Mukti'.

Swami Vivekananda has mentioned four methods of attaining Mukti.

1) **Work** : Work means *Karma* or action. It is the path of *Karma Yoga*. Yoga means to attain the union of the Soul with God (SELF).
2) **Psychic control**: It is the method of **Raja Yoga**. It teaches mind control.

3) **Philosophy**: It is the method of obtaining 'Knowledge', i.e., **Jnana Yoga**. Here knowledge or *Jnana* (in Sanskrit language) is not just knowledge of this universe like physics, history, arts, mathematics etc., but knowledge of the soul and knowledge of the divine.

4) **Worship**: It is **Bhakti Yoga**. Bhakti means devotion leading to intense love of God.

A practice of one of these or a synthesis of two or more of these methods and practice of the same is essential to attain 'Mukti'.

The rationality behind Karma Yoga, is quite obvious. The nature of man is such that he always acts. Even a thought is an action at the mental level. So no man can refrain from action even for a moment. Inaction in man means death. And to give a rational basis to action is to provide the right direction to the way a man works, and to the way a man thinks. Swami Vivekananda first defines what is Karma and then says it has two meanings. (1) It means work. (2) It means the effects of past actions in Karma Yoga, however Karma means work.

"The word Karma is derived from Sanskrit Kri-to do ; all action is Karma. Technically, this word also means the effects of actions. In connection with metaphysics, it sometimes means the effects, of which our past actions were the causes. But in Karma Yoga we have simply to do with the word Karma as meaning work."²
Whatever man does is Karma, whether he eats, drinks, breathes, thinks, works with hands, works in a bank, anything he does is Karma – It means work.

All human beings work with various motives. [As said earlier inaction is not at all a possibility] Some work for money, some for fame and some for power. Most of the human beings work for material objects and gains and worldly powers. They desire talking, reading, writing, listening and pleasures of the senses. They work because they are selfish and they are after material well-being. Many do wicked things and give some charity hoping that it is their passport to heaven. Actually it takes them nowhere because, according to the law of Karma one has to reap the fruits of one's actions.

"Work for work's sake" is the motto of Swami Vivekananda. According to him, those who work like that are 'the salt of the earth'. When a man works without any motive and with perfect unselfishness, he gains the highest. Unselfishness is more paying, only people have no patience to practise it. Love, Truth and Unselfishness are not merely moral figures of speech, but they form our highest ideal, because in them lies a great manifestation of power. A person who works for five days, no, five minutes without any selfish motive develops a capacity to become a moral giant. He manifests the greatest power. It is the power of self-restraint and of unselfishness. This is the power we see in Jesus Christ and the Buddha. It is quite logical to conclude that men like Buddha and Christ are a product of hard work, which is remarkably unselfish. Foolish men want to rule mankind. For that they will
have to first restrain the foolish idea of governing. They have to work with
great unselfishness. Their actions and causes have to produce the related
reactions and effects. It takes time. Only they should have the right kind of
patience to work without any selfishness.

Even working with a selfish motive is better than laziness. Only the
work should not harm others. It keeps one's mind engaged too. It will not be
disturbed by loose thoughts. To become Buddha or Jesus Christ is not
everybody's cup of tea. When a man starts working for such things like
money, name and fame gradually higher and higher motives of unselfishness
dawn in him. It is only a matter of time, for him to realize the importance of
work with detachment and unselfishness. Swami Vivekananda quotes from the
Bhagavadgita. "To work we have the right, but not to the fruits thereof." If a
man wants to do good work, he should never think of its results, in the same
way, when he genuinely wants to help a man, he must help without bothering
about his attitudes or expecting gratitude from him. Results will come but, it
should not be a concern.

Next Swami Vivekananda discusses about rest, relaxation and
renunciation. Swami Vivekananda gives two pictures. One of a man in a
cave, in the deep forests, removed from all the activity of the modern world.
And another man in a big city whirled rapidly round in the circle of work, duty
and life – struggle. Swami Vivekananda says that they both are imperfect
pictures. The man in the cave will be crushed the moment he comes into
contact with the modern world. The busy man bound with work and duty will
go mad if he is brought to a quiet place. The ideal Karma Yogi is always busy with work and duty but he will be calm like a man in the cave. That is because he works with self-control. He is not anxious about the fruits (results) of his actions. He is calm as if he were in a cave. A man is anxious only when he is in the spell of desire. The desire for the fruits of his action will never allow him to be calm. So a man must work and make himself more and more unselfish everyday. Initially the motives for work will always be selfish. But gradually this selfishness will melt by sheer persistence. A Karma Yogi does not renounce his duties. He renounces the desire for its fruits.

There are some who might argue that every work is motivated by desire and it is impossible to do any work in a detached manner without desire for its fruits. But Swami Vivekananda feels that it is possible. This idea is found in Bhagavad Gita, the Hindu scripture.

Four examples can be given from life. The examples of a student, a sportsman, a businessman and a yogi. Certainly it is the duty of a student to study well, to do hard work and secure distinction in the examination. His desire to do well in the examination has motivated him to do the hardwork – to study. Upto this point there is nothing wrong with his desire. But his desire to secure a particular distinction or a grade, to expect a fruit/result for his hardwork is not the attitude of a Karma Yogi. He should do the hardwork, i.e., study well, do well in the examinations and leave the rest to heavens. He should neither desire nor be anxious about the result. His hard work will take care of it. Take a sportsman, a football player. Naturally he plays football
because he is prompted by the desire to play football. His desire should be only to do his best. He may score goals; he may not score goals. His team may win or lose. He should not desire the result. His business or his desire should be only to play well. His hard work will take care of his results. This is the attitude of Karma Yogi.

Similarly a businessman. He sincerely puts in 100 percent effort to earn profits. He may earn or he may end up in losses. That should not bother him. His satisfaction lies in the fact that he has put in 100 percent effort. He need not be anxious of the result of his hard work. Results will come. This is the attitude of a Karma Yogi.

A yogi, or a spiritual aspirant also does his duty enjoined by his Guru like meditation, service, rituals etc. He does it without any anxiety for results. His efforts will take care of his results. This is the attitude of a Karma Yogi.

By these examples, one gets an idea of what work to do, and with what attitude. Work but be detached is what Swami Vivekananda says.

This demands a necessity to define the duty or karma of a particular man. He should know what he is doing is his karma.

The ideas of duty and ideas of morality differ from society to society. In one society cousins may marry and in another society it is sacrilegious. In one society a man might marry only once, in another it may be different. Similarly the idea of duty differs according to different countries and different societies. If a Christian finds a piece of beef before him and does not eat it to save his life or give to a friend to save his life, he is sure to feel that he has not done his
duty. But if a Hindu dares to eat that piece of beef or to give it to another Hindu, he is equally sure to feel that he too has not done his duty.

These confusions are at a lower level. A teacher who does not like that profession might think that it is not his duty to teach. He might like to become a businessman or a corporator. He might feel that to become a businessman is his duty. A businessman might like to become a politician and so on. These are confusions of a higher level.

Here a few arguments from Swami Vivekananda's Complete Works are presented. They provide some sort of a solution. In the first place four duties are envisaged for a man in four stages of his life. (1) Brahmacharya (2) Grihasta (3) Vanaprastha and (4) Sanyasa.

1) Brahmacharya means a celibate who is a student. This is the first stage. He learns a skill in his life.

2) Grihasta means a householder (a married man). A student marries and becomes a Grihasta. It is his duty to provide for his wife and children.

3) Vanaprastha : He is finished with learning skills, earning money and supporting a family. He retires to a life of solitude and contemplation.

4) Sanyasa : Sanyasi means a monk. In this last stage he renounces everything. He gives up the world and devotes his time to God.

A man can also directly become a Sanyasi (monk) without going through the first three stages of life. He can devote his whole life in the pursuit of God.
A man takes up a particular profession as his duty because of several factors, like ability, taste and liking. It is also the result of his past actions. A series of causes will produce a series of effects and make a man take up a particular profession. For example, a person who could not study in a medical college can never become a doctor. He who does well in a medical college becomes a good doctor.

But the duty of one man is not the duty of another. Swami Vivekananda has a brilliant example to prove this. All great teachers have taught – "Resist not evil". To forget and forgive the evil done to a man, is the highest ideal. Non-resistance is the highest moral ideal. Think for a minute. This is impossible in a rational sense. If a man never even attempts to resist evil, all the wicked people would take possession of all his properties and the entire social fabric will fall into pieces. One has to resist the wicked somewhere sometimes. Yet deep in the heart it is felt that 'Resist not Evil' is the highest ideal. So at some stage every religious injunction should be analyzed rationally and its practicality ought to be found out by the intellect. Bhagavad-Gita, the Hindu scripture was preached in the battle field. Here Arjuna, the protagonist, is called a hypocrite by Lord Krishna in whom divinity is manifested, because Arjuna refused to fight in the battle. Arjuna is a Kshatriya, which means he is a warrior, a soldier. It is his duty to punish the wicked. He has to wage a war against the wicked. "Resist not evil" is not a good policy for him. He has to fight evil. Swami Vivekananda makes this point very clear. Suppose there are two human beings X and Y. X is strong
and wicked. Y is good but weak. If X hits Y, for no reason, it is the duty of Y to hit back. He must make an attempt at least to hit back. It does not matter if he gets hit again. Y has no business to quote the scripture and say "Resist not evil". He has no business to forgive. His forgiveness has meaning only when he has the power to hit back. If a man does not hit back because of laziness and weakness, he does not derive any benefit out of his forgiveness. In fact he commits sin. On the other hand if a man has the ability to hit back, but if he forgives, it is the grand act of love. That is the ideal love, which was practised by Jesus Christ. The love of Jesus Christ can be compared with that of the renunciation of the Buddha. They belong to the highest class. The renunciation of Buddha is great, because he gave up a throne. That is ideal renunciation like the ideal love of Christ. But the beggar who has nothing to renounce cannot become a Buddha. A lazy and weak man who cannot hit back, cannot become Christ. So life's struggle should be to first become powerful (spiritually) and then forgive; to earn a fortune and then renounce. That is the duty. In Bhagavad Gita Arjuna became reluctant to fight. It looked like cowardice. So Lord Krishna ordains him to fight the war. Arjuna there has no business either to 'love' or 'forgive' his enemies, because they were wicked and he was a warrior. It is his sacred duty to kill them.

This is the central idea of Karma Yoga. A man has to fight, work and struggle. Then he develops the power to resist evil. When he has gained the power to resist, then non-resistance in him will become a great virtue. And
when he practises the highest ideal of non-resistance, he exhibits even greater power, the power of Christ.

In fact Swami Vivekananda feels that to forgive is the duty of only a monk. A householder (married man) has to resist evil because he has to protect his wife and children and his dependents which is a more important duty for him than to forgive. So Swami Vivekananda is a rationalist who wants every individual to analyse the scriptures and determine what his duty is. It is not a matter of blind faith.

Inactivity should be avoided by all means. It is activity which resists all evils mental as well as physical. When evil is resisted successfully calmness of mind and spirit is automatically achieved.

It is very easy to say "Resist not evil" or "Hate nobody". But how many of us can actually practice it in real life? When a man knows that he is wronged his first tendency is to get angry and hit back. It is read in the scriptures that to pursue wealth is not a desirable end. To pursue God is a very noble end. But many cannot actually live like that. Many cannot pursue only God? Swami Vivekananda has given a rational interpretation to the whole ethic of life and work. He feels that it is better to plunge into the struggles of life than be a hypocrite. If a man feels like resisting evil, let him do it. If a man feels like pursuing wealth let him do it. There is no place for hypocrisy in life. It is better to be an atheist than, be a hypocrite who preaches a thing and practices exactly the opposite. A man must pass through a stage of intense activity before he finds peace. A man must fulfill all his desires before he can
think of renunciation. [Only that work and activity should not injure others]
And it is only renunciation of worldly desires that makes a man pursue God. Only a Karma Yogi in the end finds peace and renunciation.

So everyman should take up an ideal and work. It is also foolish to take up another man's ideal and work. A child cannot be asked to walk twenty kilometers. Similarly one cannot take up an ideal which one cannot hope to achieve. All men and women in society have different abilities to work. So each must take up his own or her own ideal and work. No man or woman has a right to sneer at the ideal of another man or woman. It is work done with detachment alone that ensures spiritual progress. To become a businessman or a marketing executive could be an ideal. An ideal businessman always tries his level best to make and sell quality goods at competent prices. This ideal will finally help him to become an honest businessman and finally a Karma Yogi. [As discussed earlier a businessman becomes a Karma Yogi when he works with detachment and gives up the fruits of his endeavour]

Next Swami Vivekananda quotes from Maha Nirvana – Tantra, a Hindu religious cripture which has prescribed certain duties for a householder (married man) and a monk (Sanyasi). A married man should always be devoted to God. But he must never neglect his worldly duties. He must earn and protect his dependents. He must work with detachment and must give up the fruits of his actions to God. It is the most difficult thing in the world to work and not care for the result, to help a man and never think that he ought to be grateful, to do some good work and at the same time never look to see
whether it brings name or fame, or nothing at all. Even a coward becomes brave for a moment when the world praises him and a fool does heroic things when the approbation of society is upon him; but, for a man to constantly do good without caring for the approbation of his fellow men is indeed the highest sacrifice man can perform. The great duty of the householder is to earn a living, but he must take care that he does not do it by telling lies, or by cheating or by robbing and injuring others. He must devote his life to the service of others. First of all he should know that his parents are responsible for his taking birth on this earth. They are the causes for his body. So he must serve them. It is a sin to enjoy food, drink, clothing and shelter when one has not provided these things to one's parents. He must have respect for them. He must never show anger and restlessness before them. Similar is his duty towards his wife and children. He must also be faithful to his wife and children. He must not talk improper language before other women or boast of his powers. He must not talk of his wealth, fame and his power in public at all. A son should be lovingly reared upto his fourth year; he should be educated till he is sixteen. When he is twenty years of age he should be employed. After that a father should treat him affectionately as his equal. A father should behave exactly in the same way towards his daughter. In addition, when she marries, he must give her jewels and wealth. Then come other people, relatives, brothers, sisters, friends and dependents. A householder must be kind to them and should be of some service to them. Excessive attachment to food, clothes, tending of the body, dressing of the hair
etc. should be avoided. A householder must be a hero to his enemies. He must not sit in a corner and weep and preach non-resistance. He must protect his family from the wicked. He must never patronize wickedness and never serve wicked people. He must not go about making a lot of useless friends too.

Swami Vivekananda quotes so much from the scriptures and ordains so many duties for the married man. He is a rational in doing so. After all the family is the unit of society – that is what social sciences tell us. If every family is well organized then the entire society has to be well-organized. So the man who is the son to his parents, husband to his wife and father to his children has to earn well and look after them well. It is the most sensible thing to do. Earning money is not a sin, as long as it is put to good use. (for a family man). In fact it is a welcome desire because our scientific civilization itself is a product of a man's desire to earn more. It has led to new discoveries, new developments and new adventures. Such a householder, who works and earns is central to life. In fact, according to Swami Vivekananda, the lazy person who does not earn is immoral because on him depend so many people. To let them down is immoral. The only condition Swami Vivekananda enjoins is, our desire to earn more should not be harmful to others. Infact it should be helpful and it should be done with extreme detachment, with the attitude of a Karma Yogi.

Swami Vivekananda also encouraged women to go to schools and universities. He encouraged them to earn well and take up the duties prescribed above. This of course is in addition to looking after her family.
Swami Vivekananda also says that a man must struggle to acquire a good reputation. Already it is mentioned that one must not patronize wickedness and one must not serve wicked people. In addition a man must not gamble; he must not move in the company of the wicked; he must not tell lies and become a source of trouble to others. It is very rational to avoid wicked people.
2.2 DUTIES OF A MONK AND A HOUSEHOLDER – A COMPARISON

If these are the duties of a householder, then the duties of a monk are different. Swami Vivekananda's injunctions for a monk are pretty hard. He must practice Satya (Truth) and Ahimsa (non-violence). He must completely renounce all desires for sensual pleasures, money and power. Karma Yoga does not glorify the monk and condemn the householder.

Swami Vivekananda says, "If the householder dies in battle fighting for his country or religion, he comes to the same goal as the Yogi by meditation." If a man retires from the world to worship God, he must not think that those who live in the world and work for the good of the world are not worshipping God; neither must those who live in the world, for wife and children, think that those who give up the world are low vagabonds. Each is great in his own place." Swami Vivekananda illustrates this with a story. (Appendix 1)

Swami Vivekananda always used interesting stories to prove his point. This story, when looked into as an allegory has hidden meaning too. This story indeed brings out the ultimate duty of a man, of a householder as well as a monk. It also substantiates all the arguments made here to define Karma and Karma Yoga. Work, renunciation and sacrifice, according to Swami Vivekananda is the essence of Karma Yoga.
2.3 THE IDEAL OF KARMA YOGA

"There are certain works which are, as it were, the aggregate, the sum total, of a large number of smaller works. If we stand near the sea-shore and hear the waves dashing against the shingle, we think it is such a great noise, and yet we know that one wave is really composed of millions and millions of minute waves. Each one of these is making a noise, and yet we do not catch it. It is only when they become the big aggregate that we hear. Similarly what we are is determined by our character and our character is determined by a series of our past actions and the aggregate of their effects. Every little work we do goes a long way in building that which is the component of the big wave."

It builds 'Samskara'. Samskara in Sanskrit means inherent tendency. Swami Vivekananda uses the simile of a lake for the mind. Every action which causes a ripple or a wave, in the mind, when it subsides, does not die out entirely, but leaves a mark and a future possibility of the wave reappearing. This mark with the possibility of the wave reappearing, is what is called 'Samskara'. Every work that we do, every movement of the body, and every thought that we think, leaves such an impression on the mind-stuff. Even when such impressions are not obvious on the surface, they are sufficiently strong to work beneath the surface subconsciously. What we are every moment is determined by the sum total of these impressions on the mind. If good impressions prevail, the character becomes good; if bad, it becomes bad. If a man has wicked company, listens to bad words, has only wicked thoughts
and does bad actions, his mind can have only bad impressions. It determines his character. On the contrary, if a man, always has holy company, has only good thoughts and does good actions, they too leave behind their 'Samskaras' on the mind. It determines his character too. So a man must continuously have good thoughts and do good actions. As the tortoise tucks its feet and head inside the shell, and one may break the shell into pieces and kill it, and yet it will not come out, even so the character of that man who has control over his motives and organs is unchangeably established. He controls his own inner forces, and nothing can draw them out against his will. He will have complete control over his sense-organs, desires and nerve-centres. Thus alone will the character of a man be established. He alone can become a Yogi. He gets Truth. He will be safe even in evil company. He will achieve the kind of liberation Buddha achieved through meditation and Christ through prayer and devotion. Liberation from the thralldom of mind and matter is the goal of all Yoga and it is achieved by a Karma Yogi too. Here liberation means entire freedom – freedom from the bondage of good as well as the bondage of evil. According to Swami Vivekananda, a golden chain is as much a chain as an iron one. Both the chains are a bondage. When there is a thorn in a man's finger, he needs another thorn or a sharp instrument to take the first thorn out. When the first thorn is removed then there is no necessity for keeping the second thorn. Similarly, bad inherent tendencies must be removed from good inherent tendencies (through repeated good actions and thoughts) and then both can be rejected. Thus the 'attached' becomes 'unattached' “12.
One must work but one should not let the action or the thought produce a deep impression on the mind. Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{13} feels that this can be achieved. He gives his own example. He used to meet hundreds of people everyday. During night when he retired to bed, he could sense that not all of those faces had made an impression on his mind. No doubt all the images of the people he had met, will have fallen on his retina, but only a few faces (that too of his potential disciples probably) would be registered in his mind. Similarly in all our actions we can be 'unattached'. It need not create any impression on the mind. Only our ideal, the person who taught us the ideal can be remembered in all our actions. Finally we can be 'unattached' even when our ideal is concerned. We can work and work for the welfare of others incessantly without a single ripple in our mind. The whole gist of Swami Vivekananda's teaching here is that a man must work like a 'master' not like a 'slave'. He works like a slave the moment he desires the 'fruits' of his actions" He becomes 'attached' to his actions. The moment he gives up the desire for the fruits of his actions he will become 'unattached'. All selfish work makes a man a slave. All 'unattached' work makes a man a master. He works out of 'love'. This is the 'love' practised by Christ. This 'love' is very difficult to understand. Only a 'master' in the sense mentioned above, who has achieved liberation, can experience it. It is not the result of one action but an aggregate of a million small actions. It is the result of character, which is why Swami Vivekananda used to say that even a fool can be a hero for a moment, when
the pressure is on him; but to be truly a great man, each small work of his
everyday life will have to be done well. It is of paramount importance.

To attain this kind of 'love' and 'unattachment' is not easy. It is more than
a life time's work. It can be achieved only when a man does not expect any
returns from the actions he has done. Then this state of 'love' and
'unattachment' can be attained. In life one has to take up the position of the
giver, one must give love, money, help, service everything that one has to
others, and expect no return. The moment he expects a return he becomes
'attached'. To expect anything from others or to expect others to behave like
you is the most irrational thing for a man to do. A man has control over
himself. He has no control over others. A man might assume some control
when he is a manager and the other person is an assistant in his office. But it
is only in an official sense. In a spiritual sense, a man can control only
himself. First a man has to control his mind, desires and senses. That is the
only way to ideal happiness. Any desire to control others will ultimately land
a person in trouble. In order to substantiate all these arguments rationally,
Swami Vivekananda has given a short definition of what duty is. "Any action
that makes us go Godward is a good action, and is our duty; any action that
makes us go downward is evil, and is not our duty. From the subjective stand
point we may see that certain acts have a tendency to exalt and ennoble us,
while certain other acts, have a tendency to degrade and brutalize us. But it is
not possible to make out with certainty which acts have which kind of
tendency in relation to all persons, of all sorts and conditions. There is,
however, only one idea of duty which has been universally accepted by all mankind, of all ages and sects and countries, and that has been summed up in a Sanskrit aphorism thus:

"Do not injure any being; not injuring any being is virtue, injuring any being is sin."\(^1\)

So a man does not go Godward when he causes the slightest injury to others. All his actions should be such that it should help others go Godward and in the process he will go towards God himself. Again blind faith has no place here. Each man has to be a rationalist and understand how best he can be of help to others.

Actually one never helps the world. According to Swami Vivekananda\(^2\) it is a blasphemy to say that the world needs man's help. Apparently a man may help someone in this world. But in reality he helps himself. As a boy Swami Vivekananda had seen some white mice. They were kept in a box which had little wheels. When the mice tried to cross the wheels, the wheels turned and turned, and the mice never got anywhere. No doubt they were in motion, but they could never go out of the box. So it is with the world and our helping it. To think that this world is waiting for help is the most stupid thing. No, as Swami Vivekananda says it is blasphemy. Actually this world is neither good nor evil. It is good or evil only according to the state of mind in which each man looks at it. Fire by itself is neither good nor evil. But when it keeps somebody warm it is said that fire is beautiful. When it burns somebody's fingers it is blamed. Similarly if a man finds happiness he
appreciates the world. If it causes misery, then he blames it. Certainly this world does not need a man's help. Because it is neither good nor evil. If the world depended on any man's help, then this world should have been a paradise after the death of so many great people like Buddha, Christ and a host of others. No it is not. The world continues to be the same. In spite of so many great people offering their help.

Yet Swami Vivekananda feels that a man must help and do good to others. Not because it makes any difference to the person who receives the help nor to the world he lives in. But it helps the one who helps. The helper is helped. This whole world is a gymnasium where one does exercise and achieves one's goal. By helping others a man helps himself. It is only an exercise in a gym. One becomes good, perfect and finally attains liberation. This is the secret of Karma Yoga.

However much a man may try, there cannot be any work, action or Karma which is perfect or perfectly pure. Even his actions done with an intention to help others might cause injury. He may give alms to a beggar. Probably he will contribute to make the beggar lazy. Even when a man breathes or digests food which he eats, he may kill some microbes. Every bit of food which is eaten, is taken away from another man's mouth. By a man's very life and presence he is crowding out other lives. If this is the case, one cannot really do a 'perfect work' which benefits everyone in a true sense. Since there is no perfect work as such, perfection, (Liberation) (Mukti) cannot be attained by work alone. A man may work through eternity, but there is no
way out of this intricate maze of cause and effect. Every work one does will have an effect, which one has to go through. He will react and again bring about a cause which will, in turn, have an effect. Religion, on a superficial level, promises a perfect world, where there is no death, unhappiness and wickedness. Most of the men who believe in God also believe in the existence of such a world. But Swami Vivekananda does not feel so. He wonders how can there be a world with only good and no evil. How can there be even a concept of heat without the concept of coldness? What is meant by perfection after all? A 'perfect life' is a paradox, a contradiction in the very term, because life itself is a state of continuous struggle between ourselves and everything outside. Every moment actually a man is fighting. Fighting for air, food, clothes, pleasures, money, comforts and everything else. If he is defeated in this struggle, in this fight, his life has to go. What is meant by ideal happiness is the cessation of this struggle. But then life will cease, for the struggle can cease only when life itself has ceased. According to Swami Vivekananda, cessation of this struggle, cessation of this life is not suicide. A man has already seen that in helping the world he helps himself. The main effect of work done for others is to purify oneself. Only a pure mind can attain liberation. This forgetfulness of self is the one great lesson one has to learn in life. Man thinks foolishly that he can make himself happy, and after years of struggle finds out atlast that true happiness consists in killing selfishness. Karma Yoga helps him achieve this. He attains liberation when this selfishness is killed.
So Karma Yoga is something which teaches the way of work; the way of life. In fact if one analyzes more carefully, it is not just man who is working. In fact the whole universe is working. It is an evolution, a change, an action. All matter is evolving. The end result of this work is salvation and liberty. Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{\ref{17}} says that this universe comes from freedom, it rests in bondage and goes back to freedom again. Man is only a part of this universe and the same law which applies to the Universe also applies to man. To acquire this 'freedom' one has to go beyond this universe. It cannot be found here. Perfect equilibrium or what the Christians call the peace that passeth all understanding cannot be had in this universe, nor in heaven, nor in any place where one's mind and thoughts can go, where the senses can feel, or which the imagination can conceive. No such place can give us that freedom, because all such places would be within our universe, and it is limited by space, time and causation. They must be bound by these laws of the universe. So one has to go beyond space, time and causation i.e., beyond this universe. Rationally speaking, real religion can begin only where the universe ends. It is also rational to conclude that whatever work he does should not make him attached to this universe; or to his body, mind and thoughts which are a part of this universe. Until he gives up the thirst for life; strong attachment to this transient conditioned existence, he has no hope of catching even a glimpse of that infinite freedom beyond. It sounds rational when it is said that the only way to attain that freedom which is the goal of mankind, is by giving up this little life, giving up this little universe, giving up this earth, giving up this heaven, giving
up body, and mind and everything that is limited and conditioned. If a man
gives up his attachment to the body, mind and this universe he will be free. It
is the most difficult thing to give up this body, mind and universe; very few
attain that. There are two ways to do that which is mentioned in Hindu
scriptures. One is called the Neti, Neti (Not this, not this) method. The other
is Iti, Iti (this, this) method. The former is the negative and the latter is the
positive way. The negative way is the most difficult. It is the method of the
monk. He will say 'not this, not this'. and renounce everything in the world.
But the vast majority of mankind should choose the positive way. They
should work. They should go through every experience of the world and
know it for its true value. Then their mind becomes ripe enough for them to
see the impermanence of sense objects of the world. Then gradually the mind
becomes unattached to this universe. It is a slow and steady process. This is
the method of Karma Yoga. The former negative method is the method of
knowledge, Jnana Yoga. So all Karma Yogis must work. They must work till
they become unattached to the fruits of their actions. It takes them to freedom
(Liberation).

So Karma Yoga is all about work and non-attachment. Swami
Vivekananda gives the example of Buddha, who is the ideal Karma Yogi.
Swami Vivekananda's says –

"Let me tell you in conclusion a few words about one man who actually
carried this teaching of Karma-Yoga into practice. That man is Buddha. He is
the one man who carried this principle into perfect practice. All the prophets
of the world, except Buddha, had external motives to move them to unselfish action. The prophets of the world, with this single exception, may be divided into two sets, one holding that they are incarnations of God come down on earth, and the other holding that they are only messengers from God; and both draw their impetus for work from outside, expect reward from outside, however highly spiritual may be the language they use. But Buddha is the only Prophet who said, "I do not care to know your various theories about God. What is the use of discussing all the subtle doctrines about the soul? Do good and be good. And this will take you to freedom and to whatever truth there is." He was in the conduct of his life, absolutely without personal motives; and what man worked more than he? Show me in history one character who has soared so high above all. The whole human race has produced but one such character, such high philosophy, such wide sympathy. This great philosopher, preaching the highest philosophy, yet had the deepest sympathy for the lowest of animals, and never put forth any claims for himself. He is the ideal Karma Yogi, acting entirely without motive, and the history of humanity shows him to have been the greatest man ever born; beyond compare the greatest combination of heart and brain that ever existed, the greatest soul power that has ever been manifested. He is the first great reformer the world has seen. He was the first who dared to say, "Believe not because some old manuscripts are produced, believe not because it is your national belief, because you have been made to believe it from your childhood; but reason it all out, and after you have analysed it, then, you
find that it will do good to one and all, believe it, live upto it, and help others to live up to it." He works best who works without any motive, neither for money, nor for fame, nor for anything else; and when a man can do that, he will be a Buddha, and out of him will come the power to work in such a manner as will transform the world. This man represents the very highest ideal of Karma-Yoga.
**END NOTES**


2. Ibid, P. 27.


8. Ibid, P. 42.

9. Ibid, P. 47.

10. Ibid, P. 29.

11. Ibid, P. 54.


13. Ibid, P. 56.


15. Ibid, P. 64.


CHAPTER THREE

RAJA YOGA

3.1 IMPORTANCE OF RAJA YOGA

Swami Vivekananda begins the 'Introductory' in chapter I of Raja Yoga with these lines: "All our knowledge is based upon experience. What we call inferential knowledge, in which we go from the general to the particular, has experience as its basis. In what are called the exact sciences, people easily find the truth, because it appeals to the particular experiences of every human being. The scientist does not tell you to believe in anything, but he has certain results, which come from his own experiences, and reasoning on them, when he asks us to believe in his conclusions, he appeals to some universal experience of humanity. In every exact science there is a basis which is common to all humanity, so that we can at once see the truth or the fallacy of the conclusions drawn therefrom. Now, the question is; Has religion any such basis or not? I shall have to answer the question both in the affirmative and in the negative."

One must study these lines carefully. Swami Vivekananda has hit the nail on the head. One must also look at the emphasis laid on the term and the
concept "experience". Hundreds of books may be studied, but it is all information. This information becomes knowledge only through experience. Of course experience could be intellectual too. Only then will it have rationality as its basis. And some experiences could be beyond the intellect too. Everybody cannot understand the experience of Jesus Christ when he shared the 'Last supper' with his Apostles; or everybody cannot feel the intensity which the Buddha must have felt when he discarded a kingdom, riches, wife, son, pleasures etc. all at one stroke and chose to become a monk. What can anybody understand when Ramakrishna Paramahamsa said to Naren (Swami Vivekananda) "I have seen God." Certainly intellect cannot comprehend these experiences of Christ, Buddha and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Just because a man's intellect cannot comprehend these experiences, they cannot be unreal and irrational. As long as they are not everybody's experiences they have to be unreal and irrational. It is here that Raja Yoga offers a solution. Swami Vivekananda, in this chapter on Raja Yoga makes it very clear that nothing should be accepted as long as it is not his/her own experience. This is how he answers the question he has raised in the introductory paragraph in both affirmative as well as negative. Obviously, the negative is that human beings do not have a standard common religious experience. The positive or the affirmative is that if the founders of religions like Christ and Buddha had a particular kind of experience, it is not beyond human ability to have such an experience. Everyone, if he wants, can attain such an experience. Raja Yoga puts forward such principles or aphorisms
which, when followed, will provide the kind of experience which makes man understand the ultimate truth; will make man experience what Christ or Buddha experienced.

So Raja Yoga is a science. It declares that religion is based upon experience of the founders of religions. And also no man is religious as long as he has attained the same experience himself. There is no use in talking of religion unless one has realized these 'experiences'. A Christian is not a Christian if he cannot realize what was the 'experience' of Jesus Christ. There is so much of disturbance, fight and bloodshed in the name of God and religion because people have not experienced God and religion. When once they experience God and religion through the practice of religion, they can never fight.

The science of Raja-Yoga proposes to put before humanity a practical and scientifically worked out method of reaching these religious experiences. These experiences lead us to an understanding of the ultimate truth. Suppose there a possibility that a person feels that he has experienced ultimate truth, and some time in future thinks that what he experienced was not the ultimate truth. Then such an experience cannot be the ultimate truth. Because the ultimate truth has no external guarantee or characteristics. It is self-evident. When once a man gets Truth, he will never again be in doubt. If he is in doubt, he has not attained Truth. Only the method of Raja Yoga has to be worked out in detail. It is a matter of practice.
As Swami Vivekananda says, "If you want to become an astronomer and sit down and cry" Astronomy! Astronomy! It will never come to you. The same with Chemistry. A certain method must be followed. You must go to a laboratory, take different substances, mix them up, compound them, experiment with them, and out of that will come a knowledge of chemistry.\textsuperscript{2}

Similarly in Raja Yoga mind is the laboratory. It is the mind which records all our experiences. Normally, the powers of the mind are like rays of light that are scattered and dissipated. When they are concentrated and properly guided towards his own self, it illumines all the facts of life. With a concentrated mind one can fathom the deepest of truths. This is the only means of gaining spiritual (religious) knowledge. But from a man's childhood he has been taught to pay attention to things external, and never to things internal; hence most of the people have lost the faculty of observing the internal mechanism. To turn the mind, as it were, inside and stop it from going outside means to concentrate all the powers of the mind, and throw them upon the mind itself. It is very hard work. Yet this is the only scientific approach to this subject. In this process nothing should be believed. A person has to accept something only when it becomes his experience. This is what makes the whole effort rational and scientific.

When a man studies the physical sciences he studies the external world. It is easy because it is very easy and natural for the mind to flow outwards – on external objects. But in the case of religion, metaphysics and spirituality it is difficult. The object is internal. In fact it is the mind itself. The object and
the subject are one—it is mind studying itself. But the mind has a peculiar power— it is the power of reflection. Swami Vivekananda gives an example to prove this peculiar power of the mind. Suppose a person is making a speech. At the same time a part of the same person is also standing aside, as it were, and hears what he is talking. It is nothing but a part of the mind of the same person, which listens to his own speech. Whatever a man might do, a portion of his mind stands by and sees what he is doing. A more clear example can be given to prove this. Suppose a man is driving a car, a part of his mind is always there to inform him, whether he is driving his car properly or not. This experience is more obvious and prominent in a man who is still learning to drive because in later stages a man drives a car through habit. A person may be very angry and disturbed. But a part of his mind might ask him to control that anger. This shows that a part of the mind can study the mind itself. Thus a man can study his own mind or, the mind can study itself. The powers of the mind should be concentrated and turned back upon itself. Then this powerful, and concentrated mind will penetrate its own inner secrets. It is a matter of practice. When this happens a man will understand the very source of his mind, the very nature of his mind and the energy behind the mind. Then he can see for himself, if there is a soul, if there is a God and what not. Therefore the goal of Raja Yoga is to teach how to concentrate the mind and learn the innermost secrets. It does not ask whether one is a Theist or Atheist, whether one is a Jew or Buddhist etc. Every human being from every country, every religion, man or woman has the right and power to practice Raja Yoga.
According to the Raja-Yogi, the external world is the gross form of the internal, or the subtle. So by controlling the mind which is the subtle form of nature, he can control the external world. He will understand that by knowing which everything else is understood. By understanding the subtle, he will understand the gross. By knowing himself, he will know the universe; because he is a part of the universe.

Anything that is secretive and mysterious in these systems of Yoga should be at once rejected. Mystery-mongering weakens the human brain as well as the human race. So in whatever we practice as Yoga there should be nothing secretive about it. It weakens a human being. The best guide in life is strength. So a practitioner should verify the principles he has to follow and courageously practice them. This will make him strong.

Before practising Raja-Yoga, an aspirant should know something about Sankhya philosophy. In short Sankhya philosophy says that mind, matter and intellect have the same origin. The difference between them is only a matter of degree of manifestation. Matter is a gross manifestation of the same thing of which the mind and intellect are more subtle manifestations.

What Swami Vivekananda and Sankhya philosophy say is roughly reflected in science too. Bertrand Russell\(^4\) in his essay, 'What is the Soul?' says that there is no such thing as matter. What exactly one thinks of as matter is nothing but certain electrons and protons. When he actually runs his head against a stone he never bumps into anything. There are certain electrons and protons forming the part of his body, which are attracted or repelled by certain
electrons and protons in the thing he thinks that he is touching, but there is no actual contact. The electrons and protons are disturbed and transmit a disturbance along his nerves to the brain. This disturbance is experienced as contact. THE BIG QUESTION IS WHO EXPERIENCES THIS DISTURBANCE. Obviously we think it is the mind. Probably it is the soul. We do not know. But certainly to know who perceived it we have to analyse or study the mind. This exactly is what Raja Yoga proposes to do. One more observation here is very relevant. The Upanishads say that mind is only a subtle form of the matter. It can be practically proved too. Suppose a man starves, first he does not die. It is the mind (as we understand it) which ceases to function before a man dies. Mind is revived in a starving man, after he eats food. Food is matter. It is not just in the case of a starving man.

"Even if we analyse our moods, we see that it is controlled by the kind of food we eat. We understand it better when we get into a menagerie. We see elephants, like cows, huge and calm. But the lions and tigers are comparatively so restless. This difference is caused by their food. When once we start practising Raja-Yoga we realize that the mind is also intimately connected with the body. If the body becomes sick the mind becomes sick too. If the body becomes strong, the mind becomes strong too. If the mind becomes angry the body is disturbed too, along with the mind."\(^5\)

According to Swami Vivekananda\(^5\), with the majority of mankind the mind is greatly under the control of the body, because their minds are less developed. When once the power to control the mind is cultivated, then the
power to control the body too is cultivated. A man can begin with physical exercises. First the body is controlled and then a man can attempt to control the mind through other types of exercises. By controlling the mind a man can make it work as he likes and compel it to concentrate its powers as we desire.
3.2 THE EIGHT STEPS OF RAJA YOGA

Swami Vivekananda has written a commentary on Raja Yoga in the first eight chapters of the first section. In the second section he has translated the aphorisms or Sutras as they are called in Sanskrit into English. They are called the Yoga Sutras of Patanjali. It was Patanjali who first practised it. Raja Yoga is also called Astanga Yoga, because it has eight steps which are mentioned in the second chapter of the Yoga Sutras.

The eight steps of Raja Yoga are (1) Yama (2) Niyama (3) Asana (4) Pranayama (5) Pratyahara (6) Dharana (7) Dhyana and (8) Samadhi. Yama and Niyama have five further steps each. Yama constitutes Ahimsa, Satya, Asteya, Brahmacharya and Aparigraha. Niyama constitutes Shaucha, Santosha, Tapas, Svadhyaya, Ishwara Pranidhana. Yama and Niyama conform to moral training and is the basis of all spiritual endeavour. The following table will help the reader to remember these things easily.

### EIGHT STEPS OF RAJA YOGA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yama</th>
<th>Niyama</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>(i) Ahimsa (Non-violence)</td>
<td>(i) Shaucha (Cleanliness both physical and mental)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(ii) Satya (Truth)</td>
<td>(ii) Santosha (Contentment)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iii) Asteya (Non-stealing)</td>
<td>(iii) Tapas (Austerity)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(iv) Brahmacharya (Continence)</td>
<td>(iv) Svadhyaya (Self study)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(v) Aparigraha (Non receiving of gifts)</td>
<td>(v) Ishwara Pranidhana (Self surrender to God)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. Asana | Posture  
4. Pranayama | Breath control  
5. Pratyahara | Withdrawal of the senses from external objects.  
6. Dharana | Concentration, fixing the mind on a point or object.  
7. Dhyana | Meditation  
8. Samadhi | Super consciousness  

Now the seminal question is will a rationalist accept Raja Yoga and its eight steps. It is mentioned any number of times that it is practice alone which can verify these spiritual principles. However each step is examined on an intellectual level too and determined if these practices are rational and meaningful in real life. Yama and Niyama are moral disciplines. Every religion has moral injunctions, be it Christianity or Judaism, Islam or Hinduism. Personal cleanliness, honesty, faith in others, truthfulness and concern for the welfare of other human beings are very essential for a society to continue. No rationality can question this. In fact a society without any moral values, (even if enforced by the police and the court of justice) can only fall apart.

Ahimsa means non-injury to others. As long as a person injures and hurts others he can never become a Yogi. He can never become a decent human being, let alone become a Yogi. It is already analyzed that every action has a reaction. If a man causes injury to others it will rebound on him. Every
wicked thought he sends out will have an equal and opposite reaction. It will be stored up and comeback in some form of misery. No miserable man can become a Yogi. So before a man indulges in wicked actions which cause injury to others, he has to remember these injunctions of Raja Yoga.

**Satya** means Truth. The very mission of Swami Vivekananda was to realize the Truth and make others realize the Truth. However we can talk of Truth at two levels. One is that which is the opposite of a lie. For example a student has not studied a particular chapter. He tells his father or teacher that he has studied it. It is a lie. He is not speaking the truth. The Truth at a different level is the Ultimate Truth. When once this Ultimate Truth is known, there is no necessity for any other knowledge because with this Truth everything else in this world is understood. It is the very nature of God or soul or whatever we choose to call it. The experience it gives is again Samadhi or Nirvana or Christ consciousness or whatever one chooses to call it.

Raja Yoga says that to understand the Truth it is essential that we should be truthful. Bertrand Russell⁶ has given the example of Quakers. They are honest and truthful businessmen. It has made them amass a lot of wealth. No buyer wants to be cheated. No body wants to be told a lie. Here one can understand how important it is to be truthful in social life and commerce. If truth can be so important in commerce, then one can imagine its importance in spiritual life.
Asteya means non-stealing and Aparigraha means non-receiving of gifts. Suppose a person goes to a friend and begs for a job, a favour, money etc. he becomes obliged to him for life. This is what he seen in real life. If a man takes help from people and if he is not obliged to them, if he doesn't thank them sufficiently, then he will become an ungrateful person. In other words he will become wicked. It might give him temporary happiness. But it cannot give him peace of mind. If he becomes obliged he will receive some of the qualities of the giver. So when he steals or receives something from somebody then he will steal or receive some wicked qualities of that giver. He will lose respect in the society. That is a dangerous situation to be in. When a man does not receive gifts, and does not steal, he does not become beholden to others but remains independent and free. His mind becomes pure.

Brahmacharya means continence. It is very difficult to understand the rationality behind giving up of sex. It is a basic instinct. All great religious and spiritual leaders are celibate. But Swami Vivekananda or any religion for that matter does not advise anybody to practice celibacy straight away. If a man has a powerful sexual urge, it is better he indulges in the sense pleasures and turn to Yoga when he feels he has had enough of it. No man with unfulfilled desires can become a Yogi. He will become a hypocrite. It is better to enjoy than be a hypocrite. Buddha declared two thousand five hundred years ago that desire is the root cause of all misery. So the less desire for sex or for that matter for anything a man has it is less miserable for him. Swami Vivekananda and His Guru Ramakrishna Paramahamsa feel that by the
establishment of continence tremendous energy and gigantic will-power is gained. Without the virtue of chastity there can be no spiritual strength. Chastity gives a lot of mental control. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa says that the practice of unbroken chastity for 12 years develops a nerve called medha-Nadi (nerve of memory) with the help of which all the spiritual truths are understood.⁷

Dr. Alexis Carrell, in his work 'Man the Unknown' observes: "It is well known that sexual excesses impede intellectual activity. In order to reach its full power, intelligence seems to require both the presence of well-developed sexual glands and the temporary repression of the sexual appetite. Freud has rightly emphasized the capital importance of sexual impulses in the activities of consciousness. However his observations chiefly refer to sick people. His conclusions should not be generalized to include normal individuals, especially those who are endowed with a strong nervous system and a mastery over themselves. While the weak, the nervous, and the unbalanced become more abnormal when their sexual appetites are repressed, the strong are rendered still stronger by practising such a form of asceticism. (http://www.wikpedia.com)

In Niyama the first injunction is Shaucha. Shaucha means purity. Here purity is not just physical but also mental. Of course physical purity refers to cleanliness. A man must bathe and keep his body clean. He should wear clean and washed clothes. He should neither eat too much nor too little. This should help in his timely movement of bowels. He should keep his house and
surroundings neat and tidy. This external cleanliness will have a heart-warming effect on the mind. It helps in having a clear mind. Having a pure mind is of course being free from greed, jealousy, anger and back-biting which agitate the mind. They prevent the mind from perceiving the truth. Desire is the root from which greed, jealousy, anger and hatred arise.

**Santosha** here means contentment. Bertrand Russell has written a book "The conquest of Happiness". In that book he insists on the virtue of contentment as the road to happiness all the way. A man may have all the riches in the world, but if he has no contentment, he is not happy. By the practice of Ahimsa Satya and Shaucha, the mind becomes concentrated and cheerful. The first sign that a man is becoming spiritual is that he is becoming cheerful. When a man is gloomy that may be dyspepsia, but it is not religion. Everything is bliss to a Yogi. Every human face he sees brings cheerfulness to him. In fact a man has no business to go out into the world with a woebegone face and distribute his unhappiness. He should shut himself in a room. A clouded face is the result of misery and misery is caused by Tamas (ignorance and laziness). A man must learn to control his mind. It should not be dictated by Tamas. He should be happy and cheerful. For this he should have contentment.

**Tapas** means austerity. A Yogi must strengthen his mind by observing certain austerities. It could be like fasting, giving up certain pleasures and comforts etc. For example A man may go to Kashi (In India people go) and give up eating sweets or using a soft bed etc. One can give up speech and
observe silence for a fixed period of time. One can give up excess eating, alcohol, cigarettes etc. Some people take up austerities rather seriously and forget the goal itself. The purpose of all austerity is to strengthen the mind and develop will-power. Some people practice foolish austerities like meditating in water and river on an early winter morning. The result of such austerity is it brings some powers to the mind and body. It may destroy laziness and mental impurity. But it is not the end of spiritual endeavour.

Swadhyaya means self-study. It can be understood in two levels. At one level it means studying scriptures. At a different level, it means studying one's own mind. A man who wants to become a Yogi must study the scriptures. Christ, Buddha, Shankaracharya, Vivekananda,.... they all are Yogis too. By studying what they have written, a man feels inspired to live like them. First he must listen to discourses on the scriptures and Yogis and their lives. Then he must contemplate on what he has listened to. Only then he can understand what is right and what is wrong. Then he can formulate a philosophy of his own. It is only then he will decide to live upto it. A man can also sit-down to meditate and he can observe what thoughts come to his mind. It helps him to understand his mind-what are the frequent thought images that disturb him. This self-study is also very important to become a Yogi.

Ishwara Pranidhana means self-surrender to God. A man may or may not believe in Ishwara (God). But a man should work without greed and attachment. This is what is seen in the chapter on Karma Yoga. When once a
man is not attached to the fruits of his action, self-surrender is naturally achieved. When he surrenders himself he gives up everything to God, even the fruits of his actions, which are his most precious possessions. When a man practices self-surrender he attains peace of mind. He is relaxed. Of course, to practice Yama and Niyama, a lot of will power and mental control is required. Patanjali himself suggests a way to achieve this. He says that to destroy thoughts which are inimical to Yoga, contrary thoughts should be brought. For example when the mind is disturbed by a big wave of anger, he must just raise an opposite wave, the wave of love. A mother might be angry with her husband. But at that moment if she sees the innocent face of her baby, her love for the baby will counter her mood. Her anger towards her husband might be mitigated and its place might be occupied by love for her baby. Similarly when a man is fiercely gripped by selfishness or jealousy, he can think of Jesus Christ, His forgiveness and sacrifice for the sake of others. When the idea of stealing comes, non-stealing should be thought of. When he feels dirty and impure the idea of cleanliness should be thought of. It immediately helps him to become clean. This way through contrary thoughts, Yama and Niyama can be practised and achieved.

Again of the 10 Yamas and Niyamas, even if a man practices one with all sincerity the other nine will follow him. This will be borne out by practice and experience. For example if a man follows Truth or non-injury to others, it will lead him to non-stealing, non-receiving, internal purity, self-study and so on. With the practice of Yama and Niyama the mind becomes pure. It cannot
tolerate something which is impure. For example if a man is used to taking a bath every morning at 7 o' clock and enjoy the sense of cleanliness and purity, he simply cannot miss his bath. He will feel that he has missed 'something' for the whole day. It is a disgusting feeling. Similarly when Yama and Niyama are regularly practised, it gives rise to a feeling of disgust towards everything impure and unholy. Most people stop here and assume a 'holier than thou' attitude. But this is not enough. One must proceed further. Swami Vivekananda lays great emphasis on the practice of Yama and Niyama. He says that when a man practices Truth, no falsehood can come from his mouth. Whatever he utters could become truth. When a man practices non-injury even ferocious animals like tigers become very peaceful in his presence. The lambs and tigers can play together in the presence of a Yogi. With the practice of continence for 12 years a person develops a special nerve with which he can understand the very nature of Truth. With the practice of non-receiving he gets the memory of past life. At present these claims of Swami Vivekananda may seem irrational. But one thing is clear. Before a man dismisses these things he will have to practice and then verify the results for himself. It is not one day's job. It should be practised for years and years. Then the practitioner will surely see certain results for himself. This is the guarantee given by people like Swami Vivekananda who have practised it.

Asana – The third step in Raja Yoga is Asana. It means posture. For a man to meditate a correct posture is essential. In fact what is popular all over the world as Yoga is only Yogasana. That is, Yoga+Asana. They are physical
postures, and a series of exercises with a certain technique of breathing, when
practised regularly makes a man healthy. But health is not the aim of Yoga.
To realize the ultimate Truth is the aim of Yoga. However to realize Truth
meditation is an important technique to be followed and to meditate a
comfortable posture is required. A man who wants to meditate for long hours
should feel physically comfortable. The best posture for a Yogi is to sit with
his spinal column free, sitting erect, holding the three parts – the chest, neck
and head – in a straight line. Many have seen quite a few photographs of
Buddha, Swami Vivekananda and many other yogis sitting in this posture. At
first it may be a bit difficult. But through practice a person can learn to sit in
this posture for long hours.

Until a man gets a firm seat, he cannot practice breathing exercises and
meditation properly. Firmness of seat means a person does not feel the body
at all. Our ordinary experience is that the moment we sit in a particular
posture for sometime we are disturbed by a lot of body movements and even
itching. That is because our natural tendency is towards restlessness. Our mind
is restless and so is our body. But when a person slowly starts meditating, the
posture becomes firm and pleasant. A person can even go beyond the idea of
a body. After such meditation a man feels that his mind and body are
completely relaxed.

Pranayama means breath control. Swami Vivekananda narrates a story
to bring out the importance of Pranayama. There was once a minister to a
great king. He fell into disgrace. The king, as a punishment, ordered him to be
shut up in the top room of a very high tower. This was done, and the minister was left there to perish. He had a faithful wife, however, who came to the tower at night and called to her husband at the top to know what she could do to help him. He told her to return to the tower the following night and bring with her a long rope, some strong twine, pack thread, silken thread, a beetle and a little honey. Wondering much, the good wife obeyed her husband, and brought him the desired articles. The husband directed her to attach the silken thread firmly to the beetle, then to smear its horns with a drop of honey, and to set it free on the wall of the tower, with its head pointing upwards. She obeyed all these instructions, and the beetle started on its long journey. Smelling the honey ahead it slowly crept onwards, in the hope of reaching the honey, until it reached the top of the tower, when the minister grasped the beetle, and got possession of the silken thread. He told his wife to tie the other end to the pack thread, and after he had drawn up the pack thread, he repeated the process with the strong twine and lastly with the rope. Then the rest was easy. The minister descended from the tower by means of the rope and made his escape.

In this body of man, the breath is the 'silken thread'; by learning to control breath. One can grasp the pack thread of the 'nerve currents' and lastly the rope of Prana. What is this 'Prana'? Many people think that breath itself is Prana. This is not true. Breathing is only one of the many exercises through which we get to the real Pranayama. According to the philosophers of India, the whole universe is composed of two materials, one of which they call
Ákásha. It is the omnipresent, all penetrating existence. Everything that has form, everything that is the result of a combination, is evolved out of this Ákásha. It is the Ákásha that becomes the air, that becomes the liquid, that becomes the solids; it is the Ákásha that becomes the sun, the earth, the moon, the stars, the comets; it is the Ákásha that becomes the human body, the animal body, the plants, every form that we see, everything that can be sensed, everything that exists. It cannot be perceived; it is so subtle that it is beyond all ordinary perception; it can only be seen when it has become gross, has taken form. At the beginning of creation there is only this Ákásha. At the end of the cycle the solids, the liquids and the gases all melt into the Ákásha again, and the next creation similarly proceeds out of this Ákásha.

By what power is this Ákásha manufactured into this universe? By the power of Prana. Just as Ákásha is the infinite, omnipresent material of this universe, so is this Prana the infinite, omnipresent manifesting power of this universe. Prana is everything that we call energy, everything that we call force. It is the Prana that is manifesting as motion; it is the Prana that is manifesting as gravitation, as magnetism, It is the Prana that is manifesting as the actions of the body, as the nerve currents and as the thought force. We breathe, we digest food, pass stools, etc. with the force of Prana. Even the Earth moves round the Sun with this force of Prana. The sum total of all forces in the universe, mental or physical when resolved back to their original state is called Prana. When there was nothing in this universe, that is, as we understand it in ordinary sense – what existed then? Ákásha existed then
without motion. The physical motion of Prana had stopped. [But it existed all the time] At the end of a cycle of creation the energies displayed in the universe became quiet and become potential. At the beginning of the next cycle of creation Prana, strikes upon the Ákásha and out of Ákásha all these various forms of creation evolve. It is Prana which changes all these manifestations of energy. The knowledge and control of this Prana is really what is meant by Pranayama.

The Hindu philosophy always inquires into the last possible generalization. Details will be worked out only later. It seeks the fundamental. The question that is raised in the Vedanta philosophy is "What is that, knowing which, we shall know everything?" Thus all books and philosophies are written to understand that with which everything else can be understood. If a man wants to know this universe bit by bit he must know every individual grain of sand which means endless search and consumes infinite time. It is impossible. The Yogis say that behind this particular manifestation, there is a generalization. Behind all particular manifestations and ideas stands a generalized, an abstract principle; grasp it and one has grasped everything. The whole universe is generalized into that One Absolute existence which is referred to as Atman, Paramatman and Brahman or simply 'That' in the previous chapters. He who understands 'That' will understand everything. Similarly all forces in this universe is generalized into this Prana. He who has controlled this Prana has controlled his mind and all the minds that ever existed.
Even in scientific terms, what Swami Vivekananda says is acceptable. The sum total of energy in this universe is either potential or kinetic. The kinetic energy is Prana. If every human being, every worm and every stone is a manifestation of this energy then there is something of kinetic energy in everything. Obviously it is with this energy that a man eats, digests, passes bowels, fights, reads, and thinks. It is rational to accept that everything is a manifestation of this sum total of energy. It is because obviously Science says that energy can neither be created nor be destroyed by man. Since man traces a source to this energy, in all scientific enquiry, as part of this universe, belonging to this universe, evolved out of this universe he must be a part of that energy.

This opens to us the door to almost unlimited power. Suppose, a man understood Prana and could control it, all power on earth would be his. He would be able to move the sun and stars out of their places. He could control everything – from an atom down to the biggest of suns, because he can control Prana. This is the end and aim of Pranayama. When a Yogi becomes perfect, there will be nothing in nature which is not under his control.

To control Prana, one must practice Pranayama. Each man must begin from where he stands. He must learn to control that which is nearest to him and which is within his grasp. So the Prana which is working within his mind and body is the nearest to him among all the Prana that is in the universe. The example of our mind and body is taken. Think of every force that is working within a man's body. The most subtle and the most powerful is the motion of
the lungs. If that stops breathing stops and all other manifestations of Prana in our body stops. One should not be under the illusion that the movement of the lungs is producing breath. On the contrary Prana is producing breath. The motion of the lungs draws in air by pump action. The Prana is moving the lungs, the movement of the lungs draws in the air. So Pranayama is not breathing, but controlling that muscular power that moves the lungs. When this movement of Prana is under our control then it is not difficult to take all the other actions of the body under control. If one has control over certain muscles and nerves, why not over certain other muscles and nerves? For example a man cannot move his ears at will but certain animals can. A man does not have that power because he does not exercise it.

It is known that motion which has become latent can be brought back to manifestation. By hard work and practice certain motions of the body which are most dormant can be brought back under perfect control. Next the exercise in Pranayama is discussed. One must sit up right. The body must be kept straight. If a man sits crookedly he will disturb the spinal cord and it could be injurious. The three parts of the body, the chest, the neck and the head must be held in a straight line. With a little practice this posture becomes as easy as breathing. The nerve centre that controls the respiratory organs has a controlling effect on the other nerves. A man can experiment and see this for himself. His breathing is quite slow and deep when he is relaxed and quite disturbed when his mind and body is disturbed. So he must begin to breathe rhythmically. Actually man's breathing is quite irregular. But the first
lesson in Pranayama is to breathe in a measured way. To breathe in and out consciously. Initially one can keep counting while breathing in and out to make it very very measured. But it is better to soon switch over to the repetition of the word 'OM' or any other sacred sound of any choice. Let the word flow in and out with the breath, rhythmically and harmoniously. He will find that the whole body is becoming rhythmical. Then one learns what rest is. Actually compared with it sleep is not rest. When this rest is experienced even the most tired nerves will calm down. This rest is a rare experience.

A person who practices this regularly will find certain changes. The expression in his face will change. Harsh lines from his face will disappear and a calmness comes over his face. Next comes a beautiful voice. Swami Vivekananda says that he never saw a Yogi with a croaking voice. After practising this, then he should move on to the next step. This can be practised for several months or years. The practitioner will feel that he should advance.

In the first step, a man should close the right nostril with the thumb, and inhale slowly through the left nostril and then hold the breath for some time. Then let the air out through the right nostril by closing the left nostril through the thumb. Then breathe in through the right nostril while closing the left nostril with the thumb. Hold the breath for some time. During this time no discomfort should be felt. Then let the air through the left nostril by closing the right nostril with the thumb. Repeat the performance. This exercise looks simple but it can create wonders.
It is better to mention that Pranayama should be practiced only after receiving initiation and instruction from a seasoned practitioner of Yoga. The practises of Pranayama are not discussed in detail because mere printed instructions are of not much use.

**Pratyahara** is withdrawal of the senses from their objects. What does it mean actually? Naturally the mind of man flows towards objects of pleasure. Sense organs are the medium of the mind. The eyes always want to see beautiful objects. Nose wants to smell sweet and favourable fragrance and so on. Tongue wants to taste something very tasty. The mind perceives all the objects. It finds it difficult to concentrate on one object only, because the mind is a slave of sensual pleasures. But at some point of time some control must be exercised. Just because a cake is sweet and tasty for the tongue one cannot eat hundreds of it. However nobody teaches self-control. As Swami Vivekananda\(^8\) says, every child in this world is told 'Be good' 'Be good'. But he is not taught how to be good. A child is told a thousand times 'Do not steal', 'Do not tell a lie'. But he is not taught how not to steal, how not to tell a lie. In other words he is not taught mental control.

Swami Vivekananda gives a different example of hypnotists and faith-healers to drive home his point. Suppose a person is suffering from pain or psychological depression, then the faith-healer or the hypnotist will give suggestions so that the patient will learn to ignore the pain. He will succeed in putting the mind off from the pain or the problem. This is pratyahara for the time being. You use the mind to its own advantage and prevent the senses
from flowing towards its objects of pleasures. For example if a man determines that he will not eat sweets because he is a diabetic, it becomes very difficult to do it. There might be a mental struggle and tension and he might end up either unhappy or eating sweets. But by practising pratyahara he will do neither. He happily doesn't eat sweets because he will avoid a situation where he will eat sweets and slowly he will engage his mind with something more important which he has to do than merely eat sweets. It is this concentration of mind on one object to the exclusion of the others that is required. When a man practises Pratyahara he will learn to ignore the senses. He can attach or detach his mind on any object at will. Pratyahara means 'gathering towards', checking the outgoing powers of the mind.

Swami Vivekananda explains how it can be practised before meditation. When a man sits for meditation the first thing he can do is to let the mind run on. The mind is restless and jumps about from one thought to another like a monkey. Let it jump. To control that would be foolish. All that he has to do is to wait and watch his mind. It is then that he will know where the mind wants to escape and what thoughts come to the mind. After a few days he will find out that the vagaries of the mind are becoming less and less violent. Each day mind seems to become calmer and calmer. After several months slowly the mind will be under control. This controlling of mind is called Pratyahara. But remember this is not a day's work. It may take months and years. The Yogi must always practice. He should try to live alone. The companionship of different sorts of people distracts the mind. The Yogi should not speak too
much. The Yogi should not work too much. After a hard day's work he finds
it difficult to concentrate his mind. He must not eat too much nor should he
starve. He should not sleep too much nor sleep too less. This will tone down
nervous excitement and bring calmness. It enables him to see things more
clearly. His physical and mental health will be better. Swami Vivekananda is
pretty hard on the diet of those people who want to become Yogis. It is better
they live on milk, fruits and cereals, only that much which they essentially
require. Again, a man is also reminded of the 'golden mean' of Bertrand
Russell in 'Conquest of Happiness' where he advises people to be moderate in
everything. It helps in attaining mental control.

**Dharana** means fixing the mind on to a certain point. It is nothing but
concentration. On what should a man concentrate? It could be anything from
holy sounds to pictures. It could be the figure of Christ or the word of Buddha
or any 'Mantra'. It could be just light, sun or whatever. It should make the
practitioner feel ennobled. Swami Vivekananda gives the example of the pearl
oyster. There is a pretty Indian fable to the effect that if it rains when the star
Swati 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 of the
sea when that star shines, and want to catch a drop of water. It is a precious
rain drop for them. When a drop falls into them, quickly the oysters close their
shells and dive down to the bottom of the sea and patiently develop the drop
into a pearl. A yogi should be like that. First a man should hear, then
understand and then leaving all distractions, shut his mind to outside
influences and devote himself to developing the truth within himself. There is the danger of frittering away his energies by taking up an idea only for its novelty, and then giving it up for another that is newer. A man should take one thing up and do it, and see the end of it, and before he has seen the end, he should not give it up. He who can become mad with an idea, he alone sees the light. Those that take only 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 and for all this nibbling at different things, ideas and ideologies. A man should take up an idea and make that one idea his life, think of it, dream of it and live on that idea. Let the brain, muscles, nerves, every part of his body, be full of that idea, and just leave every other idea alone. This is the way to success, and this is the way great spiritual giants are produced. Others are mere talking machines. If a man wants to be blessed and make others blessed, he must go deeper. The first step is not to disturb the mind, not to associate with persons whose ideas are disturbing. Everyone knows that certain persons, certain places, certain foods, repel him. They should be avoided; and those who want to go to the highest must avoid all company, good or bad. Practice hard; whether he lives or dies does not matter. He has to plunge in and work, without thinking of the result. If he is brave enough, in six months he will be a perfect Yogi. But those who take up just a bit of it and a little bit of everything else make no
progress. It is of no use to simply take a course of lessons. To those who are full of Tamas (ignorant and dull) – those whose minds never get fixed on any idea and crave only for something to amuse them – religion and philosophy are simply objects of entertainment. These are the unpersevering. They hear a talk, think it is very nice, and then go home and forget all about it. To succeed a man must have tremendous perseverance, tremendous will. "I will drink the ocean" says the persevering soul, "at my will mountains will crumble up". "Have that sort of energy, that sort of will, work hard, and you will reach the goal."

What Swami Vivekananda says here is the value of concentrated effort. The greatest of scientists and rationalists have put in concentrated effort. Even so if a man wants to become a Yogi he must put in concentrated effort. It is rational to conclude that without concentrated hard work nothing can be achieved.

**Dhyana** means meditation. Dharana or concentration is holding the mind on to some particular object, and the unbroken flow of mind towards that object is called meditation or Dhyana. When the mind is fixed upon one object, whether external or internal, concrete or abstract ; if the flow of thoughts remains steady towards that object for a certain length of time and the mind runs unbroken as it were, towards the object, it is meditation. The mental energy flows continuously towards the object of concentration and remains in that way for a length of time and it would be called meditation.
"Meditation is the power which enables us to resist all slavery to nature. Nature may say, "Look there is a beautiful thing!" But I do not look. Then she says, "there is a beautiful smell; smell it!" I say to my nose, "Don't smell." Nature does awful things – kills one of my children and says, "Now sit down and weep. Go to the depths !" I say, "I don't have to." If we have that power within ourselves, that is freedom. That is the power of meditation.

How is it to be attained ? In a dozen different ways. Each temperament has its own way. But this is the general principle : get hold of the mind. The mind is like a lake, and every stone that drops into it raises waves. Every thought and every action is that stone. These waves do not let us see what we are. The full moon is reflected in the water of the lake, but the surface is so disturbed that we do not see the reflection clearly. Let it be calm. Do not let nature raise the wave. Keep quiet, and then after a little while she will give you up. Then we know what we are. God is there already, but the mind is so agitated, always running after the senses. You close the senses and yet you whirl and whirl about. Just this moment I think I am all right and I will meditate upon God, and then my mind goes to London in one minute. And if I pull it away from there, it goes to New York to think about the things I have done there in the past. These waves are to be stopped by the power of meditation." (CWSV, Vol. IV, 248)

"It is impossible to find God outside of ourselves. Our own souls contribute all the divinity that is outside of us. We are the greatest temple. The objectification is only a faint imitation of what we see within ourselves.
Concentration of the powers of the mind is our only instrument to help us see God. If you know one soul (your own), you know all souls, past, present, and future. The concentrated mind is a lamp that shows us every corner of the soul.

Truth cannot be partial; it is for the good of all. Finally, in perfect rest and peace meditate upon the SELF, concentrate your mind upon the SELF, make yourself one with the SELF. Then no speech is needed; silence will carry the truth. Do not spend your energy in talking, but meditate in silence; and do not let the rush of the outside world disturb you. When your mind is in the highest state, you are unconscious of it. Accumulate power in silence, and become a dynamo of spirituality." (CWSV, Vol. VII. 59-61)

"Meditate every day alone. Everything will open up of itself. During meditation suppress the emotional side altogether. That is a great source of danger. Those that are very emotional no doubt have their Kundalini rushing quickly upwards, but it is as quick to come down as to go up. And when it does come down, it leaves the devotee in a state of utter ruin. It is for this reason that Kirtanas (the singing of devotional songs) and other auxiliaries to emotional development have a great drawback. It is true that by dancing, singing, weeping and jumping, etc. through a momentary impulse, that power is made to course upwards, but it is never enduring. On the contrary when it traces back its course, it rouses violent lust in the individual. But this happens simply owing to a lack of steady practice in meditation and concentration. Such secrets may not be written in scriptures. They are being handed on
secretly through a succession of gurus and disciples." (CWSV, Vol. VII, 254-255)

**Samadhi** means super consciousness. Till now a cursory view of the different steps in Raja-Yoga was taken, except this last one. This is the goal, to which Raja-Yoga will lead us. As human beings all the knowledge a man acquires is consciousness. For example a person knows there is a table in this room. He will take notice of it. He may also know that Shakespeare wrote Hamlet. This knowledge of his regarding the table being in the room and Shakespeare's authorship is rational. He has proof. All this rational knowledge is referred to consciousness. He is conscious of the presence of a table in his room. He is conscious of the fact that Shakespeare wrote Hamlet. At the same time there is a part of his existence of which he is not conscious. For example, as Swami Vivekananda says, when he eats food, he does it consciously; when he assimilates it, he does it unconsciously. When the food is assimilated and manufactured into blood, it is done unconsciously. When out of the blood all the different parts of his body are strengthened, it is done unconsciously. And yet it is he who is doing all this. There cannot be twenty people in his body doing all this without his bringing it to the notice of his consciousness. But while studying Pranayama it was known that whatever a man does unconsciously can be brought up to the plane of consciousness. The movement of lungs – apparently he has no control over it. A person is writing this in English. His mother-tongue is Kannada. Because he is writing or speaking in English, at that particular moment of writing or speaking he may
not be conscious of his knowledge of Kannada. But then at some other time, it will surface to his conscious mind. These two examples show that the human mind operates in two planes. One is the conscious plane where one can see, touch, smell, read and acquire knowledge and arrive at rational conclusions. In the other unconscious plane he does work without his awareness. To put it in a different way, in conscious plane there is ego. A man works with 'I'ness, Egoism. In the unconscious plane he is unaccompanied by the feeling of egoism. He has an ego when he is conscious and he doesn't have an ego when he is unconscious. In the lower animals this unconscious work manifests as instinct. But this idea of conscious and unconscious mind does not end here. There is a still higher plane upon which the mind can work. It can go beyond consciousness. Just as unconscious work is beneath consciousness, so there is another work which is above consciousness, and which is also not accompanied by the feeling of egoism. The feeling of egoism is only in the middle plane. When the mind goes beyond this line of self-consciousness, it is called Samadhi or superconsciousness.

A rationalist might want to know if really such a level of consciousness exists. He might also want to know if a man in Samadhi has not gone down below consciousness or has degenerated into some peculiar mental condition.

Swami Vivekananda says that he can answer this question only through the effects or results. Suppose a man goes to deep sleep, he enters a plane beneath consciousness. He works the body all the time. He breathes, he moves the body, digests food, assimilates it, produces energy etc. But yet is
without any accompanying feeling of ego; he is unconscious of it. And when he returns from his sleep, he is the same man who went into it. The sum total of the knowledge which he had before he went into sleep remains the same. It does not increase at all. There is no enlightenment. But when a man enters Samadhi there is a sea change in him. He may go into Samadhi, a fool, but he will come out of it as a sage, a saint and a prophet. This is the difference.

Now rationality tells us that if there are two different effects, then there must be two different causes. And a man who comes back from Samadhi (in contrast to a man who comes back from sleep) is much higher than what can be got by reasoning in a conscious state or what can be got by an unconscious state. It must therefore be super consciousness and Samadhi is called super conscious state. It is seen that this has happened to Christ, Buddha and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa to name a few and whose anecdotes are supported by history. There might be others, who choose to remain away from public gaze because their renunciation is perfect.

This super conscious state is achieved by a few after a lot of hard work. These few who have claimed to have achieved this have one thing to say—that the conscious workings of the mind is narrow and limited. There is a little circle within which human reason must move. It cannot go beyond. It cannot comprehend knowledge regarding the existence of soul, existence of God, or of a supreme intelligence which may be guiding this universe. The mind of a mortal who is bound by birth and death cannot comprehend something which has no birth or death. So reason which is the highest expression of human
mind can never comprehend all this knowledge. It is only in the super conscious state of the mind that these things are understood. That is why we see a Buddha or a Christ advocate and teach certain things. The aim of all their teachings is the same. It is purity of mind. With a pure mind one can attain the super conscious state.

Thus Yoga teaches that the mind itself has a higher state of existence, beyond reason, a super conscious state, and when the mind gets to that higher state, then this knowledge, beyond reasoning comes to man. Metaphysical and transcendental knowledge comes to that man. This state of going beyond reason, transcending ordinary human nature, may sometimes come by chance to a man who does not understand its science; he as it were, stumbles upon it. When he stumbles upon it, he generally interprets it as coming from outside. So this explains why an inspiration, or transcendental knowledge, may be the same in different countries, but in one country it will seem to come through an angel, and in another through a Deva, and in a third through God. What does it mean? It means the mind brought this knowledge by its own nature, and that the finding of knowledge was interpreted according to the belief and education of the person through whom it came. The real fact is that these various men, as it were, stumbled upon this super conscious state.

All the different steps in Yoga are intended to bring us scientifically to the super conscious state or Samadhi. The prophets who have reached this state have expounded the highest philosophy of God and Nature. They were great Yogis. If one Christ or one Buddha has attained this state it also means
that anyone can attain this state. The very fact that one man ever reached that state, proves that it is possible for everyman to do so. This is possible only through experience. One may talk rationality, reason and philosophy all his life, but with no experience it is all a waste.

In order to reach the super conscious state in a scientific manner it is necessary to pass through the eight steps of Raja-Yoga mentioned in this chapter. The three – Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi – together are called Samyama. Samyama then means that, if the mind can first concentrate upon an object, and then is able to continue in that concentration for a length of time, and then, by continued concentration, to dwell only on the internal part of the perception of which object was the effect, then everything is achieved.

William Wordsworth, the English Romantic poet must have had an experience of the super conscious state of the mind. Some of the lines in his poem 'Prelude' point out to this conclusion. When Prof. Hastie taught Wordsworth in Presidency College, Calcutta Swami Vivekananda was a student there in his class. While explaining Wordsworth, Prof. Hastie told that the poet must have had a super conscious state of mind where he was not aware of his body and external world but became conscious of only a higher spirit in Nature. Even in his poem, 'Tintern Abbey' the following lines must be a product of a superconscious state of the mind.

"Until the breath of this corporeal frame

And even the motion of our human blood"
Almost suspended, we are laid asleep

In body and become a living soul;

While with an eye made quiet by the power

Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,

We see into the life of things”

In fact while in the course of his lecture, Prof. Hastie referred to Ramakrishna Paramahamsa of Dakshineshwar, as a person who had such experiences which Wordsworth had, and that it was possible for a man to achieve such a state of mind [with a 'pure mind', i.e., concentrated mind]. This is how Swami Vivekananda first heard of a saint called Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Today it is history, that Swami Vivekananda became the foremost disciple of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

This meditative state of Samyama is the highest state of existence. It is also the highest state of happiness. So long as there is desire for the material world, especially for sex, money, power and fame no meditation is possible. And no permanent and unchanging happiness is possible. A man should practice the detachment he has studied in Karma Yoga. It makes him contemplative. A witness-like existence towards the happenings in material world makes a man really detached. He can be happy. The animal has its happiness in the senses, the man in the intellect and the God in spiritual contemplation. Yoga makes a God out of man.
This is an important idea in Dhyana. A sound is heard. First there is the external vibration; second, the nerve motion that carries it to the mind; third, the reaction from the mind, along with which flashes the knowledge of the object which was the external cause of these different changes from the external vibrations to the mental reactions. These three are called in Yoga Shabda (Sound), Artha (meaning) and Jnana (knowledge). In the language of Physics they are called the ethereal vibration, the motion in the nerve and brain, and the mental reaction. Now these distinctive processes have become mixed up. In fact we do not distinguish between these three processes. Only its combined effect is seen. That is, one listens or perceives the external object. Every act of perception includes these three processes, and there is no reason why he should not be able to distinguish them. When the mind is employed in meditation, it develops the power of finer perception. Thus meditation should begin with gross objects and slowly rise to finer and finer, until it becomes objectless. The initial object could be anything. It could be a photograph of Christ, or repeating any sacred sounds (Mantras) etc. The mind should first be employed in perceiving the external causes of sensations by themselves, then the mind will acquire the power of perceiving all finer material existences, all finer bodies and forms. For example one who meditates on the photographs of Christ, might end up with a real vision of Christ himself. Somebody repeating the mantra of Ishwara might see Ishwara. The mind creates for itself a form which is actually giving a form to the formless. When the mind can succeed in perceiving the motions inside by
themselves, it will gain control over all mental waves, in itself and in others, even before they are translated into physical energy. Then he will see the very foundation of his mind, and it will be under his perfect control. Then different powers will come to the Yogi, and if he yields to the temptations of any of these, the road to his further progress will be barred. Such is the evil of running after enjoyments. There have been instances of Yogis who would will something to happen and it would happen; who would desire something and they would get it. But that desire and will for useless enjoyments will ultimately destroy their mental strength. If the Yogi is strong enough to reject even these miraculous powers, he will attain to the goal of Yoga; the complete suppression of the waves in the ocean of the mind. Then the glory of the soul, undisturbed by the distractions of the mind, or motions of the body will shine in its full effulgence. It is a state of mind which is never distracted, in the sense the person who meditates will not get a single thought probably other than the thought about the object of his meditations. When he transcends that also, it is a thoughtless condition, a complete annihilation of the mind. The Yogi will in the end find himself as he is and as he always was; the essence of knowledge, the immortal and the all-pervading.

This Samadhi is the property of every human being-no-even every animal. From the lowest animal to the highest angel each being will have to experience this state. Otherwise religion and spirituality have no meaning. These is no difference between a person who knows a lot of religion through books and a person who does not profess to have any religion, because mere
bookish knowledge will take a person nowhere. It is this experience alone that makes all this study meaningful and rational.\textsuperscript{12}

This raises another important question.\textsuperscript{13} All Yogis feel that man in this universe is only a manifestation of an 'Absolute Condition' and that he is going forward, in the path of Yoga only to return to that 'Absolute condition'. This being accepted, a rationalist can ask "Which is better, the 'Absolute' or this state in which we are living?" There are many who feel that this manifested state is the highest state of man. They imagine that in the Absolute there cannot be any quality; that it must be insensate, dull and lifeless. They feel that only this life can be enjoyed and therefore we must cling to it. But this is not possible. Everyone knows that life cannot go on. Death is the end of life. To think that there is only enjoyment in life is also an incomplete view. There can be no good without evil. There can be no happiness without unhappiness. There can't be heat without cold etc. To live in a world where there is only good and no evil is like building castles in a dream or in the air. Another theory in finding a solution to life is as follows; that man's destiny is to go on always improving, always going forward, but never reaching the goal. This statement is also absurd because there is no such thing as motion in a straight line. Every motion is in a circle. If you can take up a stone, and project it into space, and then live long enough, that stone, if it meets with no obstruction, will come back exactly to his hand. A straight line if infinitely projected must end in a circle. A man begins with life and end in death. This looks like a straight line, but if it is infinitely projected it means something different.
Every form in this world he sees, is taken out of something, and it goes back to that something. Even the sun, moon and stars are produced from nebulae, and then they dissolve and go back to nebulae. The universe will go back to where it came from. There cannot be different laws for different matter. Law is uniform. If this is the law of nature, it also applies to thought. Thought will dissolve and go back to its origin. Man will also go back to his origin the 'Absolute' or God or whatever. This Absolute remains the same. Nature works through this plan.
END NOTES


2. Ibid, P. 128.


CHAPTER FOUR

JNANA YOGA

4.1 THE NECESSITY OF RELIGION

Before reading anything on Jnana Yoga, the readers should note one thing. These essays on Jnana Yoga were actually a series of lectures delivered in various cities of America and in London and are not a carefully written thesis. Many times he spoke extempore. So it is very difficult to see a gradual development of thought in these essays. The reader may find it disjointed at first reading. But if the reader persists a few more times patiently, then he will discern a clear line of development in thought. Ultimately Swami Vivekananda wants to say this that according to Jnana Yoga, there is only one thing real in the universe, which he calls Brahman or simply 'IT'. Everything else is unreal, manifested, created and manufactured out of Brahman by the power of Maya. To reach back to that Brahman is man's goal. Every man is that Brahman, that reality plus Maya. If a man can get rid of this Maya or ignorance, then he becomes what he really is. With this in background these essays have to be studied.
Jnana means 'knowledge'. Here it means ultimate knowledge got through experience, not the knowledge we get through books. Jnana Yoga also comprises 'Advaita philosophy' of Vedanta tradition. Advaita means 'non-dualism'. That which has no second. Purposefully the word Monism is not used because it means that Truth is only one. There is nothing else. There is nothing by way of something second. But before going into the definition of Advaita philosophy, Swami Vivekananda writes a few chapters as an introduction.

He begins the first chapter with these lines: "Of all forces that have worked and are still working to mould the destinies of the human race, none, certainly, is more potent than that, the manifestation of which we call religion. All social organizations have as a background, somewhere, the workings of that peculiar force, and the greatest cohesive impulse ever brought into play amongst human units has been derived from this power. It is obvious to all of us that in very many cases the bonds of religion have proved stronger than the bond of race, or climate or even of descent. It is a well-known fact that persons worshipping the same God, believing in the same religion, have stood by each other, with much greater strength and constancy, than people of merely the same descent. Various attempts have been made to trace the beginnings of religion. In all the ancient religions which have come down to us at the present day, we find one claim made that they are all supernatural, that their genesis is not, as it were, in the human brain, but that they originated somewhere outside of it. Two theories have gained some acceptance amongst
modern scholars. First is the spirit theory of religion. The other is the evolution of the idea of the infinite.

The first maintains that the ancestor worship is the beginning of religious ideas; the other that religion originates in the personification of the powers of nature.

In the spirit theory of religion, we see that man wants to keep up the memory of his dead relatives. He thinks that they are living somehow, somewhere even when their body is dissolved. When we study the ancient religions of the Egyptians, Babylonians, Chinese and other races in America, we find clear traces of this ancestor worship. This was the beginning of religion.

On the other hand, there are scholars from the ancient Aryan literature. A study of them reveals that religion originated in nature worship. Although in India we find proofs of ancestor worship everywhere, yet in the oldest records there is no trace of it whatsoever. In the Rig-Veda Samhita, the most ancient of Vedas, we do not find any trace of it, we find only the worship of nature. So also it is found in the ancient Greeks. Their whole mythology is abstracted nature worship. So also with the very ancient German, Scandinavian and other Aryan races. They worship Nature. The human mind seems to struggle to get a peep behind the scenes. The dawn, the evening, the hurricane, the stupendous and gigantic forces of nature, its beauties, these have exercised the human mind, and it aspires to go beyond, to understand something about them. In the struggle they endow these phenomena with
personal attributes, giving them souls and bodies, sometimes beautiful, sometimes transcendent. Every attempt ends by these phenomena becoming abstractions whether personalized or not.\(^2\)

These two views on the origin of religion seem to be contradictory. But Swami Vivekananda feels that they can be reconciled on a third basis which actually is the real basis of religion. He calls that the struggle to, transcend the limitations of the senses. Whether man seeks to worship his ancestors or wants to understand the power working behind the phenomenon of Nature, he is trying to transcend the limitations of his own senses. He cannot remain satisfied with sense enjoyments or the knowledge he can acquire through the senses and through intellectual cogitations.

The first glimpse of religion must have come through dreams. Man just gets the idea of immortality only through dreams. During sleep when the body is apparently dead, the mind goes on with all its workings. Death is something like deep sleep. One is not aware of the body. Of course he never wakes up from death. It makes man wonder if his dream will go on even after death. The peculiar quality of a dream is that it is real as long as it lasts. It is realized that it is a dream only after he wakes up from his sleep.

'This', according to Swami Vivekananda,\(^3\) 'is a more natural explanation of the supernatural. Man does not experience a fresh existence during dream. He merely recapitulates the experiences of the awakened state.

In all organized religions, their founders, prophets and messengers are declared to have gone into states of mind that were neither waking nor
sleeping, in which they came face to face with a new series of facts relating to what is called the spiritual kingdom. They realized things much more intensely than a man realizes facts around him in his waking state.

Some may argue that Buddhism is an exception because they do not believe in any God or soul. Then their religion cannot be derived from the super sensuous state of existence. Actually Buddhists also stand by an Eternal Moral law and this moral law was not reasoned out through intellectual cogitations. It is the knowledge which Buddha discovered in a super conscious state while meditating under the Bo-tree in Gaya. All the teachings of Buddha have come through his knowledge discovered in that super conscious state and not through intellectual cogitations.

Thus, a tremendous statement is made by all religions – that the human mind, at certain moments, transcends not only the limitations of the senses, but also the power of reasoning. It comes face to face with the facts which it could never have sensed, and could never have reasoned out. These facts are the basis of all the religions of the world. Of course as rationalists we have the right to challenge these facts and to put them to the test of reason. Nevertheless, all the existing religions of the world claim for the human mind this peculiar power of transcending the limits of the senses and the limits of reason; and this power they put forward as a statement of fact.

Mostly the knowledge gained by the prophets and messengers in the super sensuous, super conscious mind are all abstractions as contrasted with
the concrete discoveries of Science and Physics for instance; and in all highly organized religions they take the purest form of Unit Abstraction, either in the form of an Abstracted Presence, as an Omni-Present Being, as an Abstract Personality called God, as a Moral Law, or in the form of an Abstract Essence underlying every existence. Even in modern times, too, the attempts made to preach religions without appealing to the super sensuous state of the mind have had to take up the old abstractions of the ancients and give different names to them as 'Moral law', the 'Ideal unity' etc. Actually no one has seen the ideal. There is no such things as an 'Ideal Human being' or 'Ideal God' or 'Ideal Presence', 'Ideal Power'. Yet one is told to believe in it.

Thus, this one fact stands out from all these different religions, that there is an 'Ideal unit Abstraction' which is put before us either in the form of a person or an Impersonal Being, or a Law or a Presence or an Essence. We are always struggling to raise ourselves up to that ideal. Every human being, whosoever and wheresoever he may be, has an ideal of infinite power. Every human being has an ideal of infinite pleasure. Most of the activities we see around us is a struggle for achieving this infinite pleasure and infinite power. But a very few quickly discover that infinite pleasure and infinite power cannot be grasped through our mind, body and senses which are finite and limited. Finally man gives up his idea of trying to express the infinite through the finite because it cannot happen that way. This giving up, this renunciation or rejection of the finite forms the very basis of religion and ethics.
The pursuit of the Infinite, the struggle to grasp the Ultimate or to get beyond the limitations of the senses is the most glorious business of man. One should not condemn such a person. Some people find great pleasure in eating. Some others find great enjoyment in possessing material wealth and others find pleasure in intellectual pursuits. Nobody condemns them. Why should one condemns a person who seeks spiritual knowledge? In fact lower the organism the greater is the pleasure in the senses. No man can enjoy eating food as much as a wolf or a dog. Their pleasures are only in the senses. The lower types of humanity take pleasure in the senses. A little more cultured and civilized people take pleasure in intellectual pursuits like sciences, mathematics, arts and music. The most evolved among human beings take delight in spiritual pursuits.

Spirituality is at a higher plane, because the subject is infinite. But unfortunately the spiritual paths today, prescribed by the major religions today have become intolerant. They claim superiority over each other. Actually all religious ideas have to become universal. There is something to learn from every religion. Many feel that religious ideas and spiritual ideas are dying out. But Swami Vivekananda feels that it is the other way round. Religious and spiritual ideas are just beginning to grow. Till now religion was confined to a certain section of the society mostly the priests and a few institutions like the Churches and the temples. It was full of dogma and ceremonies and rituals. But religion in future will become a part of everybody's life. It will become
real and inspire every action of man. For that what we need is a harmony among religions and not infighting.
4.2 THE REAL NATURE OF MAN

Man ultimately wants to be happy. He thinks he derives all his happiness through sense enjoyments. However life is not enjoyment. When trouble hits him, he involuntarily wants to know what life is and if life is real or not. Even to the person who has devoted every moment of his life to sense-enjoyments – even to him, death comes, and he is compelled to find out if life is real or not. Religion begins with this enquiry. One of the most poetical of the Upanishads, the Katha Upanishad, begins with this inquiry.

"When a man dies there is a dispute. One party declares that he has gone for ever, the other insists that he is still living. Which is true?"

Various answers have been given. The whole sphere of metaphysics, philosophy and religion is really filled with various answers to this question. At the same time attempts have been made to suppress it; to put a stop to the unrest of mind which wants to know what is real and permanent in this changing life. But so long as death remains, all those attempts at suppression will always prove to be unsuccessful. Every time one sees death face to face this question has to arise.

Now two positions remain to mankind. One is to accept nihilism and say that all is nothing; that a man knows nothing and that man can never know anything either about the past, or future or even the present. The other position is to seek for an explanation; to discover something real and which is beyond change in this world and which is changing every minute.\textsuperscript{5}
Obviously to live like a nihilist is extremely difficult even for one minute. In 'Crime and Punishment' a novel by Fyodor Dostoyevsky a character who exhibits traces of nihilism commits a murder and confesses his guilt. The burden of guilt is too much on him. Another character in 'The Possessed', also a novel by Fyodor Dostoyevsky is a nihilist. He commits suicide because if everything has no meaning and life has no meaning, life becomes impossible.

Then there is the other position – to seek for an explanation, to discover in the midst of this eternally changing and evanescent world whatever that is real. A man must enquire if his body is only an aggregate of molecules of matter or if there is anything real. This has been the search throughout the history of the human mind. In the very oldest times one finds that a man's mind gets a glimpse of the light of knowledge. He would try to go a step beyond this human body which is matter and even transcend it, trying to find something more perfect, something much more complete and something which remains or survives even after the body is dissolved.

It is found in the hymns of the Rig-Veda, addressed to the God of Fire who is burning a dead body (Most Hindus burn their dead and do not bury them) "Carry him 'O Fire, in your arms gently, give him a perfect body, a bright body, carry him where the fathers live, where there is no more sorrow, where there is no more death." The same idea is present in every religion. Every religion upholds this idea of 'something' which survives in a person, even after death.\(^6\)
Next, Swami Vivekananda juxtaposes this idea with a modern scientific assertion. Modern science says that man is the product of evolution. Every evolution presupposes an involution. Something cannot come out of nothing. Science tells us that matter and energy can neither be created nor be destroyed. So, if man is an evolution of the mollusc, then even the greatest of men like Christ, Buddha and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa are a product of this evolved mollusc. That energy which manifests itself slowly through various stages until it becomes a perfect man like Christ or Paramahamsa cannot come out of nothing. It came out of that 'something' or 'force' or 'energy'. It existed somewhere. And if the mollusc or the protoplasm is the first point to which modern science can trace, then that mollusc or protoplasm must have contained that energy of Buddha and Christ.

In fact a man can accept that there is some 'force' and some 'energy' which is manifesting itself in his body and which departs after his death. It is this force which makes us breathe, eat food, digest it, assimilate it and manufacture his blood and bones. A man has to eat and assimilate food for himself. Nobody else can do this for him. The question arises, if this force is 'mind' or 'soul'. It is already seen in Raja Yoga that there are different levels of concentrated minds. In all probability the mind in super conscious state is the soul, is the SELF. Now a man can argue a little further. Obviously the force that controls his body is not just the mind. He doesn't digest his food and manufacture it into blood and bones with his mind. The body requires some 'force' to make it act and the body has no control over that 'force'.
Similarly the mind also requires that 'force' to make it act and the mind has no control over it. This 'force' can be called the 'soul'. It can be given any other name if the word 'soul' is repulsive. But that 'force' is there. Hindus call that 'Atman'. 'Brahman' ['SELF' or 'IT'] in a man as 'soul' is called 'Atman'. 'Atman' is a Sanskrit word. It is beyond the body and the mind. It works the mind and it works the body through the mind. Everyone has an Atman. Swami Vivekananda has an Atman. Christ and Buddha too have an Atman. It is in accordance with the theory of evolution also. Probably Buddha and Christ are more 'evolved' than the others. This soul or Atman can be understood. Every religion has made great speculations and great discussions have followed. Advaita philosophy has some logical conclusions to make. Obviously this soul has to be omni-present because it has no form or shape. Our sense of Time and Space is limited to our mind only. So this Atman has to be beyond Space and Time. Causation cannot stand without Time. Without the idea of succession there cannot be any idea of causation. So the Atman must be beyond any idea of Time, Space and Causation. 8 Time, Space and Causation are within the framework of the mind.

Now, when something is beyond Time, beyond Space and beyond Causation, it must be infinite. Then comes the highest speculation of Advaita Philosophy in Hinduism. The infinite cannot be two. If the soul be infinite, there can be only one soul, and all ideas of various souls having a soul which is separate are not real in the highest sense. The spirit is therefore ONE and INFINITE. He is the omnipresent spirit. And the apparent man is only a
limited manifestation, of that Real Man. In this sense all religions and mythologies are true. A man, however great he may be, is only a dim reflection or manifestation of the Real Man who is beyond and who is THE SPIRIT. The Real Man, The Spirit, is beyond Time, Space and Causation. It is beyond Life and Death. It was never born. It will never die. These ideas are within the purview of the mind. And this Spirit is beyond the mind.

Every soul is infinite. Swami Vivekananda\(^9\) quotes an incident to drive home this point. Some children were being examined. The examiner put them rather hard questions, and among them was this one: "Why does not the earth fall?" He wanted to evoke answers about gravitation. Most of the children could not answer at all; a few answered that it was gravitation or something. One bright little girl answered it by asking another question: "Where should it fall?" The question asked by the teacher is meaningless. Most of the questions asked about the soul are also meaningless because a man cannot comprehend something through the intellect, which is beyond the mind and the intellect itself. In infinity there is no up and down, there is no left and right. These things are there only in the relative. The infinite cannot come and go anywhere. It cannot fall or rise. Thus when people speculate or think of this infinite they have to give up the idea of the body and mind. The body and mind and intellect are impermanent. They are prone to change. Therefore they cannot be the infinite Truth. It is the spirit which can live alone for ever. The body and mind are continually changing. In fact they are names of only a series of changeful phenomena, like rivers whose waters are
in a constant state of flux, yet presenting the appearance of unbroken streams. Every particle in this body is continually changing; no one has the same body for many minutes together, and yet we think of it as the same body of the same individual. So with the mind; one moment it is happy, another moment unhappy; one moment strong, another weak; an everchanging whirlpool. That cannot be the spirit which is infinite.

This idea might be frightening and some people might question about the existence of individuality and personality. A boy has no moustache; when he grows to be a man, perhaps he will have a moustache and a beard. His individuality would be lost, if it were in the body. If another person lost one eye, his individuality would be lost if it were in the body. Then a drunkard should not give up drinking because he would lose his individuality. Then a thief should not become a good man because he would lose his individuality. A boy should not become a man. Actually there is no individuality and personality which does not change. If there is a perfect individuality or personality, it can only be in the infinite. It is the only thing that does not change. Neither can individuality be in memory. Suppose on an account of a blow on the head, a person forgets all his past, then he has lost all his individuality. A person does not remember the first two or three years of his childhood and if his memory and existence are one, then whatever he forgets is gone. That part of his life which he does not remember, he did not live. That is a very narrow idea of individuality.¹⁰
The funny thing is we are spirit in an absolute sense and we are individuals in a relative plane. Actually we are struggling towards that individuality which is of the infinite, which is the Real Nature of Man. Actually all evolution is a movement towards that infinity. But the evolution is not taking place in the infinity. It is the evolution of nature which manifests this infinity as human beings and as this universe.

Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{11} gives an example to make things clear. "Let us say a man is addressing a group of people. The group of people are separated by the man by a screen. There is a hole in the screen. Through the screen the man sees only a few in the group. But gradually, the hole became bigger and bigger. It evolved and finally got form completely. The bigger the hole became, the man could see more and more of the group. Finally when the screen was torn, he could see the whole group. Actually the group did not change at all in this case. It was the hole that was widening and evolving. Gradually the group was manifesting itself to the man. Similarly it is with the spirit. No perfection is going to be attained. We are already free and perfect. What are these ideas of religion and God searching for? Why does man look for a God, look upto a God? Why does man, in every nation, in every society want a perfect ideal somewhere, either in man, in God or elsewhere? Because that idea is within us, within every individual."

"It is the God within your ownself that is propelling you to seek Him, to realise Him. After long searches here and there, in temples and in churches, in earths and in heavens, at last you came back, completing the circle from where
you started, to your own soul and find that He for whom you have been seeking all over the world, for whom, you have been weeping and praying in churches and temples, on whom you were looking as the mystery of all mysteries shrouded in the clouds, is nearest of the near, is your own self, the reality of your life, body and soul. That is your own nature. Assert it. Manifest it. Not to become pure, you are pure already. You are not to be perfect, you are that already. Nature is like that screen which is hiding the reality beyond. Every good thought that you think or act upon is simply tearing the veil, as it were; and the purity, the infinity, the God behind, manifests itself more and more. This is the whole history of man. This is a knowledge which is not knowable in the ordinary sense of the term. "He is the eternal subject of everything. He is the eternal witness in this universe. He is your own self." Knowledge in the ordinary sense is a lower step, a degeneration. Look at our ethical codes in every religion, says Swami Vivekananda, there is one idea which stands out as the centre of all ethical systems expressed in various forms. The idea is "do good to others". The guiding motive of man should be charity towards all human beings and charity towards all animals. This is the other way of saying "I am the universe. This universe is One". Why should I do good to others? It is sympathy, the feeling of sameness everywhere. The hardest hearts feel sympathy for other beings sometimes. Extreme self abnegation is the centre of all morality. And what is perfect self-abnegation, the abnegation of this apparent self, the abnegation of all selfishness. The more this is apparent, self is abnegated, the real self
manifests. Actually a lot of majority of mankind is doing some work in this direction. A lot of charity is given. Only they have to give charity more consciously. Know that this apparent self is not permanent but the "Self" beyond all this is permanent and infinite."\(^{12}\)

Next Swami Vivekananda discusses the utility, the effect and the result of this knowledge. These are the days when people judge the utility of everything through money.

Swami Vivekananda\(^{13}\) asks scornfully "What right has a person to ask that Truth should be judged by the standard of utility or money? Suppose there is no utility-will it be less true?"

Actually it has the highest utility. It provides happiness, and after all, all human struggle is directed towards that one end-to be happy. Actually there is no happiness in the pleasures of the senses. A man might own a lot of money and property – might indulge in sex and consume the choicest of food and alcohol. But it may not provide him with everlasting happiness. This only Time will prove. Real happiness can be found only in the Spirit. Therefore the highest utility for mankind is to find this happiness in the spirit.

One wonders if practising this Truth is practical and if it can be practised. Swami Vivekananda says, "Truth does not pay homage to any society, ancient or modern, society has to pay homage to Truth or die."

Societies should be moulded on Truth and Truth should not adjust itself to society. If such a noble truth as unselfishness cannot be practised in
society, it is better for man to give up society and go into the forest. That makes a courageous man. There are two sorts of courage. One is the courage of facing the cannon. And the other is the courage of spiritual conviction.

There is a legend in India told even today. When Alexander, the great, invaded India, he was told by his teacher to go and see some of the sages there. After a long search he was able to find one. He was an old man sitting on a block of stone. The emperor talked with him and became impressed by his wisdom. He asked the sage to go to his country with him, "No" said the sage, "I am quite satisfied with my forest here". The emperor said, "I will give you money, position, wealth. I am the emperor of the world". "No" replied the man, "I don't care for those things". The emperor replied, "If you do not go, I will kill you". The man smiled serenely and said, "That is the most foolish thing you ever said, Emperor. You cannot kill me. Me the sun cannot dry, fire cannot burn, sword cannot kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless, the ever living omni-potent, omnipresent spirit." That is spiritual boldness and conviction. In the Mutiny of 1857 there was a Swami whom a Mohammedan Mutineer stabbed severely. The Hindu Mutineers caught him and brought him to the Swami, offering to kill him. But the Swami looked up calmly and said, "My brother, thou art He, thou art He!" and expired.

Money, power and muscles become useless in a society which cannot produce such men. Swami Vivekananda says that such a society is the greatest, where the highest truths become practical.
4.3 MAYA AND ILLUSION

Jnana, as mentioned already means knowledge. This knowledge is not the knowledge we get through books. It is the ultimate knowledge, which, when understood will solve all the mysteries of the world, and enable a person to answer all the questions. First this knowledge will be discussed as it is and then it will be discussed if it is rational.

This 'Jnana' or knowledge reveals that there is only ONE thing real in this universe. Since there is only ONE thing real in the universe, to give it a name makes no sense. So it can be called 'THAT'. It is Real and Absolute. It is beyond any name, form and change. Everything else seen in the universe is subject to change and therefore unreal. It is the last level of generalization to which one can arrive at. It is beyond Time, Space and Causation. The people from whom Vedas came were intent upon discovering principles and following them. On an intellectual plane they could arrive at the last level of generalization, at the ultimate reality. They wanted to go deep into the heart of things. Something beyond was calling them and they could not wait. Vedanta philosophy first makes generalizations and then tries to workout the details. Hindus also call 'THAT' as Brahman. [Hereafter 'THAT' will be referred to as 'Brahman', and 'Atman'. When it is referred to as 'Brahman' it means universal soul. When it is referred to as 'Atman' it means individual soul or spirit. These words are used only for the sake of convenience.]

Now, the universe and everything we see in this universe is a manifestation of 'THAT' Brahman. In a more tangible way we can understand
that the universe and everything in this universe is manifested and created out of Brahman. This manifestation is there because of 'Maya'. In other words the Real Brahman is perceived as the unreal universe because of 'Maya'. Maya is the power through which the universe is manifested.

So, to understand the reality behind the universe, we have to understand what Maya is. According to this philosophy, Man who is also a part of this universe consists of three parts. The body, the mind and the Atman. It is already mentioned that Atman is THAT. Man is also a manifestation of THAT. One can quite easily understand and appreciate that man is the body and the mind. But it is because of Maya one cannot understand that man is the Atman itself. The body is the external coating and mind is the internal coating on the Atman. If one can understand Maya, then one can understand the ultimate truth which is within oneself.

The concept of Maya was clearly defined by Sri Shankaracharya. Until then Maya meant different things like magic, unreality, etc. Today, in Vedanta philosophy Maya is only a statement of facts regarding the universe as it is. It is the world which is around us. But it is an illusion. Maya, literally means 'illusion'. It is something which appears like reality for the time being. For example in twilight a man sees a snake. He is afraid. But after sometime he becomes bold and slowly approaches it. When he goes near, he discovers that it is only a rope. But when he first saw that he was under the 'illusion' that it was a snake. This illusion which looked like reality for the time being is 'Maya'. The reality is, it is a rope.
Swami Vivekananda gives a few illustrations to describe Maya.\textsuperscript{16}

"There is the tremendous fact of death. The whole world is going towards death; everything dies. All our progress, our vanities, our reforms, our luxuries, our wealth, our knowledge have that one end – death. Only this is certain. Cities come and go, empires rise and fall, Plants break into pieces and crumble into dust. Death is the end of everything. Death is the end of life, of beauty, of wealth, of power and of virtue too. Saints die and sinners also die; kings die and so do beggars. We all are going to Death, Death is the ultimate reality for us. But we cling to life. We cannot give up. This is Maya.

The mother is nursing her child with great care. In fact her very life is that child. The child grows; becomes a man. By chance he becomes a wicked man. He kicks and beats his mother everyday. And yet the mother clings to the child. And when her reason awakes, she covers it up with the idea of love. She little thinks that it is NOT love. It is a bondage. She clings to it. She cannot give up. This is Maya.

We face a tremendous contradiction in our own intellect, in our knowledge and in our life. A reformer arises and wants to remedy the evils that are existing in a society; and even before they have been remedied, a thousand other evils arise. It is like an old house that is falling. You patch it up in one place and the ruin extends to another. So many reformers have come and gone and the society continues to be as it is. There is still evil; there is exploitation. Where there is happiness, we find misery by its side. Where there is heat, there is also cold. Where there is life there is death. Where there
is a height there is also a valley by the side somewhere. Where there is good there is also evil. If we want to get rid of unhappiness, we must get rid of happiness too. If we want to get rid of heat we must get rid of cold too. If we want to get rid of death, we must get rid of life too! It is like this. We can't give up. This is Maya.

We often hear people argue that during the course of evolution all evil will be eliminated and only good will remain. This is very nice to hear. It also panders to the vanity of those who have enough of the good things and comforts of this world, and who did not have to struggle everyday. According to them the common man may suffer. Let him! The common herd do not matter to them. This argument takes for granted that the manifested good and evil in this world are two absolute realities and the amount of good is an increasing quantity and the amount of evil is a decreasing quantity. It is very easy to make such statements but difficult to prove them. Swami Vivekananda gives the example of a man in a forest. He does not know how to cultivate the mind; he cannot read a book; he has not heard of such a thing called writing. But he is healthy. He doesn't run behind doctors as we in civilized societies do. In our civilized societies we have invented machines to do all the manual labour. Machines for us mean progress and evolution. But it is also a tool for the few rich and powerful people to rule over others. Every new scientific technological discovery will make a rich man richer. It will provide him with a new tool to exploit his fellow beings. With the advancement of science and technology man is living more and more for his
senses. He finds happiness only through his senses. As man progresses more and more in this direction, his horizon of happiness no doubt increases, but his horizon of unhappiness also increases. Just come to think of it - the man in the forest doesn't have to go through schooling, doesn't have to earn money; doesn't have to go to law courts; doesn't have to pay taxes; doesn't have to become poor (or rich for that matter and exploit his fellow beings) and doesn't have to be ruled by a tyrannical and corrupt government. This shows that the more powers we acquire to enjoy, we also acquire more powers to suffer also. In fact our very nerves with greater enjoyment become finer and finer and therefore more capable of suffering. For example that man in the forest may put up with an abuse or an insult with a smile. But a gentleman of our civilized society suffers with an insult. The magnitude of his suffering is high because of his refined nerve which is used to comfort. We who are progressing now should know that the more we progress, the more avenues are opened to pain as well as to pleasure. Yet we do not give up our efforts to scientific and technological progress. This is Maya.

Now we come to know that Maya is not a theory. It is simply a statement of facts as they exist. It is the universe as we understand it. It simply shows that the very basis of our being is a contradiction. We must accept that where there is good there is evil also; where there is smile, there is weeping also; where there is life, there is death also. Where there is knowledge there is ignorance also and where there is brilliance, there is
stupidity also. Our life is a mixture of good and evil and all such dualities. Consequently there has to be non-existence where there is existence.

Man cannot go beyond these contradictions; these dualities. Man's intellect may try to know everything, but before he has gone a few steps, he finds an adamantine wall which he cannot pass. Man's intellect moves only in a circle. He cannot go beyond that circle. Man himself cannot go beyond his intellect."

Echoes of this idea is found in Bertrand Russell's essay 'What is the Soul?'. He says "One of the most painful circumstances of recent advances in Science is that each one of them makes us know less than we thought we did."17

Now Brahman is Absolute and Infinite. This infinite can express itself only as finite in this universe [through Maya, of course]. We see the Absolute and the infinite only through our senses, our mind and our intellect, because of our limitations. This limitation is also Maya. So we have to reject Maya. Our intellect cannot comprehend something which is absolute and infinite. It means that the Absolute and the infinite can never be expressed in finite terms. It is impossible. When something is impossible to us, then we will have to beat a retreat. And this beating a retreat means renunciation which is the real beginning of religion and spirituality. We have to renounce and reject the snake, which is an illusion. Then we see the rope. We have to renounce all the dualities – good and evil, life and death, heat and cold, existence and non-existence. We have to renounce all the contradictions in our intellect. We
have to renounce Maya which is an illusion only. We have to renounce all material comforts, money, sex and all the manifestations of the universe we see around us. Then we get to the REALITY. It is THAT that we began with."

All great religious leaders of the world - Jesus, Buddha, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, Sufi saints etc. etc. etc. have preached only this renunciation; rejection of everything material. Christ says "He that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."18 This statement is nothing but renunciation. That is why he did not earn money, nor did he save himself when he was crucified. He knew it had no meaning. He knew what was to be rejected. Buddha always maintained that desire was the root cause for all misery and unhappiness. He was preaching renunciation. Almost all Hindu and Sufi saints have preached renunciation.

Actually there is no other way. Sooner or later it should be realized that all sense-enjoyments, all intellectual enjoyments, and all the enjoyments of which human mind is capable of must come to an end. They are nothing and moreover they are, associated with as much misery. These enjoyments are within the framework of Maya. It is an illusion. There is such an amount of misery in this world, and what is most important is, that it is a by-product of man's pursuit of pleasures.

So Jnana Yoga or Advaitha Philosophy is neither optimistic nor pessimistic. It does not say that the world is all good. Nor does it say that the world is all evil. It says that evil has as much value as good and good also has
only as much value as evil. They are bound together. This is the world. One has to know this and work with patience. But the question that arises is - Why a man should work and for what should he work. A man might also wonder that it would be better to be an agnostic. The modern agnostics also know that there is no solution to this problem. They do not know how to get out of this Maya, as it is called in Vedantha Philosophy. Therefore they advice man to be satisfied and enjoy life. Here again is a mistake; a horrible mistake. One has seen in reality that all enjoyments also bring misery. Agnostics want man to enjoy life as it is. But ultimately life becomes a search for THAT. The agnostic takes life as it is, minus THAT (the ideal component). The agnostic claims that the ideal cannot be reached and he gives up the search.19

All religions, all spirituality20 when analyzed with an open mind, and in intellectual terms, are more or less attempts to get beyond this Nature, get beyond this Maya. The crudest and the most developed religions have expressed through mythology, symbology, stories of god, angels and demons, through stories of saints or seers, great men or prophets or through the abstractions of philosophy – all have that one object, all are trying to get beyond these limitations; trying to understand the Infinite. In one word, they all are struggling towards freedom. Man feels, consciously or unconsciously, that he is bound by something. Man came here to sip the honey and he finds his hands and feet sticking to it. He is caught, though he came to catch. He came to enjoy; he is being enjoyed. He came to rule; he is being ruled, he came to work; he is being worked. He wants to enjoy the pleasures of life;
and they eat into his vitals. He wants to get everything from nature, but he finds in the long run that nature takes everything from him – depletes him, and casts him aside. Yet man cannot give up all this. This is Maya. This bondage is Maya, and man wants freedom from this bondage. Even in the lowest of religious ideas, where departed ancestors and other spirits – mostly violent and cruel, lurking about the houses of their friends, fond of bloodshed and strong drink are worshipped, even there one finds that one common factor – want of freedom. The man who wants to worship these gods, sees in them, above everything else, greater freedom than in himself. If a door is closed for him, he wants a god who will go through that door. He wants a God who has no limitations, the limitations from which he is bound. The idea of freedom increases until it comes to the ideas of a personal God of which the central concept is that He is beyond the limitation of Nature, of Maya.

This Maya is everywhere. It is terrible. Yet man has to work through it. The man who says that he will work when the world has become all good is as likely to succeed as the man who sits beside the river Ganga and says, "I will ford the river when all the water has run into the ocean." So a man must work through Maya and overcome it.

Vedanta is unique among all religions of the world. It never stopped at this stage. Other religions stop at the idea of a personal God, or a Ruler and Creator of this universe or the Ruler of Maya or Nature etc. But Vedanta begins from here. These ideas grow and grow until it is realized that the God
or the Ruler or the Creator is within oneself. He is the man who is free, but who through limitation thought he was bound.
4.4 MAYA AND FREEDOM

Swami Vivekananda narrates an anecdote from Hindu Mythology to explain what Maya is; how we are bound by Maya. In Hindu Mythology Lord Krishna is worshipped as an incarnation of God Himself. Narada, a Rishi, is his foremost devotee. Narada once said to Krishna "Lord, show me Maya." A few days passed away, and Krishna asked Narada to make a trip with him towards a desert and after walking for several miles, Krishna said, "Narada, I am thirsty; can you fetch some water for me?", "I will go at once Sir, and get you water." So Narada went. At a little distance there was a village; he entered the village in search of water and knocked at a door, which was opened by a very beautiful young girl. At the sight of her he immediately forgot that his master was waiting for water, perhaps dying for the want of it. He forgot everything and began to talk with the girl. All that day he did not return to his master.

The next day he was again at the house, talking to the girl. That talk ripened into love; he asked the father for the daughter, and they were married and lived there and had children. His father-in-law died, he inherited his property. He lived, as he seemed to think, a very happy life with his wife and children, his fields and his cattle and so forth. Then came a flood. One night the river rose until it overflowed its banks and flooded the whole village. Houses fell, men and animals were swept away and drowned, and everything was floating in the rush of the stream. Narada had to escape. With one hand
he held his wife, and with the other two of his children; another child was on
his shoulders, and he was trying to ford this tremendous flood. After a few
steps he found the current was too strong and the child on his shoulders fell
and was borne away. A cry of despair came from Narada. In trying to save
that child, he lost his grip on the other children. They were also swept away.
At last his wife, whom he clasped with all his might, was torn away by the
current, and he was thrown on the bank, weeping and wailing in bitter
lamentation. Behind him, there came a gentle voice, "My child, where is the
water? You went to fetch a pitcher of water, and I am waiting for you; you
have been gone for half an hour." "Half an hour!" Narada exclaimed. Twelve
whole years had passed through his mind and all these scenes had happened
in half an hour! This is Maya.

This is an interesting anecdote. Man's life is very much like Narada's. He
lives in this world for 60 to 80 years. For all that a man might know it could
be half an hour for the 'inner man.' Time is relative. And the SELF is beyond
all the limitations caused by time, space and causation.

This anecdote also enables a man to imagine all the possibilities of
Maya. Maya is what makes the infinite express itself as finite forms. It is just
whatever he gathers and understands through his five senses, mind and
intellect. The infinite spirit, becomes bound by time, space and causation, by
desires, motives and actions. It is done by Maya. According to Ultimate
Reality a man is free, but he is bound by Maya. Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{22} feels
that there are two avenues. One is to remain bound and enjoy being bound –
That is to enjoy all the pleasures of life and go through all the miseries which
are also a part of life and be done with it. The other is to reject this Maya and
find freedom of the spirit. Religion and spirituality begin with this rejection.
It arises with a tremendous dissatisfaction of the present condition of things –
our disgust with love, hatred, miseries, joys cruelties etc.

Any philosopher's question is this : "What is this universe ? From what
does it arise ? Into what does it go ?" And the answer is "In freedom it rises, in
freedom it rests and into freedom it melts away."

"With every action we do we are inching towards this freedom of spirit
Vedanta philosophy believes that there is a Being which is beyond this Maya.
It is superior to and independent of Maya. He is attracting us towards Himself.
And we are all going towards Him. And that He is within us. Not only the
human soul, but all creatures from the highest to the lowest are going towards
Him. It is a struggle. Thus comes competition, joys, struggles, life, death,
pleasures, pains etc. The whole universe is nothing but this struggle to reach
Him. Here Vedanta begins with these monotheistic ideas. They change the
whole scene. The ghastly battle-field of Maya is now changed into something
meaningful and beautiful. We understand why there is struggle, unhappiness
and fight. We see all these and the little joys and cruelties of life as they are in
the nature of things. Because without them, there would be no going towards
Him. All human life, all nature, therefore is struggling to attain to freedom.
The sun is moving towards the goal, so is the earth in circling round the sun, so is the moon in circling round the earth. To that goal the planet is moving and the air is blowing. Everything is struggling towards THAT. The saint is going towards THAT so is the sinner. One stumbles more than the other, and he who stumbles more we call bad, he who stumbles less we call good. Good and bad are never two different things, they are one and the same; the difference is not one of kind, but of degree."

With every expansion of man's idea of Maya, idea of Nature and of soul, he also arrives at the idea of monotheism, which holds that there is Maya (Nature) and that there is some Being who is the Creator, the Ruler of Maya.

Here Vedanta begins,\(^{23}\) where these monotheistic ideas first appear. But the Vedanta philosophy wants further explanation. The explanation is this, that there is a Being who is superior to and independent of Maya and He is attracting us towards himself. All are going towards Him. Vedanta says that 'He' is within each individual. Each individual is seeking for him outside, but he is not there. He is within. That ideal of freedom which a man perceived was correct, but he projected it outside, and that was a mistake. Turn inward and it will be realized that everything a man is looking out for is within himself. 'I am He' 'Thou Art THAT' says Shankaracharya. They are the words of Vedanta. Nature or Maya never had any power over man. Man is like a child who dreams that he is being tortured. He wanted freedom from that torture. It was the goal. When once the child gets up from dreaming he
realizes that it was all a dream. He should not only know this intellectually, but it should become his experience and knowledge. Then he shall know that he is free. Then, and then alone, will all difficulties vanish, then will all the perplexities of heart be smoothed away, all crookedness made straight and all the delusion will vanish. Maya, instead of being a horrible and hopeless dream will become beautiful. This earth, instead of being a prison house or unhappy place will become our playground. All our dangers, difficulties and sufferings will only show us that behind everything there is only one substance and that is He. He is the real SELF.
The one question that is the most difficult to understand in Advaita Philosophy is this – "How has the Infinite, the Absolute, become the Finite?" How did the Brahman or the absolute God become this universe? This question has been asked again and again and will always be asked in future too. Swami Vivekananda takes up this question and in order to illustrate what he has to say, he uses a figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(a) The Absolute</th>
<th>(b) The Universe</th>
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(c) Time, Space, Causation

Here (a) the Absolute has become (b) the Universe coming through (c) Time, Space and Causation. By universe, Swami Vivekananda just does not mean the physical things around, but also the mental world, the spiritual world, the earth, the galaxies etc. etc. in fact everything that exists. Mind, body etc. are only the names we have given to all that the Absolute has become and which is of course, the source. All such changes compose our universe. This (a) Absolute has become the (b) Universe by coming through (c) Time, Space and Causation. This is the central idea of Advaita. Time, Space and Causation are like the glass through which the Absolute is seen. And when it is seen on the lower side, It appears as the Universe. Now one
has to understand that in the Absolute there is no Time, Space and Causation. It is beyond these things. It is one which is bound by nothing. The idea of Time is not there because there is no mind, no thought. The idea of space cannot be there because there is no external change. In fact there is no change of any type. And the idea of causation cannot be there, because what we understand as motion and causation cannot exist where there is only ONE. A man has to clearly understand this, and impress it on his mind that what man calls causation is only when the Absolute has 'degenerated' if one is permitted to use that word" into the phenomenal. Therefore all 'will' and 'desire' come only after the Absolute has become the universe.

Swami Vivekananda says, "I think Scopenhauer's philosophy makes a mistake in its interpretation of Vedanta, for it seeks to make the will everything. Scopenhauer makes the will stand in the place of the Absolute. But the Absolute cannot be presented as will, for will is something changeable and phenomenal, and over the line, drawn above time, space and causation, there is no change, no motion; it is only below the line that external motion and internal motion, called thought begin. There can be no will on the other side (in the Absolute), and will therefore cannot be the cause of this universe. Coming nearer, we see in our own bodies that will is not the cause of every movement. I move this chair; my will is the cause of this movement, and this will becomes manifested as muscular motion at the other end. But the same power that moves the chair is moving the heart, the lungs and so on, but not through will. Given that the power is the same, it only becomes will when it
rises to the plane of consciousness, and to call it will before it has risen to this plane of consciousness is a misnomer. This makes a good deal of confusion in Schopenhaur's philosophy."

Now the idea of ABSOLUTE is understood. It is greater than the will. It is something for which there is no second. Swami Vivekananda wants a man to reason it to the end where reason brings him to a dead end. From there he can look up to only something which is beyond reason.

Suppose a stone falls and question arises as to why it falls. This question presupposes a possibility that nothing happens in this world without a cause. Whenever a man asks why anything happens, he takes it for granted that everything that happens must have a cause or reason. That is, it must have been preceded by something else which acted as the cause. This precedence and succession is what is called the law of causation. It means that everything in the universe is by turn a cause and an effect. It is the cause of certain things which come after it, and is itself the effect of something else which has preceded it. It also means that every particle in this universe exists only in relation to every other particle and the interdependence which is the outcome of cause and effect theory presupposes that nothing in this universe is independent. Nothing in this universe is Absolute.

Suppose the question is asked, "what caused the Absolute?" It is an error. It is defined that Absolute is something which is beyond everything, all dualities, time, space and causation and then to ask what caused it and to think that the Absolute is also bound by something else is stupid. If one make this
supposition one drags the Absolute to the level of the universe. In the Absolute there is neither time, nor space, nor causation. It is all one. That which exists by itself alone cannot have any cause. If it had a cause it would not be free but it would become bound. That which has relativity cannot be free. Thus the very question, why the Infinite became the finite, is an absurd one. It is self contradictory. Let a man think logically and rationally. Let him see the whole proposition from a different angle. Suppose he knows the answer how the Infinite or the Absolute became the finite, then the Absolute will not remain Absolute. Knowledge, or what is meant by knowledge is something which is limited by the mind and intellect. It is something which is known. If the Absolute becomes limited by the mind, it is no more Absolute. It has become finite. Everything limited by mind becomes finite. Therefore, to know the Absolute is again a contradiction in terms. That is why this question has never been answered. If this question is answered, then there would be no Absolute. A God known is no more a God. He has become finite like any other human being. He cannot be known. He is always the unknowable one. That is why there are so many atheists and rationalists who argue that there is no God and many times they look sensible. But Advaitha does not stop here. It rationalizes further. It says that God is more than knowable. This is an important argument. God is not unknowable in the sense that atheists and agnostics put it.

Swami Vivekananda gives an example. "For instance here is a chair, it is known to us. But what is beyond space or whether people exist there is
possibly unknowable. But God is neither known nor unknowable in this sense. He is something still higher than known; that is what is meant by God being unknown and unknowable. The expression is not used in the sense in which it may be said that some questions are unknown and unknowable, God is more than known. This chair is known, but God is intensely more known than that, because in and through Him we have to know the chair itself. He is the witness, the eternal witness of all knowledge. Whatever we know, we have to know in and through Him only. He is the essence of our own self. He is the essence of this ego. Therefore you have to know everything in and through the Brahman. To know the chair you have to know it in and through God. Thus God is infinitely nearer to us than the chair, but yet he is infinitely higher. Neither known nor unknown, but something infinitely higher than either. He is your self. "Who would live a second, who would breathe a second in this universe, if that Blessed One were not filling it?" Because in and through Him we breathe, in and through Him we exist. Not that he is standing somewhere and digesting my food and making my blood circulate. What is meant is that He is the Essence of all this, the soul of my soul. You cannot by any possibility say you know Him; it would be degrading Him. He is the One who breathes, digests food and converts it into blood, calories etc. etc. You cannot get out of yourself, so you cannot know Him. Knowledge is objectification. For instance, in memory you are objectifying many things, projecting them out of yourself. All memory, all the things which I have seen and which I know are in my mind. The pictures, the impressions of all these
things, are in my mind, and when I would try to think of them, to know them, the first act of knowledge would be to project them outside. (For example we see the chair, the memory of which is stored in our mind, we see and understand that it is a chair) This cannot be done with God, because he is the Essence of our souls; we cannot project Him outside ourselves. Here is one of the profoundest passages in Vedanta: "He that is the Essence of your soul, He is the Truth, He is the Self, thou art That, O Shwetaketu." This is what is meant by "Thou art God" (iEiÉ iuÉÇ AxÉÏ - Thou art That. AWÇû oÉë¼AxqÉÏ - I am Brahman/God.) You cannot describe Him by any other language. All attempts of language, calling Him father, or brother or our dearest friend, are attempts to objectify God, which cannot be done. He is the eternal subject of everything. I am the subject of this chair; I see the chair; so God is the eternal subject of my soul. How can you objectify Him, the essence of your souls, the Reality of everything? Thus I would repeat to you once more, God is neither knowable nor unknowable but something infinitely higher than either. He is one with us; and that which is one with us is neither knowable nor unknowable, as our own self. You cannot know your own self. You cannot move it out and make it an object to look at, because you ARE that and you cannot separate yourself from it. Neither is it unknowable, for what is better known than yourself? It is really the centre of our knowledge. In exactly the same sense God is neither knowable nor unknowable, but infinitely higher than both; for He is our real self."
In fact one can conclude this speech of Swami Vivekananda by saying that no scientist can ever understand the truth by dividing matter into atoms, protons, neutrons ... or by further dividing or analysing matter because our own consciousness, our own self is behind matter.

Compare what Swami Vivekananda says with Modern Science. Physicists and scientists have chased the solid matter to liquid to the atom and from atom to electron proton and neutron, and yet they are unable to understand the essence of matter. They have understood that matter is energy i.e., energy in a particular shape, colour and form is matter. In fact it can never be understood also because, consciousness is behind matter. It is the mind which has put it there. So among the new properties with which one proposes to analyse the atom, he shall probably have to include a rudimental form of consciousness.

What one perceives as reality is mental and when trying to further understand it the knower becomes the known because there is the same consciousness [SELF] in the two. When matter becomes the sum of its qualities and since these qualities exist only in the mind, the whole objective universe of matter and energy, atoms and stars does not exist except as a construction of the SELF, an edifice of the conventional symbols shaped by the senses of man.

This intensive study of Science only makes one conclude that there is some Reality behind this appearance. Known reality, they suggest is mere phenomenon or appearance but behind the appearance there must be a real
essence; behind the phenomenal manifestation there must be an ultimate force. This essence and force is not understood by the intellect. Nevertheless it is already speculated and known. So they must be known by some process of revelation to an intuitive faculty of direct insight.

In fact Bertrand Russell's Neutral Monism means that neither mind nor matter is a primitive constituent of the universe but both are derived from a more fundamental homogeneous stuff, the difference between them being ultimately reducible between different forms of arrangement of that fundamental stuff. What science has admittedly done is to revise its account of the universe so as to at least provide for the possibility of religion being true. In fact science has cleared the boards of the Universe for religion.

[Refer to 'Russell's Neutral Monism' by W.T. Stace published in 'The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell, edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp and published by Srishti Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2001; Pg 351-384]

Albert Einstein in his essay "Remarks on Bertrand Russell's Theory of Knowledge", says:

"We all start from 'naive realism', i.e., the doctrine that things are what they seem. We think that grass is green, that stones are hard, and that snow is cold. But physics assures us that the greenness of grass, the hardness of stones, and the coldness of snow, are not the greenness, hardness and coldness that we know in our own experience, but something very different. The observer, when he seems to himself to be observing a stone, is really, if Physics is to be believed, observing the effects of the stone upon himself. Thus science seems
to be at war with itself; when it most means to be objective, it finds itself plunged into subjectivity against its will. Naive realism leads to physics, and physics, if true, shows that naive realism is false. Therefore naive realism, if true, is false; therefore it is false."

Further, Albert Einstein feels that such arguments only make us feel that we cannot get along without metaphysics. It was the opinion of Bertrand Russell also.

[Refer to 'The Philosophy Bertrand Russell' edited by Paul Arthur Schilpp and published by Srishti Publishers and Distributors, New Delhi, 2001; P. 277-292]
4.6 GOD IN EVERYTHING

Jnana Yoga propounds the theory of Advaita philosophy, Advaita means non-dualism. It means that there are no two things in this universe. There is only ONE. This is the Infinite or the Absolute which is discussed till now. There is only ONE Absolute. It manifests itself as the universe through Time, Space and Causation. Time, space and causation need to be analyzed. Whatever they are they have no independent existence.

The one peculiar attribute one finds in time, space and causation is that they cannot exist separate from other things. An attempt can be made to think of space without colour or limits, or any connection with the things around – just abstract space. One cannot in fact think of space like that. One can only think of space between two limits or at least objects. It is so with time. One cannot have any abstract idea of time. One has to take two events one preceding and the other succeeding, and join the two events by the idea of succession. Time depends on two events just as space has to be related to outside objects. And the idea of causation is inseparable from time and space. This is the peculiar thing about them. They have no independent existence. They do not even have the existence which the chair or the wall has. But everything in this universe manifests only through time, space and causation. An illustration can be given. There is a wave on the ocean. The wave is the same as the ocean. Yet the wave is different from the ocean. The difference is only its name and form; Another difference is that there is an idea of a wave in the mind.
In a larger sense the wave form is not separate from the ocean. It is only an idea, if the wave subsides the form vanishes in a moment, and yet the form, as long as it was there was not an illusion. Yet when it subsided it looks like an illusion. This is Maya.

The whole of this Universe along with all living being and earth and suns and stars is a peculiar form. The Absolute is that ocean and everything in this universe are the various waves of that ocean. It is only the name and form that differentiates waves from the ocean and that comes through time, space and causation. As soon as an individual gives up this Maya or gets rid of this clinging to time, space and causation he reaches the Absolute. He becomes liberated.

The theory of evolution can be explained in a different sense with this knowledge of Jnana Yoga.

There are two factors here. One is the tremendous potential power which is trying to express itself. And the other factor is Nature, which is trying to hold it down. This Nature or this environment is not allowing the power to express itself. So in order to fight these environments the power is taking new bodies again and again. An amoeba, in the struggle gets another body and conquers some obstacles; then gets another body and so on until it becomes a man. A man too will get many bodies till he gets liberated.

This idea if expressed in metaphysics will take this form; there are two components in every action – one is the subject and the other is the object.
The one aim of life is to make the subject the master of the object. For example a man is scolded by someone and he might become unhappy. His struggle will be to become strong so that even if he is scolded he will cease to be unhappy. A little fish wants to fly away from its enemies in water. So it evolved wings and became a bird. The thing to be noted here is that the fish did not change either the water or the land. The change was within itself. It was subjective. **In fact all morality is nothing but making the subject strong by attuning it to the Absolute.**

It is a logical conclusion of Advaita philosophy that all of us will conquer all the environmental restrictions in due course. Only it is a matter of time. It must happen because we are infinite and all nature is finite. That is how the Advaita system gets its whole force, on the subjective side of man. To talk of evil and misery is non-sense, because they do not exist outside.

When Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{26} was preaching Vedanta in the West, he was asked by a clergyman, "What? You have no devil in your religion? How can that be?"

There is no devil, no evil and no good because ultimately there is only ONE, the SELF.

Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{27} feels that even Jesus Christ worked with that high impersonal idea of non-dualism. "It is the Man who said, 'I and my Father are One.' His power has descended into millions. For thousands of years it has worked for good. And it is known that the same Man, because he was a non-dualist, was merciful to others. To the masses who could not conceive of
anything higher than a Personal God, he said, 'Pray to your Father in heaven.'

To others who could grasp a higher idea, he said, 'I am the vine, you are the branches,' but to his disciples to whom he revealed himself more fully, he proclaimed the highest truth, 'I and my Father are One'.

Swami Vivekananda says, "I may make bold to say that the only religion which agrees with, and even goes a little further than modern researches, both on physical and moral lines is Advaita and that is why it appeals to modern scientists so much. They find that the old dualistic theories are not enough for them, do not satisfy their necessities. A man must have not only faith, but it must be intellectually sanctioned also. Now in the later part of the 19th century, such an idea as that religion coming from any other source than one's own hereditary religion must be false, shows that there is still weakness left, and such ideas must be given up. I do not mean that such is the case in this country alone, it is in every country and nowhere more than in my own. This Advaita was never allowed to come to the people. At first some monks got hold of it and took it to the forests, and so it came to be called the "Forest philosophy".

In fact it was the great Shankaracharya who codified the system of Advaita philosophy. Today the whole world is indebted to this great man. In a short life span of 32 years he travelled the length and breadth of India and preached Vedanta Advaita philosophy. He has written commentaries (Bhashyas) to Upanishads which form the very basis of Advaita philosophy. He also established four mutts at four zones (North,
South, East and West) of the country and organized a religious order of monks in the country who would preach Advaita philosophy. Even today most of the monks in India belong to the 'Dashanami' sects established and organized by Shankaracharya.

Swami Vivekananda says that Materialism is a philosophy which says 'Eat, drink and be merry; there is no God, soul or heaven; religion is a concoction of wicked priests'. It advises a man to live happily. It is the happiness of sensual pleasures. It even advises a man to borrow money for food and then enjoy eating and never bother about repaying it.

Swami Vivekananda says that materialism prevails in Europe today. If he were alive today, he would have included USA too. The salvation of modern man in general, (whether of India, or Europe or USA) depends on a rationalistic religion, and Advaita, the non-duality, the Oneness, the idea of an Impersonal God – is the only religion that can attract intellectual people. It comes whenever religion seems to disappear and irreligion seems to prevail. That is why it is becoming popular today.

Swami Vivekananda adds, "In the old Upanishads we find sublime poetry; their authors were poets. Plato says, inspiration comes to people through poetry, and it seems as if these ancient Rishis, seers of Truth, were raised above humanity to show these truths through poetry. They never preached, nor philosophised, nor wrote Music, but everything came out of their hearts. In Buddha we had the great, universal heart and infinite patience,
making religion practical and bringing it to everyone's door. In Shankaracharya we saw tremendous intellectual power, throwing the brightening light of reason upon everything. We want today that bright sum of intellectuality joined with the heart of Buddha, the wonderful infinite heart of love and mercy. This union will give us the highest philosophy. Science and religion will meet and shake hands. Poetry and philosophy will become friends. This will be religion of the future, and if we can work it out, we may be sure that it will be for all times and peoples."

Swami Vivekananda has always advocated a system of philosophy which lays emphasis on reason, rationality and intellect. He wants us to think, reason it out and then accept. He boldly accepts all religions. He felt that a man should not disturb the faith of any, even of those who through ignorance have attached themselves to lower forms of worship. His philosophy preaches of a God who is the sum total of all faiths and religions. If a man wants a universal religion which can apply to everyone, that religion must not be composed of only parts, but it must always be the sum total of all values and include all degrees of religious development.

This is the greatness of Advaitha philosophy. It accepts all religions which advocate duality. Dualism naturally appeals to everyone and even to the less educated. And a practitioner of Advaitha philosophy appreciates the necessity of a religion for every kind of human being. There is no place for evil in Advaitha Philosophy.
The Vedanta gives no other attributes to God except these three – that He is Infinite Existence, Infinite Knowledge and Infinite Bliss. Even these three attributes are one because Knowledge cannot be there without Existence and Bliss. Bliss cannot be there without Existence and Knowledge and Existence cannot be there without Knowledge and Bliss. In fact God is the very SOURCE of all our Existence, Knowledge and Bliss. It is ONE.
4.7 REALIZATION

When a man analyzes life, he sees that man is constantly struggling. He struggles to earn money, comfort, friends etc. etc. He finds that the struggles and evils of life cause more unhappiness than the happiness they provide. There is no such thing as perfect happiness, eternal happiness, because behind all happiness lurks a shadow of misery and sorrow. For example, wine causes a hangover and money spent on pleasures will never come back. Over-eating will cause indigestion and so on.

All religions say that the world must be accepted for what it is. They further assert that there is something beyond this world of sorrow. The world a man sees and experiences is confined to his experiences gained through the five senses and the mind. But behind and beyond all this material world is the Infinite in which there is no evil. Some call it God, some Allah, some Jehovah, Jove and so on. The Vedanti calls it Brahman.²⁸

The first impression a man gets, when he looks at this advice of religion is to terminate life, deny life. If the world is full of struggle and sorrow, if it is unreal and if some God or Jehovah or Jove, who is beyond this is real, then the question arises why a man should not commit suicide. Any rationalist would ask such a question. Swami Vivekananda narrates a story.²⁹ Once a mosquito settled on the head of a man, and a friend, wishing to kill the mosquito, gave it such a blow, that he killed both the man and the mosquito. If a man rejects this world, if he rejects this life, then nothing will remain. It is like killing
both the man and the mosquito. So Vedanta philosophy does not ask a man to
deny or give up either this world or the life. Vedanta only preaches
renunciation. The ideal of renunciation nowhere attains such a height as in the
teachings of the Vedanta. Through renunciation one can understand that it is
God alone who is real. Then a question arises as to how should renunciation
be achieved. A man need not give up his wife and become a monk. A man
need not stop earning money. He must learn to look at his wife as a
manifestation of God, of the Absolute, of the Infinite. He must earn money
through an honest and legal enterprise and see God in his profession. He need
not give up his children and relatives. He should learn to see God in them.
The whole world is full of the Lord. In fact in the previous chapter it was seen
that it is God (Absolute) himself who has become everything, every form of
finite things. The Infinite has become the finite. So what a man should do is
serve God in the world, while he should mentally give up the world. He
should know for sure that what he sees around is Maya. It is unreal. It does
not exist. What exists is God alone. Serve him and do not desire anything
else. The cause of all miseries from which a man suffers is desire. He desires
something, and when it is not fulfilled he suffers. The result is distress and
depression. If there is no desire there is no suffering Here Swami
Vivekananda makes certain facts clear. He doesn't want to be
misunderstood.

He says "the walls have no desire and they never suffer. True, but they
never evolve; the chair has no desire, it never suffers; but it is always a chair.
There is a glory in happiness, there is a glory in suffering. If I may dare to say so, there is a utility in evil too. Our miseries remind us of God and make us think deeply about life. Life is all about desire, effort and suffering and success or failure. We all understand that desires are wrong, but what is meant by giving up desires? How would life go on? If we give up desires and give up the world and give up work and effort we become idle, useless and worthless. We become like lumps of clay neither thinking nor doing anything. We become fatalists driven by circumstances and ordered by the laws of nature. But that is not what we want as followers of a religion and especially followers of Vedanta.\textsuperscript{31}

A man must work. He must earn and he must enjoy life. Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{32} explains how it is done. He gives the example of a painting. It is the seer who enjoys a painting than the seller. The seller is busy with his accounts. He has no time to see the painting. But the seer who has no intention of either buying or selling enjoys it, but from a distance. He is not involved in buying and selling. This whole universe is a picture and one must enjoy it as a seer. A man should enjoy everything but he should not be attached to his objects of enjoyment. He should work, but he should not be attached to the fruits (results) thereof. This philosophy is already explained in Karma Yoga.

A man should see God in everything and then work because He is in the SELF. If He is the self, He is in everything. "The Kingdom of heaven is
within you" says Jesus Christ. So does Vedanta. A man should work with this knowledge in the background. Many do not know what a mine of infinite bliss is within them. Only they have not discovered it. People are dying of thirst sitting on the banks of the mightiest river. They are dying of hunger sitting near heaps of food. They are in it all the time and they are mistaking it. Religion and Vedanta in particular proposes to find this out for man.

Swami Vivekananda says, "More questions arise in connection with this. It is very easy to talk. From my childhood I have heard of seeing God everywhere and in everything, and then I can really enjoy the world, but as soon as I mix with the world and get a few blows from it, the idea vanishes. I am walking in the street thinking that God is in everyman, and a strong man comes along and gives me a push and I fall flat on the footpath. Then I rise up quickly with clenched fist, the blood has rushed to my head, and God's omnipresence goes for a toss. I have become mad. Everything is forgotten; instead of encountering God, I see the devil."

This is everybody's experience. A man finds it difficult to see God in every human being. He meets so many people, live with so many people and come in contact with so many people. Most of them are selfish, arrogant and crooked. He finds it very difficult to see God in them. Swami Vivekananda reminds of a story in 'Aesop's Fables' where a fine stag is looking at his form reflected in the lake. He tells his young one, "How powerful I am, look at my splendid head, look at my limbs, how strong and muscular they are; and how
swiftly I can run." In the mean time he hears the barking of dogs in the distance, and takes to his heels, and after he has run several miles, he comes back panting. The young one says, "You just told me how strong you were, how was it that when the dog barked, you ran away?" Yes, my son; but when the dogs bark, all my confidence vanishes." Such is the case with man. He thinks highly of humanity, he feels himself strong and valiant, he makes grand resolves; but when the 'dogs' of trial and temptation bark, he is like the stag in the fable. He cannot stick to an ideal. Then there is no use of teaching all these things. Then religious books are of no use. But they remind a man that through perseverance it can be achieved. If a man reads Jesus Christ's life constantly every day, even he might learn to see God in everybody and forgive his crucifiers. But nothing can be achieved in a day.

Swami Vivekananda says that this SELF is to be heard, then to be thought upon and then meditated upon. At present, a man may be very far away from his ideal. But if he has the desire to achieve it, one day he may achieve it. So first he must hear about God, about Advaitha philosophy and then he must think about it and constantly meditate upon it. (To understand the way meditation is done one must refer to "Raja Yoga")

A man must have an ideal and work to achieve it. A man with an ideal will commit fifty thousand mistakes. But a man without an ideal will commit lakhs of mistakes. Therefore it is better to have an ideal.
Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{35} says, "It is thought which is the propelling force in us. Fill the mind with the highest thoughts, hear them day after day, think of them month after month. Never mind failures; they are quite natural, they are the beauty of life, these failures. What would life be without them? It would not be worth having if it were not for struggles. Where would be the poetry of life? Never mind the struggles, the mistakes. I never heard a cow tell a lie, but it is only a cow – never a man. So never mind these failures, these little backslidings; hold the ideal a thousand times, and if you fail a thousand times, make the attempt once more. The ideal of man is to see God in everything. But if you cannot see him in everything, see him in one thing, in that thing, in which you like best, and then see Him in another. So on you can go. There is infinite life before the soul. Take your time and you will achieve your end. If we see God in everything, we will also see Oneness in everything. All our misery is because we are caught in Maya. To be caught in Maya is to be ignorant. When once we attain Knowledge, we see God in everything and all our misery vanishes. All misery comes though ideas of separation. Separation between man and man, between nation and nation, between moon and sun and between atom and atom. But this separation does not exist. It exists only in Maya, in our unreal perception. If we go deep, below the surface, we find only Oneness in all men and matter."

This is the great theme of Vedanta, of Advaita philosophy – Non-dualism. There is no two. There is only ONE. Actually a man cannot completely understand this Oneness, through his body, mind, the five senses,
and the intellect. Even with his best effort he may understand a little. Even the best of human beings who have called themselves, Son of God and Incarnation of God like Jesus Christ and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa got only a glimpse of it through Intuitive knowledge and not through a systematic study of science and philosophy. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa narrates the story of the salt doll. Once a salt doll went to measure the depth of the ocean but it soon became one with the ocean. Similarly a man becomes one with God when he tries to understand Him and his ONENESS. Human beings can at best understand this universe even after a systematic study of our scriptures only like human beings. Suppose cows had a philosophy and a religion, then they would have a cow universe and a cow solution of the problem. Their God could be a giant cow ruling the universe. They would never understand a God in the form of man. Similarly we can understand a God only as human beings and not in any other way.

Swami Vivekananda says "We must first find the universe which includes all universes; we must find something which, by itself, must be the material running through all these various planes of existence, whether we apprehend it through the senses or not. If we could possibly find something which we could know as the common property of the lower as well as of the higher worlds, then our problem would be solved. Even if by the sheer force of logic alone we could understand that there must be one basis of all existence, then our problem might approach some sort of solution; but this
solution certainly cannot be obtained only through the world we see and know, because it is only a partial view of the whole."

"Our only hope then lies in penetrating deeper. The early thinkers discovered that the farther they were from the centre, the more marked were their variations and differentiations; and that the nearer they approached the centre, the nearer they were to unity. The nearer we are to the centre of a circle, the nearer we are to the common ground in which all the radii meet; and the farther we are from the centre, the more divergent is our radial line from the others. The external world is far away from the centre, and so there is no common ground in it where all the phenomena of existence can meet. At best, the external world is but one part of the whole phenomena. There are other parts, the mental, the moral and the intellectual—the various planes of existence—and to take up only one, and find a solution for the whole out of that one, is simply impossible. We first, therefore, want to find somewhere a centre from which, as it were, all the other planes of existence start and standing there we should try to find a solution. That is the proposition. And where is the centre? It is within us. The ancient sages penetrated deeper and deeper until they found that in the innermost core of the human personality (soul) is the centre of the whole universe. All the planes gravitate towards that one point. That is the common ground, and standing there alone can we find a common solution."

Most of the phenomena in science are expressed through cyclical theories. Even here Swami Vivekananda makes use of a cycle.
In Science or logic a man always understand a thing with reference to something which is already known. Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{39} wants a man to apply the same logic in spiritual matters too. "Penetrate, till you find the centre", says Swami Vivekananda. There are various planes in our own self-the physical, the moral, the mental, the intellectual and the spiritual. A man can analyse the self-and he will have to get to the centre. It is a matter of concentration. If the concentration is stronger then the penetration will be deeper.

Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{40} then quotes the Katha Upanishad. The Katha Upanishad speaks in a very figurative language. There was, in ancient times, a very rich man, who made a certain sacrifice which required that he should give away everything that he had. Now this man was not sincere. He wanted to get the fame and glory of having made the sacrifice, but he was only giving things which were of no further use to him – old cows, barren, blind and lame. He had a son by name Nachiketa. This boy saw that his father was not doing what was right, that he was breaking his vow; but he did not know what to say to him. In India father and mother are living gods to their children. And so the boy approached the father with the greatest respect and humbly inquired of him, "Father, to whom are you going to give me? For your sacrifice requires that everything shall be given away." The father was very much vexed at this question and replied, what do you mean my boy? A father giving away his own son?" The boy asked the question a second and a third time, and then the
angry father answered, "Thee I give unto Death (Yama)" And the story goes on to say that the boy went to Yama, the God of death.

So the boy went to Yama's world. But even gods are sometimes not at home (!) and three days this boy had to wait there. After the third day Yama returned. "O learned one," said Yama, "you have been waiting here for three days without food, and you are a guest worthy of respect. Salutation to thee, O Brahmin, and welcome to my home! I am very sorry I was not at home. But for that I will make amends. Ask three boons, one for each day" And the boy asked, "My first boon is that my father's anger against me may pass away; that he will be kind to me and recognize me when you allow me to depart". Yama granted this fully. The next boon was that he wanted to know about a certain sacrifice (a ritual) which took people to heaven. (Of course the boon was granted). Then the third boon comes, and with that the Upanishad proper begins. The boy said, "There is this difficulty; when a man dies some say he is (he lives), others say that he is not (he does not live). Instructed by you I desire to understand this." But Yama was frightened. He had been glad to grant the other two boons. Now he said, "The gods in ancient times were puzzled on this point. The subtle law is not easy to understand. Choose some other boon, O Nachiketa, do not press me on this point."

The boy was determined and said, "What you have said is true. O Death, that even the gods had doubts on this point, and it is no easy matter to understand. But I cannot obtain another exponent like you and there is no
other boon equal to this." Death said, "Ask for sons and grandsons who will live one hundred years. Ask for many cattle, elephants, gold and horses. Ask for an empire on this earth and live as many years as you like or choose any other boon which you think equal to these—wealth and long life. Or be thou a king, O Nachiketa, on the wide earth. I will make thee enjoyer of all desires. Ask for all those desires which are difficult to obtain in the world. These heavenly maidens with chariots and music, which are not to be obtained by man, are yours. Let them serve you, O Nachiketa, but do not question me as to what comes after death." Nachiketa said, "These are merely things of a day, O Death, they wear away the energy of all the sense organs. Even the longest life is very short. These horses and chariots, dames and songs, may remain with Thee. Man cannot be satisfied by wealth. Can we retain wealth when we behold Thee? We shall live only so long as Thou desirest. Only the boon which I have asked is chosen by me."

Yama was pleased with this answer and said, "Perfection is one thing and enjoyment another; these two having different ends, engage men differently. He who chooses perfection becomes pure. He who chooses enjoyment misses his true end. Both perfection and enjoyment present themselves to man; the wise man having examined both distinguishes one from the other. He chooses perfection as being superior to enjoyment, but the foolish man chooses enjoyment for the pleasure of his body. O Nachiketa, having thought upon the things which are only apparently desirable, thou hast wisely abandoned them." Death then proceeded to teach Nachiketa.
We now get a very developed idea of renunciation and Vedic morality, that until a man has conquered the desires for enjoyment, the truth will not shine on him. So long as these vain desires of our senses are clamouring, dragging us down and making us slaves, the truth cannot express itself in our hearts.

Yama said, "That which is beyond never rises before the mind of a thoughtless child deluded by the folly of riches. "This world exists, the other does not, thinking thus they come again and again under my power. To understand this truth is very difficult. Many, even hearing it continually, do not understand it, for the speaker must be wonderful, so must be the hearer. The teacher must be wonderful, so must be the taught. [That is why world teachers are always wonderful people like Buddha, Christ and Paramahamsa. It is upto us to become wonderful listeners. If men like Buddha and Christ ask people to speak truth, eat less etc. etc. people listen to them and try to follow them. If ordinary people preach, nobody listens to them.] The mind should not be disturbed by vain arguments. [It cannot be explained through words nor experienced by our mind, body or intellect.] For it is no more a question of argument, it is a question of fact. All arguments and reasoning must be based upon certain perceptions. Without these there cannot be any argument. The chemist takes certain chemicals and conducts certain experiments. The physicist analyses certain things and proves it. If this is true of external phenomena, why should it not be so with the internal phenomena, asks Swami Vivekananda. Therefore we are told not to disturb the mind by vain
arguments (of atheists). Religion is a question of fact, not of talk. We have to
analyse our own minds. We have to analyse our own souls. We have to
understand and realize what we have understood. A man may read The
Gospel and Sermon on the Mount. If he understands it in an intellectual sense
it is not of much use. But if he realizes it, he would become God. So is the
case with all the scriptures in the world. Actually there is no difference
between the highest ecclesiastical giant who can talk volumes and the lowest
ignorant fool who cannot read and write. In fact, if the fool can understand
only one teaching of Christ and realizes it, he would be far better than the
ecclesiastical giant. There are millions of Christians but we may not see even
one who lives with the spirit preached in the Sermon on the Mount."

So realization is the watchword of Vedanta. Realize Religion – No
talking will do. God can be realized only through introspection and
meditation. When a man realizes that there is no real happiness in the
pleasures of the senses, then he will renounce all the pleasures of the world.
He will renounce all the pain and misery too. He will renounce the entire dual
throng of heat-cold, pleasure-pain, good-bad, birth-death, riches-poverty,
virtue-vice, etc. etc. He will renounce the whole universe and understand the
Atman who shines behind the universe.

Yama speaks about renunciation, rejection of worldly desires, value of
realization and finally answers the question: "What becomes of a man when
the body dies?" "This wise one never dies, is never born, It arises from nothing
and nothing arises from It. Unborn, Eternal, Everlasting, this Ancient One can
never be destroyed with the destruction of the body. If the slayer thinks he can slay, or if the slain thinks he is slain, they both do not know the truth, for the Self neither slays nor is slain."

Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{42} draws our attention to the word "wise". As we proceed in our study of Vedanta, we find that all wisdom and all purity are there in the soul already, and the difference lies only in its expression. Every man and everything in this world has the all pervading Brahman, Atman, God or SELF; or whatever you call it. The background or the reality is the same, only the expression is different. The same Atman is present in the saint and the sinner, in the beautiful and the ugly, men and animals. The difference is in the expression. In the saint it is expressed more and in the sinner it is expressed less. But this expression makes no difference to the Atman. If in their dress a man shows more of his body than another, it does not make any difference in their bodies. The difference is in their dress. Similarly the sinner also has an Atman like the saint. But he has covered it up with his ignorance. He does not express it. It is his mistake that he could not manifest his soul. So ultimately in Vedanta, there is no good and bad. There is only ONE. (There is no good and evil). According to this interpretation Satan can be defined as a person who does not manifest even one part of the Atman. He is completely covered in Maya or ignorance. He does only evil.

Swami Vivekananda\textsuperscript{43} warns of one more mistake that is committed by men. Men have a foolish idea of heaven. They think that the earth becomes a place where all evil disappears. Or they imagine a place where there is no
evil. (as a man understands evil through the intellect). Where there is happiness, there has to be unhappiness. Drinking wine might be heaven. If done daily and excessively it damages the body. Wine can't be heaven at all, so it is with sex, food etc. It is very irrational to think of a place where there is no unhappiness. Swami Vivekananda thinks rationally. Where there are human beings, there will always be a struggle for existence. In olden days, in forests, cannibals used to eat each other. Now in modern civilization, in big cities they cheat each other. The struggle is only refined. But it is there. Moreover man has become a dominant race. He is making use of all the resources and his number is increasing. The number of weaker animals is decreasing. It will create further imbalance and ecological problems. This world can never become a heaven because there are human beings. Where there are human beings there can only be a struggle to survive. Only the fittest survive. There cannot be any happiness for weak people. They are unfit to survive. Any struggle cannot bring total happiness and cannot create a heaven. Swami Vivekananda, is a rationalist and feels that there can't be a heaven. A heaven is there only when we realize God and become One with the infinite.

Swami Vivekananda says, "Perfection is always Infinite. We are this Infinite already, and we are trying to manifest that infinity. You and I, and all beings, are trying to manifest it. But some German philosophers have started a peculiar theory – that this manifestation will become higher and higher until we attain perfect manifestation, until we become perfect beings. What is meant by perfect manifestation? Perfection means infinity and manifestation
means limits and so it means that we shall become unlimited limiteds, which is self-contradictory."

Even the greatest among men like Christs, Buddhas, Scientists, Artists, etc. etc. etc., none of them have displayed that perfect 'perfection'. They are unable to answer so many questions. They have not created a heaven on earth.
4.8 UNITY IN DIVERSITY

Swami Vivekananda traces the history of the Upanishads. He feels that Katha Upanishad was written much later than Chhandogya Upanishad. In Katha Upanishad language is more modern and the thought more organized. In the older Upanishads the language is archaic and the ritualistic aspect of Vedas has left an impression on them. There were also Puranas which spoke of various gods, each god controlling one aspect of Nature like Rain God, Water God, Sun God, Fire God etc. So most of the older Upanishads do contain prayers and rituals. There is however one great gain in studying the very old Upanishads.

According to Swami Vivekananda one can trace a growth of spiritual ideas. In the more recent Upanishads, the spiritual ideas have been collected and brought into one unit, as in the case of Bhagavat Gita. Swami Vivekananda feels that Bhagavat Gita is like a bouquet composed of the beautiful flowers of spiritual truths collected from the Upanishads. In Gita a man does not find any rituals; nor can he trace a historic development of spiritual ideas comparable to Western development of political ideas. The West could never bear the absolute rule. They always tried to prevent any one man from ruling over them and gradually advanced to higher and higher democratic ideas and ideas of physical liberty.

Similarly in Indian metaphysics the multiplicity of gods gave place to one God of the universe and in Upanishads there is a rebellion even against that one God. Not only was the idea of many governors of the Universe ruling
their destinies unbearable, but it was also intolerable that there should be one person ruling this universe. This is the first thing that strikes the reader. The idea grows and grows, until it attains its climax. In almost all the Upanishads, one finds the climax coming at the last, and that is the dethroning of this God of the universe. The personality of God vanishes, the impersonality comes. God is no more a person, no more a human being, however magnified and exaggerated, who rules in this universe, but he has become an embodied principle in every being, immanent in the whole universe. So the personal God is broken down, and God as principle is built up. The God is only a phenomenon, the principle is behind it. Therefore, the last word of each Upanishad is, "Thou art That." There is but One eternally blissful principle, and that One is manifesting Itself as all this variety." Thus Swami Vivekananda through various examples, quoting from scriptures with a logical development of thought propounds the theory of Advaita. There is only One, no Two.

The Upanishads boldly state that There is only ONE. The Upanishads leave it at that. Then the question is taken up by Hindu philosophers. Taking for granted that there is but One Impersonal Principle which is manifesting Itself in all these manifold forms, the question arises as to how that One becomes many. Another way of putting the same old question is asking why was this universe created or what is the purpose of life. Various philosophers, in India and all over the world have given various answers. But most of them are just intellectual gymnastics.
The best answer that Vedanta has produced is the theory of Maya. It means that the One Principle has Not become manifold. It is only a cosmic illusion. That which looks as manifold is only APPARENT. Man is only apparently a person, but in reality he is the Impersonal Being. God is a person only apparently, but really He is the Impersonal Being. So the one idea that stands out is that the idea that man is essentially divine. He is divine within. This is the central idea of all religions of the world. The rest is mere rituals and superstitions. In the Bible a man finds the allegorical statement that the first man Adam was pure, and his purity was obliterated by his evil deeds afterwards. It is clear from this allegory that the nature of the primitive man was perfect. The impurities that a man sees, the weaknesses that he feels, are but super impositions on that nature and the subsequent history of Christian religion shows that they also believe in the possibility, nay, the certainty of regaining that old state. This is the whole history of the Bible, Old and New Testaments together. So with the Mohammedans: they also believed in Adam and the purity of Adam and through Mohammed the way was opened to regain that lost state. So with the Buddhists; they believe in attaining the state called Nirvana which is beyond this relative world. Nirvana is almost the same as the Brahman of the Vedanta. The whole system of Buddhists is founded upon the idea of regaining that lost state of Nirvana. In every system this doctrine is found. A man cannot get anything which is not his already. He is indebted to nobody in this universe. He can claim it as his own birthright. All religions explain "Attainment of our own empire (perfection)."
Although all the systems agree that a man had the empire and he lost it, they give varied advice as to how to regain it. A man says that he must perform certain ceremonies, pay certain sums of money to certain idols, eat only certain sorts of food, live in a peculiar fashion to regain that empire. Another says that if he weeps and prostrates and asks pardon of some Being beyond nature, he will regain that empire. Again another says, if a man loves such and such a being with all his heart, he will regain that empire. All these varied advice are there in the Upanishads. But the greatest counsel of the Upanishads is that One need not weep at all. One need not feel weak and beg for pardon or money or knowledge and wisdom. One need not go through any rituals or ceremonies and need not take any notice of how to regain the lost empire because, a man never lost it. He should never seek that which he never lost. It is a bold statement, but it is true. Man is 'THAT' already and there is no need to seek it.

The solution of Vedanta Advaitha is to think that man is free and he is not bound. If he always think that he is bound he will become bound. So the real Vedanti Advaiti says "Shivoham". It means "I am Lord Shiva", "I am God." Swami Vivekananda knew of a man who would say 'Shivoham' always. One day a tiger fell upon him and dragged him away to kill him; people who saw this from the other side of the river, heard him say 'Shivoham' till his last breath. There have been many such men. That is how Hindu monks are supposed to live. That is the ideal, to think that there is nothing except Lord Shiva (God) and to think that 'I am He.' That is the position of strength.
Nevertheless there are great and wonderful things in the religions of the dualists; It is a wonderful idea to worship a Personal God with love. Sometimes this idea is very soothing. But, says, the Vedanta, the soothing is something like the effect which comes from an opiate and not natural. It brings weakness in the long run. Swami Vivekananda can't accept a religion which brings weakness. Today man wants a religion which is intellectual, rationally acceptable and something which gives strength. Weakness is the one cause of suffering. Man becomes miserable because he is weak. He will lie, kill, steal and do all crimes because he is weak. He dies because he is weak. Christ never died. He commended his spirit to the Lord, so did Swami Vivekananda. He gave up his body through yoga. Man suffers because he is weak. To be weak is to be bound by delusion – to be bound by Maya. He should give up the delusion and the whole thing vanishes. It is plain and simple.

Swami Vivekananda says, "By eating all sorts of bad and indigestible food, or by starving ourselves, we are incompetent to eat a good meal. We have listened to words of weakness from our childhood. You hear people say that they do not believe in ghosts, but at the same time, there are few who do not get a little creepy sensation in the dark. It is simply superstition. There are people in this country who, if I told them there was no such being as the devil, will think all religion is gone. Many people have said to me, how can there be a religion without a devil ? How can there be religion without someone to direct us ? How can we live without being ruled by somebody ?
We like to be so treated because we have become used to it. We are not happy until we have been reprimanded by somebody everyday. The same superstition! But however terrible it may seem now, the time will come when we shall look back, each one of us, and smile at everyone of those superstitions which covered the pure and eternal soul, and repeat with gladness, with truth and with strength, I am free and was free and always will be free. This non-dualistic idea will come out of Vedanta, and it is the one idea that deserves to live. The scriptures may perish but the Truth will remain eternal."

For this is the Truth and Truth is eternal & truth itself teaches that it is not the special property of any individual or nation. Men, animals and gods are all common recipients of this one truth. Let them all receive it. No body should be deneid this truth. No superstition should be encouraged. Swami Vivekananda says that he would give up ten thousand lives if twenty people would give up superstition. Not only in this country (England), but in the land of its birth (India), if people are told the truth they become frightened. They say that this idea is for Sannyasins who give up the world and live in forests; for them it is all right. But for poor householders (married people) they must have some sort of fear and they must have some sort of ceremonies.

People are still reluctant to accept this non-dualistic theory and say "I am God, and everything else is God."
When it is analyzed that the whole world of time, space and causation is an illusion and God alone is real, then obviously either man is God or else he is nothing. Ultimately, Only monks in India are trained to think and live like this. They perform their own death ceremony. When they become Sanyasins, they become dead in body and they are alive only in spirit. Sri Shankaracharya was the first to organize, the order of monks in India. He began the Dashanami order.

Swami Vivekananda says, "I have no objection to dualism in many of its forms. I like most of them, but I have objections to every form of teaching which inculcates weakness. This is the one question I put to every man, woman or child, when they are in physical, mental or spiritual training. Are you strong? Do you feel strength? – for I know it is truth alone that gives strength. I know that truth alone gives life and nothing but going towards reality will make us strong, and none will reach truth until he is strong. Every system, therefore, which weakens the mind, makes one superstitious, makes one desire all sorts of wild impossibilities, mysteries and superstitions, I do not like, because its effect is dangerous. Such systems never bring any good; such things create morbidity in the mind, make it weak, so weak that in course of time it will almost become impossible to receive truth or live upto it. Strength, therefore, is the one thing needful. Strength is the medicine for the World's disease. Strength is the medicine which the poor must have when tyrannised over by the rich. Strength is the medicine that the ignorant must have when oppressed by the learned; and it is the medicine that sinners must have when
tyrannised over by other sinners (who pretend to be saints); and nothing gives such strength as this idea of non-dualism. Nothing makes us so moral as this idea of Advaitha. Nothing makes us work so well at our best and highest as when all the responsibility is thrown upon ourselves. I challenge everyone of you. How will you behave if I put a little baby in your hands? Your whole life will be changed for the moment; whatever you may be, you must become selfless for the time being. You will give up all your criminal ideas as soon as responsibility is thrown upon you – your whole character will change. So if the whole responsibility is thrown upon our own shoulders, we shall be at our highest and best; when we have nobody to grope towards, no devil to lay our blame upon, no Personal God to carry our burdens, when we are alone responsible, then we shall rise to our highest and best. I am responsible for my fate, I am the bringer of good unto myself, I am the bringer of evil. I am the Pure and the Blessed One. We must reject all thoughts that assert the contrary. "I have neither death nor fear, I have neither caste nor creed, I have neither father nor mother nor brother, neither friend nor foe, for I am existence, knowledge and Bliss Absolute; I am the Blissful One, I am the Blissful One. I am not bound either by virtue or vice, by happiness or misery. Pilgrimages and books and ceremonials can never bind me. I have neither hunger nor thirst; the body is not mine, nor am I subject to the superstitions and decay that come to the body, I am Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute; I am the Blissful One. I am the Blissful One.
This says the Vedanta, is the only prayer that we should have. This is the only way to reach the goal, to tell ourselves and to tell everybody else, that we are divine. And as we go on repeating this, strength comes. He who falters at first will get stronger and stronger, and the voice will increase in volume. Delusion will vanish and the Sun of Truth alone will shine.\textsuperscript{46}
4.9 THE COSMOS

4.9.1 The law of Macrocosm

Swami Vivekananda next takes up the question of how this world was created. He discusses it with Advaita Philosophy in the background. Man will see the beautiful world around his with all its mountains, rivers and forests and gardens. He marvels at the grandeur in this Creation. He is tempted to know how it was created. This has been asked a million times. Millions of attempts have been made to answer it, yet millions of times it will have to be answered again. It is not that each answer was a failure; every answer to this question contained a part of the truth, and this truth gathers strength as time rolls on.

Science traces back a time, millions of years ago when there was no earth with all its beautiful mountains and rivers and infinite variety of flora and fauna. Everything then was in a nebulous state. For a moment forget what was there millions and millions of years ago. Let it be seen what is around now. So many plants, animals and human beings are seen. A little seed is put in the ground and it is watered. It grows and grows into a huge tree. Then it dies and leaves behind a seed. It completes the circle – it comes out of the seed, becomes the tree and ends in the seed again. Look at a bird, how from the egg it springs, lives its life and then dies, leaving other eggs, seeds of future birds. It is the same case with animals and man.
"Everything in nature begins, as it were, from certain seeds, certain rudiments, certain fine forms and becomes grosser and grosser, & develops, going on that way for a certain time, and then again goes back to that fine form and subsides. The raindrop in which the beautiful sunbeam is playing was drawn in the form of vapour from the ocean, went far away into the air, and reached a region where it changed into water, and dropped down to its present form – to be converted into vapour again. So with everything in Nature by which we are surrounded. We know that the huge mountains are being worked upon by glaciers and rivers, which are slowly but surely pounding them and pulverizing them into sand, that drifts away into the ocean where it settles down on its bed, layer after layer, becoming hard as rocks, once more to be heaped up into mountains of a future generation. From sand rise these mountains, unto sand they go. Applying this course of reasoning to phenomena, we find, in the first place, that everything is almost similar at the beginning and the end. The mountain comes from the sand and goes back to sand; the river comes out of vapour and goes back to vapour; plant comes from the seed and goes back to the seed. The universe with its stars and planets has come out of a nebulous state and go back to it. "What do we learn from this? That the manifested or a grosser state is the effect and the finer state is the cause. We have already seen that the world as a phenomena as explained in terms of cause and effect. So what is destruction? – The effect going back to the cause. If a table here is destroyed – it will go back to its cause, to those fine forms and particles which, combined, made this form,
which we call a table. The glass we see around is the effect, and it had its cause, and this cause is present in this form. A certain amount of material called glass plus the force in the hands of a manufacturer are the causes, the instruments and the materials, which combined, produced this form called 'glass'. The force which was in the hands of the manufacturer is present in the glass as the power of adhesion, without which the particles would fall apart. The glass is only a manifestation of these fine causes in a new shape, and if it be broken to pieces, the force which was present in the form of adhesion will go back and join its own element, and the particles of glass will remain the same, until they take new forms.

Thus one finds that the effect is never different from the cause. It is only that this effect is a reproduction of the cause in a grosser form. It is cyclical in nature. The cause becomes the effect and effect becomes the cause. In this cycle there is a rising and a falling. It is like a wave. Each wave has a hollow and each hollow has a wave. One more fact we learn when we observe closely is the duration factor. The cause immediately does not become the effect. The fine form does not become the gross immediately. The seed immediately does not become the tree. The seed breaks into pieces, degenerates, as it were and regeneration happens out of that degeneration.

Similarly the whole of this universe, in the beginning was in an unseen and unmanifested form, which is called chaos, and out of that comes a new projection.
"Out of what has this universe been produced then? From a preceding fine universe. Out of what has man been produced? The preceding fine form. Out of what has the tree been produced? Out of the seed; the whole of the tree was there in the seed. It comes out and becomes manifest. So the whole of this universe has been created out of this very universe existing in a minute form. It has been made manifest now. It will go back to that minute form and again will be made manifest. Now we find that the fine forms slowly come out and become grosser and grosser until they reach their limit, and when they reach their limit they go back further and further, becoming finer and finer again. This coming out of the fine and becoming gross, simply changing the arrangements of its parts, as it were, is what in modern times called evolution. This is very true; perfectly true; we see it in our lives. No rational man can possibly quarrel with this theory of evolution. But we have to learn one thing more. We have to go one step further. We have to understand that every evolution is preceded by an involution. The seed is the father of the tree, but another tree was itself the father of the seed. The seed is the fine form out of which the big tree comes and another big tree was the gross form which is involved in that seed. The whole of this universe was present in the cosmic fine universe. The first little cell, in this scheme which becomes man afterwards, was simply the involved man and becomes evolved as a man. Thus we see that nothing can be created out of nothing. This is what science says too. Everything exists through eternity and will exist through eternity.
Only the movement is in succeeding waves and hollows, going back to fine forms and coming out into gross manifestations.

Now what is the most evolved notion that man has of this universe? Obviously, it is intelligence. It is the adjustment of part to part, the display of intelligence, of which the ancient design theory was an attempt at expression. Intelligence is that we find in most advanced animals and man. The protoplasm of the earliest cell in this universe was the involution of the highest intelligence. The most evolved man whom the Christians call "Christ", the Buddhists call "Buddha" and Hindus call "Yogis" (writers of Vedas and Upanishads) the perfect man who is at one end of the chain of evolution was involved in the cell of protoplasm, which is at the other end of the same chain. In the beginning of the universe was therefore intelligence. At the beginning that intelligence was involved and in the end that intelligence gets evolved. The sum total of the intelligence displayed in the universe must, therefore, be the involved universal intelligence unfolding itself. This universal intelligence is what we call God. We can call it by any other name, but it is absolutely certain that in the beginning there is that infinite cosmic intelligence. This cosmic intelligence gets involved, and it manifests, evolves itself, until it becomes the perfect man, the 'Christ-man', 'the Buddha man', 'Ramakrishna'. Then it goes back to its own source. That is why all the scriptures say, "In Him we live and have our being." That is why all scriptures preach that we come from God and go back to God.
Many people have questioned Swami Vivekananda, "Why do you use that old word God?" Swami Vivekananda says that it is the best word for the purpose. One cannot find a better word. No doubt, today, the word is used by all sorts of people for all sorts of purposes. And it has lost its original significance. But these theological terms were coined by great saints of yore. It is man's responsibility to understand these terms in the right sense with proper spirit of enquiry. Moreover if Swami Vivekananda coins the term 'Cosmic Intelligence' instead of 'God', there might be hundred others who might coin different hundred terms and there would be chaos and confusion. So one can carry on with the word 'God'.

Thus we see that all various forms of Cosmic energy, such as matter, thought, force, intelligence etc. are simply the manifestations of that cosmic intelligence called 'God'. Everything that a man can see, feel or hear is His creation, or to be more accurate is His projection or to be even more accurate is the Lord Himself. It is He who has become, the earth, the stars, the sun and the moon. It is He who has become I and You and all these materials. It is He that comes down from the lowest atom, becomes the gigantic universe and goes back to the atom. This is the mystery of the universe. This is the law of the macrocosm.
4.9.2 The law of Microcosm

The human mind naturally wants to go outside. It is interested in the external world. The eyes must see, the ears must hear and the senses must sense the external world. Naturally the beauties and sublimities of Nature captivate the attention of man. The first questions that arose in the human soul were about the external world. The sky, the stars, the earth, the rivers and mountains etc. etc. were all a mystery to man. Life itself was a mystery. If a man studies the history of religions he will find that religion began with worshipping a sea-God, a sky-God, a river-God, rain-God etc.

As the endeavour to answer this mystery went deeper and deeper these external manifestations failed to satisfy the human mind and finally man turned inward. From analysing the external, man began to analyse the internal.

A man looks at an object. He wonders about the things that are necessary for this vision. First, the eyes. Eyes are not the real organs of vision. They are only instruments of vision. Then there are the nerve currents which carry these vibrations to the third instrument which is the mind. When the mind is not joined to the organ, the eye, ear and other sense organs, may take the impression but it is of no use. The mind too is only a carrier. It carries the sensation forward to the intellect. The intellect is the determining faculty and decides upon what is brought to it. Still this is not sufficient. The intellect must carry it forward and prevent the whole thing before the ruler in the body – the human soul.
The instruments are in the external body, the gross body of man; but the mind and the intellect are not. They are in what is called in Hindu philosophy the finer body, and what in Christian theology a man reads of as the spiritual body; finer, very much finer than the body, and yet not the soul. This soul is beyond them all. The external body perishes in a few years; any simple cause may disturb and destroy it. The finer body is not so easily perishable; yet it sometimes degenerates, and at other times becomes strong. We see how, in the old man, the mind loses its strength, how, when the body is vigorous, the mind becomes vigorous, how various medicines and drugs affect it, how everything external acts on it, and how it reacts on the external world. Just as the body has its progress and decadence, so also has the mind, and therefore, the mind is not the soul, because the soul can neither decay nor degenerate. It can be known. It is known that there is something behind this mind. Because knowledge which is self-illuminating and the basis of intelligence cannot belong to dull, dead intelligence as its own essence. No dull or dead matter can illumine itself. It is intelligence that illumines all matter.

This body is not self-luminous; if it were, it would be so in a dead man also. Neither can the mind nor the spiritual body be self-luminous. They are not of the essence of intelligence. That which is self-luminous cannot decay. The luminosity of that which shines through a borrowed light comes and goes; but that which is light itself, cannot decay. It is seen that the moon waxes and wanes, because it shines through the borrowed light of the sun. If a lump of iron is put into the fire and made red hot, it glows and shines, but its light will
vanish, because it is borrowed. So, decadence is possible only of that light which is borrowed and is not of its own essence.

It is seen that the body, the external shape, has no light as its own essence, is not self-luminous, and cannot know itself; neither can the mind. The mind waxes and wanes, because it is vigorous at one time and weak at another, because it can be acted upon by anything and everything. Therefore the light which shines through the mind is not its own. It must belong to that which has it as its own essence, and as such, can never decay or die, never become stronger or weaker; it is self-luminous, it is luminosity itself. It cannot be that the soul knows, because it is knowledge itself. It cannot be that the soul has existence, because it is existence itself. It cannot be that the soul is happy, because it is happiness itself. That which is happy has borrowed its happiness; that which has knowledge has received its knowledge; and that which has relative existence has only a reflected existence. Wherever there are qualities these qualities have been reflected upon the substance, but the soul has no knowledge, existence, and blessedness as its qualities, they are the essence of the soul.

Again a man may wonder if it should be taken for granted, that the soul has knowledge, blessedness, existence, as its essence, and has not borrowed them. It may be argued, why not say that the soul's luminosity, the soul's blessedness, the soul's knowledge, are borrowed in the same way as the luminosity of the body is borrowed from the mind. The fallacy of arguing in this way will be that there will be no limit. From whom were these borrowed?
If we say from some other source, the same question will be asked again. So, at last we shall have to come to one who is self-luminous; to make matters short then, the logical way is to stop where we get self-luminosity, and proceed no further.

It is seen that this human being is composed first of this external covering, the body; secondly, the finer body, consisting of mind, intellect, and egoism. Behind them is the real SELF of man. It is seen all the qualities and powers of the gross body are borrowed from the mind. The mind has borrowed its powers from the finer body. The finer body has borrowed its powers from the SELF.

A great many questions now arise about the nature of this soul. If the existence of the soul is drawn from the argument that it is self-luminous, that knowledge, existence, blessedness are its essence, it naturally follows that this soul cannot have been created. A self-luminous existence, independent of any other existence, could never have been the outcome of anything. It always existed; there was never a time when it did not exist, because if the soul did not exist, we cannot understand Time. Time is in the soul; it is when the soul reflects its powers on the mind and the mind thinks, that time comes. When there was no soul, certainly there was no thought, and without thought, there was no time. Soul has neither birth nor death, but it is passing through all these various stages. It is manifesting slowly and gradually from lower to higher, and so on. It is expressing its own grandeur, working through the mind on the body; and through the body it is grasping the external world and
understanding it. It takes up a body and uses it; and when that body has failed and is used up, it takes another body; and so on it goes.

Swami Vivekananda says that the man as he is seen is the body. It is the gross form. But the mind and intellect are finer forms of the gross body. The most subtle form is the SELF. It is the finest form and it is the basis for the mind and the intellect. This is the law of microcosm.⁴⁸
END NOTES

1. In modern philosophy 'IT' is referred to as 'SELF'.


3. Ibid. P. 59.


5. Ibid. P. 71.

6. Ibid. P. 72.

7. Ibid. P. 75.

8. Ibid. P. 76-78.

9. Ibid. P. 78.

10. Ibid. P. 80-81.

11. Ibid. P. 81.

12. Ibid. P. 80-83.

13. Ibid. P. 83.


15. In modern terminology it is also called SELF.


19. Refer to Bertrand Russell's postponement of judgement in chapter I.

21. Ibid., P. 121.
22. Ibid. P. 121-128.
23. Ibid. P. 128.
24. Ibid. P. 130-143.
25. Ibid. P. 131.
26. Ibid. P. 142.
27. Ibid. P. 138-142.
28. Ibid. P. 144.
29. Ibid. P. 144.
30. Ibid. P. 145.
31. Ibid. P. 144-146.
32. Ibid. P. 149.
33. Ibid. P. 151.
34. Ibid. P. 152.
38. Ibid., P. 156-57.
39. Ibid., P. 156-64.
40. Ibid., P. 156-164.
41. Ibid., P. 165.
42. Ibid., P. 168.
43. Ibid., P. 169-174.
44. Ibid., P. 175-192.
45. Ibid., P. 193-195.
46. Ibid., P. 189-202.
47. Ibid., P. 203-211.
48. Ibid., P. 212-217.
CHAPTER FIVE

BHAKTHI YOGA

5.1 DEFINITION OF BHAKTHI YOGA

Bhakthi means devotion to God. According to the ancient Hindu sage Narada¹ "Bhakthi is intense love to God; when a man gets it, he loves all, hates none; he becomes satisfied forever; This love cannot be reduced to any earthly benefit", because so long as worldly desires last that kind of love does not come. "Bhakthi is greater than Karma, greater than Yoga, because these are intended for an object in view, while Bhakthi is its own fruition, its own means and its own end."² Bhakthi Yoga is a real, genuine search after the Lord, a search, beginning, continuing and ending in love for the God. It is believed that one single moment of the madness of extreme love to God brings us eternal freedom. Actually there is not much difference between Jnana (knowledge) and Bhakthi (love or devotion) because they both lead a man to the same destination. In fact all the four paths in Hinduism Jnana, Karma, Bhakthi and Raja Yoga lead to the same destination - Liberation of the Soul.
The one great advantage of Bhakthi is that it is the easiest and the most natural way to reach the Divine. When once a man believes in God, how easy it is for him to love Him. However its greatest disadvantage is that it often degenerates into fanaticism. All the weak and undeveloped minds in every religion or country have only one way of loving their own ideal, that is, by hating every other ideal, God and religion. Herein is the explanation of why the same man who is so lovingly attached to his own ideal of God and religion, becomes a howling fanatic as soon as he sees or hears anything of any other ideal. This kind of love is somewhat like the Canine instinct of guarding the master's property from intrusion. However the instinct of the dog is better than the 'reason' of man, for the dog never mistakes its master for an enemy in whatever dress he may come before it. Again the fanatic loses all power and judgement. He may be good, kind and honest when he deals with the people of his own religion, but the same man becomes a cut-throat to the people of other religions and the people who believe in a different God, other than his own.

But this danger exists only in the initial stages of Bhakthi which is called 'Gauni' (the preparatory stage). When Bhakthi becomes ripe it is called 'Para' Bhakthi (Supreme stage), then there is no manifestation of either fanaticism or hatred. Such a devotee has love towards not only all human beings but it is extended even towards other creatures and objects.\(^3\)
The Bhaktha (devotee) must pray and worship God. However he must not give too much of importance to ceremonies, rituals and lengthy flowery language while praying. It is the sincerity and love of the devotee that matters more than external ceremonies or language. Swami Vivekananda feels that meditation is the best form of devotion. Meditation here means constant remembrance of God. This remembrance should be like the flowing of an unbroken stream of oil poured out from one vessel to another. It is not just unbroken but eternal also. When this remembrance becomes unbroken and constant, it takes the form of a vision ('darshan' in Sanskrit). "He who is near can be seen, but he who is far can only be remembered." This remembrance when exalted assumes the form of vision. Worship is constant remembering.

In Shruti of the Vedas, it is written, "This Atman is not to be reached through various sciences, nor by intellect, nor by much study of the Vedas. Whomsoever this Atman desires, by him is the Atman attained, unto him this Atman discovers himself."

Swami Vivekananda also says that mere hearing, thinking and meditating are not the means of attaining this Atman, it is said, "Who this Atman desires, by him the Atman is attained" It is the Lord within us who discovers himself. It has been said by the Lord. "Those who are constantly attached to Me and worship Me with love - I give that direction to their will by which they come to me."
Quoting from Bhagavan Ramanuja in his commentary on Narada's Bhakti Sutra "Athato Brahma-jijnasa", Bhoja says, "Pranidhana is that sort of Bhakthi in which without seeking results (fruits or rewards) such as sense enjoyments etc. all works are dedicated to that Teacher of Teachers" (Guru) Not the teacher in the ordinary sense, but the teacher who teaches spirituality and knowledge of God. According to Shandilya "Bhakthi is intense love to God." The best definition is given by Prahlada; "That deathless love which the ignorant have for the fleeting objects of the senses - as I keep meditating on Thee - may that love not slip away from my heart." Prahlada wants to love God with as much intensity as a man of the World who loves the pleasures of senses - i.e. money and sex; power and wealth. He never wants to forget that love - even for a moment.

Swami Vivekananda concludes, by saying, "Love ! for whom ? For the supreme Lord Ishwara. We plainly see, therefore that Bhakthi is a series or succession of mental efforts at religious realization beginning with ordinary worship and ending in a supreme intensity of love for Ishwara."
5.2 THE PHILOSOPHY OF ISHWARA

Swami Vivekananda begins this chapter with these lines:

"Who is Ishwara? In Sanskrit there is a saying, "Janmadyasaya Yatch". It means - "From who is the birth, continuation and dissolution of the universe." He is Ishwara - "The Eternal, the Pure, the Ever-Free, the Almighty, the All knowing, the All-Merciful, the Teacher of all Teachers"; and above all "Sa Ishwarah anirvachaniya Premaswarupah". It means He, the Lord is, of His own nature, inexpressible Love. These definitions indicate that in Bhakthi, God is a Personal God."

Then the question arises, if there are two Gods. Because in Jnana Yoga too it was seen that there is a Cosmic Intelligence which is called God. Here there is a Creator, a Preserver and a Destroyer. Actually there is only ONE God. Different people with different intellectual and spiritual developments perceive Him in different ways. Actually the personal God worshipped by a Bhaktha (Devotee) is not different or separate from the Brahman realized by a practitioner of Jnana Yoga. Everything is Brahman, the One without a second. But the Brahman or the Cosmic Intelligence of a Jnana Yogi is too much of an abstraction to be loved and worshipped. So the Bhaktha chooses the relative aspect of Brahman, the Ishwara. The personal God need not be Ishwara to everyone. It could be Allah for the Muslims or Jesus Christ for the Christians, Buddha for the Buddhists and Mahavira for Jains and so on. It could be a great saint too. To use a simile: Brahman is as the clay or substance out of
which an infinite variety of articles are fashioned (it could be toys, pots, benches etc.) As clay they all are one; but form or manifestation differentiates them. Before everyone of them was made, they all existed as clay. Even after manufacture, they are identical substantially. But when formed and so long as the form remains, they are separate and different; the clay-mouse can never become the clay elephant, nor the clay pot become the clay bench. As manifestations they are different, but as clay they are one. Thus Ishwara is the highest manifestation of the Absolute Reality, or in other words, the highest possible reading of the Absolute by the human mind. Similarly all devotees of different Faiths and Religions understand the Absolute Reality only through their Personal God. Creation is eternal, so also is Ishwara and so also is the Personal God of every Faith.

Next Swami Vivekananda clarifies certain points. According to Bhakthi Yoga, when an individual practises Bhakthi Yoga his soul is liberated. The liberated souls enjoy eternal bliss. They get many powers, but not the power of creating, preserving and destroying the universe. It is the Quality or the power of Brahman alone. The liberated soul, when it attains the highest level of Self-Realization, becomes one with Brahman. When everything is Brahman, ONE without a second, there is no question of anybody creating, preserving and destroying. When everything is ONE there can be no creator and nothing is created. So the very idea becomes absurd.
The liberated soul attains freedom. But if it wants to retain its Individual Self, it has to be subordinate to the will of the Supreme Ruler (Creator, Preserver, Destroyer). Or else there will be a clash of the wills of different individual souls.

So Bhakthi Yoga becomes a bit difficult for people who are too much attached to the idea of the Absolute or Non-dualism (Jnana Yoga). Bhakthi will become natural, only when we accept Ishwara, or a Personal God and This Personal God as something superior to personal (individual) soul. However a Bhaktha will have to know about Karma Yoga, Raja Yoga and Jnana Yoga, because that will strengthen his will and faith. The strength of a devotee lies in his faith and love to his personal God and so a knowledge of other Yoga systems is absolutely necessary for him. However when a Bhaktha becomes steadfast in his devotion, he cannot benefit by intellectual and bookish knowledge. A knowledge of other systems of philosophy can only strengthen his faith. Beyond that, it is not of much use. Because he is treading on a path which is fitted very soon to lead him beyond the hazy and turbulent regions of reason and to lead him to the realm of realization. He soon, through the mercy of the Lord, reaches a plane where pedantic and powerless reason is left far behind, and the mere intellectual groping through the dark gives place to the daylight of direct perception. He no more reasons and believes, he almost perceives God. He no more argues, he senses the Reality in God. This feeling of seeing God, feeling God and enjoying God is higher than everything, else in life.
The Bhaktas maintain that such a perception and love of God, is greater than even Moksha-liberation. People work, earn more and do all sorts of things in life. They want to earn more money and enjoy material comforts. But the Bhakta feels that there is the greatest enjoyment of life in the love of God. Human beings judge all their requirements with a measure of happiness which they bring to them. But when love of God brings the highest happiness, it is the highest achievement to a Bhaktha.

It is also significant to note that great saints and spiritual giants have been produced only in those systems of religion where there is an exuberant growth of mythology and ritualism. It is mythology and ritualism which makes man feel that God is great-nay- God is supreme. The dry intellectual and argumentative religion only eradicates all that is poetical, all that is beautiful and sublime in one's search for God and Truth. It is intense love that does the trick. Take away the intense love for God from religion and spirituality. What remains is an empty shell, a countless frame of words and sophistry with no meaning. It may contain a little spirit of social reform, but even that is uninspiring. An ounce of practice in Bhakthi Yoga, practice of righteousness and spiritual realization, outweighs tons and tons of frothy talk on God, Philosophy and Theosophy.⁶

In Bhakthi Yoga mythology, symbolism and rituals are necessary for beginners in the preparatory stage. However, a great danger with people who are attracted by mythology, symbols and rituals is that they claim their religion
to be superior. Such people should constantly remember that any glory, pleasures and happiness that belongs to this world are transient. God alone is real. They must also constantly remember that praise, superiority and enjoyment is not the ultimate end of life. To realize the Truth is the ultimate end of life. Therefore to glorify one's religion and claim superiority makes no sense. The mythology, symbolism and ritual part of religion should be used only to increase one's devotion to one's personal God.

Spiritual Realization, or a Knowledge of the Liberation, Ultimate Truth or God or whatever we call It, is not something to be derived from books. A man may study books all his lives, conduct all experiments in all laboratories, but in the end he will find that he has not developed spiritually at all. In studying books he is sometimes deluded into thinking that thereby he is being spiritually helped. But if he analyses the effect of the study of books on himself, he shall find that at the utmost it is only his intellect that derives profit from such studies and not his spirit. This inadequacy explains why many can speak wonderfully on the Vedas, Bible and Quran, and when it comes to action i.e., living like a saint, they find themselves awfully deficient.

The soul can receive the impulse of spiritual development only from another soul. The person from whose soul such impulse comes is called the Guru – the Teacher; and the person to whose soul the impulse is conveyed is called the Shishya – the disciple (the student). To convey such an impulse to any soul, in the first place the Guru must possess the power of transmitting it,
as it were, to another, and in the second place, the soul to which it is transmitted must be fit to receive it.

The true preacher of religion has to be of wonderful capabilities, and clever shall his hearer be. And when both of these are really wonderful and extraordinary, then will a splendid spiritual awakening result and not otherwise. He who can transmit intuitive knowledge of God, Truth and Secrets of creation and those to whom it can be transmitted are the real Gurus and Shishyas. The others are only play acting in the name of religion and spirituality. They just have a little curiosity awakened, just a little intellectual aspiration kindled in them, but are merely standing on the outward fringe of the horizon of religion. There is no doubt that there is some value in that. Because in the course of time it may result in the awakening of a real thirst for religion.

Swami Vivekananda says that it is a mysterious law in Nature, that as soon as a Shishya is ready the Guru must come. He will undoubtedly come.

There are people who may doubt this fact. They claim to be excellent disciples and complain that they did not find the 'Guru', the Teacher. The greater danger is from those people who claim to be 'Gurus'. They are immersed in ignorance, yet in their arrogance they want to shoulder the responsibility of other aspirants. It is a case of the blind leading the blind. They are like beggars who want to make a gift of one million dollars. Just as these beggars are ridiculous, so are these teachers.
5.3.1 Qualifications of the Teacher and the Taught

A man wonders if there is a way to recognise a Guru. Well, the sun requires no torch to make him visible, a man need not light a candle in order to see him. When the sun rises, he instinctively becomes aware of the fact, and when a teacher of men comes to help, the soul will instinctively know that truth has already begun to shine upon it. Truth stands on its own evidence, it does not require, any other testimony to prove it true, it is self-effulgent. It penetrates into the innermost corners of our nature, and in its presence the whole universe stands up and says, "This is Truth". The teachers whose wisdom and Truth shine like the light of the sun are the very greatest, the world has known, and they are worshipped as God by the major portion of mankind. But we may get help from comparatively lesser ones also. The thing is we do not possess, intuition enough to recognize a man from whom we can receive teaching and guidance. So the Shishya should have certain qualifications before he goes in search of a 'Guru'.

The conditions necessary for a Shishya are purity, a real thirst after knowledge and perseverance. No impure soul can really be religious. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." (The Bible) A man might argue, that if a man is pure he will as well see God, so there is no necessity for a Guru. But without Guru's grace nothing is possible in spiritual matters. Even to become 100% pure, i.e. to be free of all desire for worldly pleasures, a man needs Guru's grace.
So purity in act, speech and action must be sincerely practised by a disciple. He must practice and overcome the six passions which make him impure. The six passions are Desire (for wealth, sex, fame, authority etc.) Anger, Greed, Attachment (to worldly possesions), Arrogance, and Envy (Jealousy). As to the thirst after knowledge, it is an old law that a man gets only whatever he wants and whatever he works for. No one can get anything other than what he fixes his hearts upon. To pant for spiritual upliftment truly is a very difficult thing, not as easy as a man generally imagines. Hearing religious talks or reading religious books is no proof yet of a real want of it. There must be a continuous struggle, a constant fight, an unremitting grappling with our lower nature, till the higher want is actually felt and the victory is achieved. It is not a question of one or two days, or of years, or of lives; the struggle may have to go on for hundreds of lives. The success may be got sometimes immediately, but a man must be ready to wait patiently. The student who sets out with such a spirit of perseverance will surely find success and realization at last. Swami Vivekananda has discussed the qualifications for a real disciple or student. However it is summarized and quoted from Shri Saibaba's biography because it is clearly numbered.

1. **Mumukshu**: It means intense desire to get free. A person should not care for any other thing in life except for Mukti or Liberation (Self-Realization). It should be his only goal in life.
2. **Virakti**: means a feeling of non-attachment with the things of this world. Unless a man feels disgusted with the things, emoluments and honours, (riches and glory) which his actions would bring in this world, he has no right to enter into the spiritual realm.

3. **Antarmukha**: means introversion. Our senses have been created by God with a tendency to move outwards and so a man always looks outward (towards his senses and the pleasures they bring) and not inward. But if a man wants God, his gaze must turn inwards. (Look at the photos of the Buddha and Swami Vivekananda with their gaze turned inwards during meditation.)

4. **Catharsis**: (Eliminating all base ideas and emotions) Unless a man has turned away from wickedness and stopped doing immoral things, he cannot rest his mind. And with such a disturbed mind he cannot think of God.

5. **Right Conduct**: Unless a man leads a life of truth, penance and celibacy he cannot get God-realization.

6. **Preferring Shreyas to Preyas**. Shreyas means the good; Preyas means the pleasant. The riches and glory of the world are pleasant to enjoy but they are not good because they do not take you to God. Those qualifications which take a man to God are Preyas. So a shishya has to choose Preyas.
7. **Control of the mind**: A shishya must learn to control his mind and control his desires for the pleasures of the world. Otherwise he will choose 'Preyas' and not 'Shreyas'.

8. **Purification of the mind**: A man must discharge his worldly duties. Then he will be free from the worries of life. He must become a Karma Yogi. Then he will attain purity of mind. The idea that "I am the body" is a great delusion and Karma Yoga makes a man feel that he has to be beyond the idea of body, beyond the ego of mind and body complex.

9. **The necessity of a Guru.**

10. And Lastly **the Lord's grace** is the most essential thing. Without the blessings of God nothing is achieved, especially spiritual development and God-realization. So for a man to realize "the Ultimate Truth" God must be well pleased in him.
5.3.2 Qualification of the Teacher or Guru

The teacher should know the spirit of the scriptures. Everybody can read Bibles, Vedas and Korans; in fact they do. But for ordinary mortals, they are only words, syntax, etymology, philology and the dry bones of religion. The teacher who deals too much in words will not understand the spirit of the scriptures.

"Shabdajaalam Maharanyam Chittabrahmana Kaaranam" - "The network of words is a big forest; it is the cause of a curious wandering of the mind." Those who employ a beautiful language, excellent academic and communicative skills, explanation of diction, etc. etc. are only desirous to show off their learning. They want to be praised as great scholars. However great teachers of mankind like Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa never go into any explanation of any religious texts. In fact what they have spoken have become scriptures. Too much of 'text-torturing' is not going to help in the study of scriptures. A man might study the grammar, diction, history and anthropology pertaining to the times of Jesus Christ or Buddha, but if he cannot make Christ or Buddha his ideal and learn to live like them, all his effort is a waste.

Bhagavan Ramakrishna used to tell a story of some men who went into a mango orchard and busied themselves in counting the leaves, the twigs, and the branches, examining their colour, comparing their size, computerizing all the information and engaging on a learned discussion on these things. But one
of them, more sensible than the others, did not care for these things. Instead of
that he began to eat the mango fruit. And he was wise. All the study of
Sciences, Arts, Computers and Mathematics is like counting leaves. To
pursue God is like eating the mango fruit.

Men like Christ and Buddha, and Paramahamsa never counted leaves.
They straight away ate the mango fruit. They pursued God and the Ultimate
Truth. They wanted to know the most fundamental source of all knowledge.
So "leaf-counters" cannot become Gurus. A Guru must 'live' the scriptures
and not just study it. If it is written in the scriptures "Do not speak a lie," he
should not speak a lie in real life.

The second condition in a teacher is sinlessness. The teacher should be
pure in heart, mind and soul.

The question is often asked, "Why should we look into the character and
personality of the teacher? We have only to judge of what he says, and take
that up."

This is not right. A man need not look into the character of a teacher
who teaches Physics, History or Algebra. Because these academic subjects
require only intellectual equipment. But a spiritual teacher must be pure. Or
else he cannot bring light to another soul. The essence of all spirituality, its
teaching and learning, is the purity of heart, mind and soul. A vision of God
or a glimpse of the Ultimate Truth is never attained without purity of the soul.
A Guru is a 'transmitter' of spiritual power, of purity of heart and mind. If the Guru has no spiritual power or purity of mind, he cannot transmit the same. Therefore the teacher must be pure.

The third condition for a teacher (Guru) is with regard to the motive. The teacher must not teach with any ulterior selfish motive-like money, fees, salary, power, name and fame. He must work simply out of love - love for the student and love for mankind. The only medium through which spiritual force can be transmitted is love. Any selfish motive, such as the desire for gain or for name, will immediately destroy this conveying medium. God is love, and he who has known God as love can teach God to others. A man must look for these three conditions in a teacher. If they are not there, it is not safe to study from him. It is a greater danger to study from false Gurus and false prophets because instead of God, they may teach wickedness.

This makes it clear that everybody cannot become disciples and only a chosen few can become Gurus. The relationship between a true aspirant and a true Guru is a very uncommon one. Without faith, humility, submission and veneration in a disciple's heart towards his teacher there cannot be any spiritual development. A disciple literally worships his Guru as God himself. The Guru can and will impart the knowledge of God. Religion and spirituality which is the highest knowledge and highest wisdom cannot be bought, nor can it be acquired through books and argument. It is attained with childlike confidence in the Guru and service to him.
5.4 TEACHERS (GURUS) AND INCARNATIONS OF GOD:

The greatest of Gurus are incarnations of God. No man can see God except through these human manifestations.

Swami Vivekananda says, "If we try to see God otherwise, we make for ourselves a hideous caricature of Him and believe the caricature to be no worse than the original ....... When-ever we try to think of God as He is in His absolute perfection, we invariably meet with the most miserable failure, because, as long as we are men, we cannot conceive Him as anything higher than man. The time will come when we shall transcend our human nature and know Him as He is ; but as long as we are men (i.e. bound by human body, mind and intellect) we must worship Him in man and as man. Talk as you may, try as you may, you cannot think of God except as a man. You may deliver great intellectual discourses on God and on all other things under the sun, become great rationalists and prove to your satisfaction that all these accounts of the Avatars (incarnations) of God as man are non-sense. But let us come for a moment to practical common sense. What is there behind this kind of remarkable intellect ? Zero, nothing, simply so much froth. When next you hear a man delivering a great intellectual lecture against this worship of Avatars of God, get hold of him and ask, what his idea of God is, what he understands by 'omnipotence' and 'omnipresence', and all similar terms, beyond the spelling of the words. He really means nothing by them; he cannot formulate as their meaning any idea unaffected by his own human nature; he is no better off in this matter than the man in the street, who has not read a single
book. The man in the street, however, is quiet and does not disturb the peace of the world, while this big talker creates disturbance and misery among mankind. Religion (spirituality, knowledge of God) is after all realisation, and we must make the sharpest distinction between talk and intuitive experience. What we experience in the depths of our souls is realization. Nothing indeed is so uncommon as common sense in regard to this matter."

Two kinds of men do not worship God as man – the human brute who has no religion and the Paramahamsa who has risen beyond all the weaknesses of humanity and has transcended the limits of his own human nature. To a Paramahamsa all Nature has become his own self. He has realized his soul to be the source of everything. He has to worship himself.

God understands human feelings and becomes man to do good to humanity.

Bhagwan Sri Ramakrishna says, "When a huge tidal wave comes all the little brooks and ditches become full to the brim without any effort or consciousness on their own part; so when an Incarnation comes, a tidal wave of spirituality breaks upon the world, and people feel spirituality almost full in the air."

God himself speaks through such Incarnations. He accepts many disciples, apostles, and works for the spiritual upliftment of mankind in general. They are Jagadgurus. It means they are Gurus of the whole world. Mankind, should follow them, if they want the ultimate Truth. It is not mandatory that only Incarnations should be Gurus. People who have attained
the goal i.e., people who are liberated, who have had a vision of God, who have realized their soul can also become Gurus. They are called Siddha – Gurus. They are Yogis.

These Siddha Gurus convey the germs of spiritual wisdom to the disciple by means of The Word (the Mantras) to be meditated upon.

In Hindu Philosophy, the Universe has got a name and a form (Namarupa) as its condition of manifestation. The Name is the sound and the Universe is its manifestation. For example, the Guru gives the word OM to his disciple to meditate upon. The three letters AUM in combination is pronounced as OM. The sound of the throat is 'A'; M is the last lip sound and the U exactly represent the rolling forward of the impulse which begins at the root of the tongue till it ends in the lips. If properly pronounced, this OM will represent the whole phenomenon of sound production, and no other word can do this. So it becomes the very symbol of creation – Similarly, there are other words which become symbols (Mantras) of certain deities, certain Ishta devathas – favourite Gods – which is given by a Guru to a Shishya to meditate upon.
5.5 THE METHOD AND THE MEANS

Bhagwan Ramanuja says in his commentary on the 'Vedanta Sutras': "The attaining of 'That' comes through discrimination, controlling the passions, practice, sacrificial work, purity, strength and suppression of excessive joy."

Discrimination means Viveka in Sanskrit. The Bhakta has to discriminate between the Real and the Unreal. God alone is Real. The world is illusory, therefore unreal. So a Bhaktha has to choose God in preference to the world. He must choose God and not mammon because he cannot serve two masters.

A Bhaktha (devotee) also has to discriminate between pure food and impure food. According to Ramanuja food becomes impure through three causes (1) by nature of the food itself as in the case of garlic etc.; (probably meat like beef and pork) (2) Owing to its coming from wicked and accursed persons; and (3) from physical impurities, such as dirt or hair etc. Chhandogya Umpanishad says that "when the food is pure, the Sattva element gets purified, and the memory becomes unwavering."

The question of food has always been one of the most vital with the Devotees of God. Each religion has its own peculiar ideas. All rationalists and sceptics find fault with these injunctions in religion.

The beginner must pay particular attention to all such dietetic rules as have come down from the line of his accredited teachers; but the extravagant
and meaningless fanaticism, which has driven religion entirely to the kitchen, as may be noticed in the case of many of our sects, without any hope of the noble truth of that religion ever coming out to the sunlight of spirituality, is a peculiar sort of pure and simple materialism. It is neither Jnana, nor Bhakti, nor Karma; it is a special kind of lunacy, and those who pin their souls to it are more likely to go to lunatic asylums than to Brahma-loka (Abode of God). If vegetarianism is everything then all cows should have become Yogis.

Swami Vivekananda, the rationalist accepts food of all varieties as long as they do not disturb a man's devotion to God.

However the topic of food is interpreted in a different way by Shankaracharya in his Bhashya on Upanishads. The word 'Ahara' in Sanskrit is generally translated as 'food'. But according to Shankaracharya, "That which is gathered in is Ahara" Whatever is gathered in through the five senses is Ahara. What we see through the eyes, what we listen to, with the ears, what we touch with the skin and so on, is also 'Ahara'.

So all the 'Ahara' a man takes in must be pure. That is he must always look at the pictures of Ishta Devatha (chosen ideal) God. He must always listen to music and discourses about God. He must worship God with his hand, travel to holy places with his legs etc. etc. These things purify the mind. The body is the gross form and the mind is its finer form. So when once a man starts purifying the gross, the mind also starts becoming pure i.e. inclined towards God.
Controlling the passions is the next thing to attend to. It is achieved by self-restraint and self-denial. Renunciation is the word in spiritual struggle. All the immense possibilities of divine realization in the soul cannot get actualized without struggle and without practice. For a devotee the mind must always think of God. At first it is very difficult to compel the mind to think of God always. But with every new effort the power to do grows stronger in us. Lord Krishna says in Bhagawadgita that by practice and by non-attachment it is attained.

Purity is the basic thing in spirituality. Purity is a product of renunciation – Renounce all greed, hatred and jealousy. Cleaning the external body and choosing the right food is easy. But without internal cleanliness and purity, these external observances are of no value whatsoever. Ramanuja has discussed certain points which make a man pure –

1. Satya – Truthfulness

2. Arjava – Sincerity

3. Daya – Doing good to others without any profit motive-compassion.

4. Ahimsa – Non-injury to others either by thought, word or deed.

5. Anabhidya – Do not covet others property and riches. Not thinking vain thoughts and not brooding over injuries and insults.
Swami Vivekananda, the rationalist always has something meaningful and scientific to say. He feels that Ahimsa is the most fundamental quality to be practised. A man must never hurt anybody. It is also remarkable that almost every good idea in this world is carried to a disgusting extreme. A good practice carried to an extreme and worked in accordance with the letter of the law becomes a positive evil. Swami Vivekananda quotes the example of monks of a certain religious sect, who do not bathe, lest the vermin on their bodies should be killed. They never think of the discomfort and disease they bring to their fellow human beings. Luckily, they do not belong to the religion of the Vedas.

According to Swami Vivekananda, the test of Ahimsa is absence of jealousy. Any man may do a good deed or make a good gift on the spur of the moment or under the pressure of some superstition or priestcraft; but the real lover of mankind is he who is jealous of none. The so-called great men of the world may all be seen to become jealous of each other for a small name, a little fame, and a few pieces of gold. So long as this jealousy exists in a heart, it is far away from Ahimsa. The cows and sheep do not eat meat. But they are not perfect Yogis. They are not perfect non-injurers. Any fool may abstain from eating this or that, but it does not make him free from jealousy.

The next means to the attainment of Bhakthi-Yoga is strength. (Anavasada) The Atman cannot be attained by the weak. It means both physical and mental weakness. A spiritual aspirant should keep his body
strong and healthy. With a body full of diseases, Yoga is not possible. The mentally weak also cannot attain the Atman. The spiritual aspirant should have a strong will. He should overcome temptations and should be able to renounce the pleasures of the senses and the flesh for the sake of God.

A spiritual aspirant should be cheerful. He should not be gloomy. At the same time he should avoid excessive mirth (Anuddharsha). Excessive mirth makes a man unfit for serious thought and spiritual pursuits.¹¹
There are many preparations intended for the purification of mind. Swami Vivekananda makes a list of them (i) Repetition of holy names i.e. repetition of a Mantra (ii) Rituals and modes of worship (iii) worship of personal God. But the greatest preparation or purifier is renunciation, renunciation of worldly, material things and sense pleasures.

Renunciation of a Bhakthi Yogi is natural. It arises from love of God. Here there is no violence. Here there is no fear or unhappiness. The Bhaktha's renunciation is easy, smooth flowing and as natural as the things around us. A man begins to love a woman. After a while he loves another, and the first woman he lets go. She drops out of his mind smoothly, gently, without his feeling the want of her at all. A woman loves a man; she then begins to love another man, and the first one drops off from her mind quite naturally. A man loves his own city, then he begins to love his country and the intense love for his little city drops off smoothly, naturally. Again, a man learns to love the whole world; his love for his country, his intense fanatical patriotism drops off without hurting him, without any manifestation of violence. An uncultured man loves the pleasures of the senses intensely, as he becomes cultured, he begins to love intellectual pleasures, and his sense-enjoyments become less and less. No man can enjoy a meal with the same gusto or pleasure as a dog or a wolf.
But those pleasures which a man gets from intellectual experiences and achievements, the dog can never enjoy. At first, pleasure is in association with the lowest senses. But as a man reaches a higher plane of existence, the lower kind of pleasure becomes less intense. So when a man gets even higher than the plane of the intellect, higher than that of mere thought, when he gets to the plane of spirituality and of divine inspiration, he finds there a state of bliss, compared with which all the pleasures of the senses, or even of the intellect, are as nothing. When the moon shines brightly, all the stars become dim; and when the sun shines the moon herself becomes dim. So when love of God is awakened in a man, his love for physical and sensual pleasures and intellectual pleasures become dim. Finally they disappear. It is a process of evolution. Here Swami Vivekananda has analysed the principle of renunciation in spirituality in a rational way. He feels that nothing should be done out of force. A man cannot easily give up marriage, food, drink, money, comforts etc. etc. overnight. It should be a smooth process. This renunciation should be a product of his love of God.
5.6.2 BHAKTHI YOGA AND LOVE

Bhakthi Yoga is the science of higher love. A man can see love everywhere in nature. Whatever in society is good and great and sublime is the working out of that love. Whatever in society is bad and diabolical is also love. Only it is ill-directed. It is the same emotion that gives the pure and holy conjugal love between husband and wife as well as the sort of love which goes to satisfy the lowest forms of animal passion. The emotion is the same, but its manifestation is different in different cases. It is the same feeling of love, well or ill-directed, that impels one man to do good and to give all he has to the poor, while it makes another man cut the throats of his brethren and take away all their possessions. The former loves others as much as the latter loves himself. The direction of the love is bad in the case of the latter, but it is right in the case of the former. The same fire that cooks a meal may burn a child, and it is no fault of the fire if it does so; the difference lies in the way in which it used. Love is like fire. It should be used in, a proper way. Love God. Love whatever is pure, beautiful and magnificent. See God in such people and such objects. Love them.

Ramakrishna Paramahamsa says, "Wherever there is any bliss, even though in the most sensual of things, there is a spark of that Eternal Bliss which is the Lord Himself."

Even in the lowest kinds of attraction there is the germ of divine love. One of the names of the Lord in Sanskrit is Hari, and this means that He
attracts all beings to Himself. His is in fact the only attraction worthy of human hearts. Only He can attract a soul really. Dead matter cannot attract a soul. It never did and never will. When a man falls in love with a beautiful woman, it is not the handful of arranged molecules that attracts the man. Behind those material particles there must be and is the play of divine influence and divine love. It is the self man loves in his wives, husbands, children, friends and relatives. In short it is the Divine in them. Nobody would love a corpse. The more love, becomes refined, man will learn to love the divine more.
5.6.3 THE FORMS OF LOVE MANIFESTATION

There are forms in which divine love manifests itself. First there is reverence. People go to temples and holy places to show reverence. It is because God is worshipped there. Reverence is grown out of love. When a man loves something very dearly and he does not get it then he goes through (2) Viraha. Viraha means pangs of separation. In earthly love a man experiences it. He experiences this with divine love too. A Bhaktha finds life miserable if he cannot love God. He loves God so much ultimately, he obtains His vision. Then there is the feeling of (3) Sacredness. The Bhaktha feels that whatever belongs to the Lord is sacred. Even in earthly love a lover thinks that whatever belongs to his lover is special. (4) Universal love leads to self-surrender. Every lover of God says that only God's will should happen.
5.7 THE LAST WORD IN BHAKTHI YOGA

When the highest ideal of love for God is reached, everything else including Jnana Yoga, Raja Yoga and Karma Yoga is thrown away; every philosophy is thrown away, every pleasure, comfort, friends, money, beauty etc. etc. is thrown away. He does not care for freedom, mukti and liberation. He does not want to become one with God. In fact the Bhaktha does not want to become one with God. He wants to be a little away from God so that he can enjoy the bliss of the Divine. Love for love's sake is the highest enjoyment. God is the embodiment of love and a Bhaktha just wants to enjoy that Love.

Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa used to say, "My friends, the whole world is a lunatic asylum. Some are mad after worldly love, some after name, some after fame, some after money some after salvation and going to heaven. In this big lunatic asylum I am also mad, I am mad after God. I think my madness is after all the best. This blessed madness of divine love alone can cure for ever the disease of the world that is in us."

Compare this with the last One Commandment of Christ -

Jesus said unto him, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like unto it (cannot be separate from it) Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self"

-St. Matthew, Chapter 22, 37-40
The only Commandment for man is to love God and love God in all human beings, other creatures and in everything.

Man has to begin as dualist in the religion of love. God is to us a separate Being, and he feels himself to be separate being also. Love then comes in the middle and man begins to approach God and God also comes nearer and nearer to man. Man takes up all the relationships of life, as father, as mother, as son, as friend, as master, as lover, and projects them on his ideal of love, on his God. To him God exists as all these, and the last point of his progress is reached when he feels that he has become absolutely merged in the object of his worship. Man begins with love for himself, and the unfair claims of the little self make even love selfish. At last, however, comes the full blaze of light, in which this little self is seen to have become one with the infinite. Man himself is transfigured in the presence of this light of Love, and he realizes atlast the beautiful and inspiring truth that Love, the Lover and the Beloved are One.

A rationalist who sees the reality as perceived by the fine senses can only understand duality and not either Monism or Non-duality. Man begins with duality. Swami Vivekananda traces here the development that takes place in a devotee which takes him from duality to a point where he realizes that everything is ONE.

Bhakthi is real religion, in the sense all religion involves loving God, and communism with Him. However Swami Vivekananda feels that religion as a
quest for God is not for the many. There may be in every country a few hundred people who genuinely want God. The rest want only money power and carnal pleasures. So the need will come when there is a genuine demand. There are hardly hundreds in every country who have had some spiritual experience. No man will turn to spirituality unless he is fed up of the world and its pleasures and pains.

There is another form of religion which is fashionable. One of Swami Vivekananda's friends had much furniture in her parlour. She bought a Japanese vase because it was fashionable to have one in a parlour. She would not mind paying a thousand dollars for that and buying it even though she did not need it. In the same way she would have a little religion and join a church. Bhakti is not for such. That is not 'want'. Want is that without which one cannot live. Man wants breath, he wants food. When a man wants a woman in this world, he feels that without her he cannot live. This is the secret of necessity; it is that without which a man cannot live. In the same way a man must want God. This is how Jesus Christ and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa loved God. They loved God more than anything else in the world. Without God they could not live. They are the ideal Bhaktas.

The very first step in Bhakti Yoga is to ask oneself this question: "What do I want?" A man may want bread more and he may go mad if he does not get bread when he is hungry. But a real devotee loves God more than bread! If there is a want in a man's life he must fill it with God. God will take care of
the rest! This must be the attitude of a Bhaktha. He must always ask himself, "What do I need?" and come to the answer "I need God more than anything else."\(^{13}\)
END NOTES


2. Ibid, P. 31-32.

3. Ibid, P. 33.

4. Ibid, P. 34.

5. Ibid, P. 31-35.


7. Ibid, P. 42-44.


10. Ibid, P. 52-56.


12. Ibid, P. 59-64,

CHAPTER SIX

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO INDIA

6.1 ARRIVAL OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN INDIA

Swami Vivekananda successfully represented India and Hinduism at the Parliament of Religions held in Chicago in 1893. He stayed for four more years in USA and UK to spread the message of Vedanta. After his memorable work in the West, he returned to India.

The home-coming of Swami Vivekananda was a notable event in the history of modern India, for it was a united India (India was undivided under the British rule then) that rose to do him honour. Looming as he did upon the national horizon as the Prophet and Apostle of a re-interpreted and re-invigorated Hinduism, Vivekananda was the Man of the Hour and the Harbinger of a New Era. No wonder, therefore, that his home-coming was keenly awaited by millions of his fellow-countrymen. For more than three years the people of India had been aware that the Swami was, with marked success, presenting and interpreting Hinduism to the Western nations. All
India looked to him as to some mighty Acharya of old, born again to revivify the Eternal Religion, and to carry her banner through the civilized world. New forces had come into play in India ever since his triumph at the Parliament of Religions. Through study of the Swamis lectures and utterances, the eyes of educated Indians had been opened to the hidden treasures of their religion. They had come to see more and more how Vedanta alone could claim to be a universal religion. The Swami, they had discovered, was a man of powers and spiritual realization. As a true patriot he had made a deep study of his country's complex problems. Many among the educated, were eager to see him and hear his message. They had accepted him as the torch-bearer of the Indian nation.

When it was known that Swami Vivekananda had left Europe for India, committees were formed in the large cities to organize his reception. Two of his brother-disciples went South to meet him: Swami Niranjanananda met him when he landed at Colombo and Swami Shivananda met him at Madurai. Others, disciples of Swami Vivekananda himself, made their way from Bengal and other northern provinces to Madras, (Chennai) and awaited his arrival there. Newspapers and journals throughout the country commenced a series of editorials praising him and his work. This further aroused the nation's expectancy.

The lectures of Swami Vivekananda were attended by thousands. In many places the horses were unharnessed by the people from his carriage and
drew it themselves. They were also joined by their Maharajas. He was showered with flowers and garlands. The holy Ganga-water was sprinkled over him. Thousands wanted to see him and listen to him. Once they even sat on the railway track and stopped the train he was travelling in, only to see him.¹

Swami Vivekananda landed at Colombo on the afternoon of January 15th 1897. He was given a right royal reception by the Hindu community there. Then Swami Vivekananda gave his first public speech in the East. Swami Vivekananda was also invited by the people of various cities and towns of India. He delivered a series of lectures in all those cities and towns where he was welcomed and honoured, right from Colombo in the South upto Almora in the North. These lectures are compiled as "Lectures from Colombo to Almora in Vol. 3 of his 'Complete Works'.

In all he delivered 29 lectures. It is mentioned here with their titles and the places in which they were delivered.

1. First Public Lecture in the East – Colombo.

2. Vedantism – Jaffna

3. Reply to the Address of Welcome at Pamban-Pamban.

4. Address at the Rameshwaram Temple on Real worship - Rameshwaram.

5. Reply to the Address of Welcome at Ramnad – Ramnad.
6. Reply to the Address of Welcome at Paramakudi – Paramakudi.

7. Reply to the Address of Welcome at Shivaganga and Manamadura – Manamadura

8. Reply to the Address of Welcome at Madura - Madurai


10. Reply to the Address at Madras – Madras (Chennai)

11. My plan of campaign – Victoria Hall, Madras

12. Vedanta in its Application to Indian Life - Madras

13. The Sages of India – Madras


15. The Future of India – Madras

16. On charity – Madras

17. Address of welcome presented at Calcutta and Reply – Calcutta

18. The Vedanta in All its Phases – Calcutta.

19. Address of Welcome at Almora and Reply – Almora

20. Vedic Teaching in Theory and Practice – Almora (in Hindi)


24. The Vedanta – Lahore.


26. The Influence of Indian Spiritual Thought in England [In this speech Swami Vivekananda introduced Sister Nivedita at the Star Theatre, Calcutta. Then Sister Nivedita made a speech]

27. Sannyasa – Its Ideal and Practice – Belur Math, Calcutta. [This speech was addressed to Brahmacharis and monks before leaving to the West.]

28. What Have I Learnt – Dacca 1901 [After he came back from the West]

29. The Religion we are born in – Dacca 1901.
6.2 FIRST PUBLIC LECTURE IN THE EAST

Preaching Vedanta in the West was not the only idea of Swami Vivekananda. He had other major ideas. The chief one was to rejuvenate India and kindle her spiritual strength; make Indians take pride in their rich heritage and to evoke ideas of nationalism.

He says,\textsuperscript{2} "India must listen to me! I shall shake India to her foundations. I shall send an electric thrill through her national veins. Wait! you shall see how India will receive me. It is India, my own India, that knows truly how to appreciate that which I have given so freely here, and with my life's blood, as the spirit of Vedanta. India will receive me in triumph."

The Swami's fervent words were prophetic. Those who heard him realized that it was not recognition for himself that he was seeking, but recognition for what he felt must become the gospel of all nations, namely the gospel of Vedas and Vedanta. Swami Vivekananda in these lectures made Indians take pride in their ancient philosophy. Thereby he gave them a common point to feel the unity in diversity. For the first time the nationalistic feeling towards one Nation called India was aroused in the public.

Swami Vivekananda was welcomed with an address in every city. A sample of one, is quoted here. It is the address of welcome given by the people of Colombo in Sri Lanka.
Revered Sir,

In pursuance of a resolution passed at a public meeting of the Hindus of the city of Colombo, we beg to offer you a hearty welcome to this Island. We deem it a privilege to be the first to welcome you on your return home from your great mission in the West.

We have watched with joy and thankfulness the success with which the mission has, under God's blessing, been crowned. You have proclaimed to the nations of Europe and America the Hindu ideal of a universal religion, harmonizing all creeds, providing spiritual food for each soul according to its needs, and lovingly drawing it unto God. You have preached the Truth and the Way, taught from remote ages by a succession of Masters whose blessed feet have walked and sanctified the soil of India, and whose gracious presence and inspiration have made her, through all her vicissitudes, The Light of the World.

To the inspiration of such a Master, Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa Deva, and to your self-sacrificing zeal, Western nations owe the priceless boon of being placed in living contact with the spiritual giants of India, while to many of our own countrymen, delivered from the glamour of Western civilization, the value of our glorious heritage – has been brought home.
By your noble work and example you have laid humanity under an obligation difficult to repay, and you have shed fresh lusture upon our Motherland. We pray that the grace of God may continue to prosper you and your work and

We remain, Revered Sir,

Yours faithfully,

For and on behalf of the Hindus of Colombo

P. COOMARA SWAMY

Member of the Legislative Council of Ceylon

Chairman of the Meeting

K. KULAVEERA SINGHAM, Secretary

These tributes paid to Swami Vivekananda provide an ample testimony to the awe and a sense of gratitude he inspired among Indians.

The important points of some of his lectures are summarized here and examined if they are rational. He began his first public lecture in the East in Colombo as follows:

"What little work has been done by me has not been from any inherent power that resides in me, but from the cheers, the goodwill, the blessings that have followed my path in the West from this our very beloved, most sacred, dear Motherland. Some good has been done, no doubt, in the West, but specially to myself; for what before was the result of an emotional nature, perhaps, has gained the certainty of conviction and attained the power and
strength of demonstration. Formerly I thought as every Hindu thinks, and as the Hon, President has just pointed out to you, that this is the Punya Bhumi, the land of karma, today I stand here and say, with the conviction of truth, that it is so. If there is any land on this earth that can lay claim to be the blessed Punya Bhumi, to be the land to which all souls on this earth must come to account for karma, the land to which every soul that is wending its way Godward must come to attain its last home, the land where humanity has attained its highest towards gentleness, towards generosity, towards purity, towards calmness, above all, the land of introspection and of spirituality—it is India. From here have started the founders of religions from the most ancient times, deluging the earth again and again with the pure and perennial waters of spiritual truth. Hence have proceeded the tidal waves of philosophy that have covered the earth, East or West, North or South, and hence again must start the wave which is going to spiritualize the material civilization of the world. Here is the life-giving water with which must be quenched the burning fire of materialism which is burning the core of the hearts of millions in other Lands. Believe me, my friends, this is going to be.

So much I have seen, and so far those of you who are students of the history of races are already aware of this fact. The debt which the world owes to our Motherland is immense. Taking country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu. “The mild Hindu” sometimes is used as an expression of reproach: but if ever a reproach concealed a wonderful truth, it is in the term,
“the mild Hindu”, who has always been the blessed child of God. Civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient times and in modern times, great ideas have emanated from strong and great races. In ancient and in modern times, wonderful ideas have been carried forward from one race to another. In ancient and in modern times, seeds of great truth and power have been cast abroad by the advancing tides of national life; but mark you, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets and with the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood. Each idea had to wade through the blood of millions of our fellow-beings. Each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of windows. This, in the main, is what other nations have taught; but India has for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of, when the very fathers of the modern Europeans lived in the forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history has no record and tradition dares not peer into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it. We, of all nations of the world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on our head, and therefore we live.

There was a time when at the sound of the march of big Greek battalions the earth trembled. Vanished from off the face of the earth, with not even a tale left behind to tell, gone is that ancient land of the Greeks. There was a
time when the Roman Eagle floated over everything worth having in this world; everywhere Rome’s power was felt and pressed on the head of humanity; the earth trembled at the name of Rome. But the Capitoline Hill is a mass of ruins; the spider weaves its web where the Caesars ruled. There have been other nations equally glorious that have come and gone, living a few hours of exultant and exuberant dominance and of a wicked national life, and then vanishing like ripples on the face of the waters. Thus have these nations made their mark on the face of humanity. But we live, and if Manu came back today he would not be bewildered, and would not find himself in a foreign land. The same laws are here, laws adjusted and thought out through thousands and thousands of years; customs, the outcome of the acumen of ages and the experience of centuries, that seem to be eternal; and as the days go by, as blow after blow of misfortune has been delivered upon them, such blows seem to have served one purpose only, that of making them stronger and more constant. And to find the centre of all this the heart from which the blood flows, the mainspring of the national life, believe me when I say after my experience of the world, that it is here.

To the other nations of the world, religion is one among the many occupations of life. There is politics, there are the enjoyments of social life, there is all that wealth can buy power can bring, there is all that the senses can enjoy; and among all these various occupations of life and all this searching after something which can give yet a little more whetting to the cloyed senses, among all these, there is perhaps a little bit of religion. But here, in India,
religion is the one and the only occupation of life. How many of you know that there has been a Sino-Japanese War? Very few of you, if any. That there are tremendous political movements and socialistic movements trying to transform Western society, how many of you know? Very few indeed, if any. But that there was a Parliament of Religions in America, and that there was a Hindu Sannyasin sent over there, I am astonished to find that even the cooly knows of it. That shows the way the wind blows, where the national life is. I used to read books written by globe-trotting travelers, especially foreigners, who deplored the ignorance of the Eastern masses, but I found out that is was partly true and at the same time partly untrue. If you ask a plough man in England, or America, or France, or Germany to what party he belongs, he can tell you whether he belongs to the Radicals or the conservatives, and for whom he is going to vote. In America he will say whether he is a Republican or a Democrat, and he even knows something about the silver question. But if you ask him about his religion, he will tell you that he goes to church and belongs to a certain denomination. That is all he knows and he thinks it is sufficient.

Now, when we come to India, if you ask one of our ploughmen, “Do you know anything about politics?” He will reply, “What is that”? He does not understand the socialistic movements, the relation between capital and labor, and all that; he has never heard of such things in his life, he works hard and earns his bread. But you ask, “What is your religion?” he replies, “Look here, my friend, I have marked it on my forehead.” He can give you a good hint or
two on questions of religion. That has been my experience. That is our nation’s life.³

Purposefully a lengthy passage is quoted from Swami Vivekananda's very first speech in the East. **This passage bears testimony to the passion with which he loved India and her Philosophy.** At that time India needed someone who would make Indians take pride in themselves, their mildness and their philosophy. But Swami Vivekananda has a word of caution. He never wanted Indians to become cowards in the name of philosophy. It was Strength and Action that he preached in his other speeches. He knew that India was under foreign rule because of their lack of unity and lack of strength. Once and for all, he wanted Indians to get rid of these negative qualities. He has preached that if ever there is sin in this world, it is weakness. To be weak is the greatest sin.
6.3 LECTURE IN JAFNA

In Jafna, in Ceylon, he delivered a lecture on Vedantism. Here he says that the Vedas are principally divided into two parts (a) Karma Kanda (b) Jnana Kanda. Karma Kanda deals with work, ceremonies and rituals. They deal with sacrifices which were performed by sages called 'Rishis' in ancient India. They also prescribe a particular life style and food habits. Today nobody follows them because of time constraints. Some are not practicable under present circumstances. In fact the injunctions of Karma Kanda also are impracticable because a particular food habit or a life style may be impracticable under different climatic conditions and circumstances. The Jnana Kanda deals with knowledge. It is the philosophical and spiritual part of Vedanta. All the sects of India – Dualists, Qualified Monists, Monists, Shaivities, Vaishnavites, Shaktas, Sauras, Ganapatyas, etc. etc. all acknowledge the Jnana Kanda of the Vedas. All the philosophers and spiritualists of India look upto the Upanishads (Jnana Kanda of the Vedas) for their principles. That is why traditional Hindus use the word 'Vedanti' to describe themselves and not the word 'Hindu'. Swami Vivekananda also quotes of Smritis and Puranas. They are written by sages. But Vedas and Upanishads are the final authority. If there is something in Smritis or Puranas which are contradictory to Vedas, then they ought to be rejected. Next Swami Vivekananda discusses the idea of God and soul in Vedanta. These ideas are already discussed in 'Jnana Yoga'.
He completes the lecture with a grand note on the idea of giving. The modern age in Hinduism is called 'Kaliyuga'. This age of physical comforts has made man unfit to perform penances and rigorous spiritual disciplines. So what is needed in this Yuga is giving help to others. It is called 'Daana' in Sanskrit. The highest help a man can give is spiritual knowledge. The next best thing is to give secular knowledge. The next best thing to that is saving life. The last good thing to give is food and drink. He who gives spiritual knowledge, saves the human soul from many miseries. He who gives secular knowledge awakens the intellect and thereby opens the eyes of human beings towards spiritual knowledge. All other gifts that a human being can make rank far below these two. Swami Vivekananda here analyses which help is the best to man. Here we are reminded of the story of a man who gave a hungry man fish to eat. He was generous, no doubt. But his help was inferior when compared to the man who taught the same hungry man how to catch fish. But the help of a Christ or a Vivekananda which is rendered to humanity is immense.

Swami Vivekananda says, "There is an eternal fountain of spirituality in our (Hindu) scriptures, and nowhere on earth, except in this land of renunciation (that is India) do we find such noble examples of practical spirituality. I have had a little experience of the world. Believe me, there is much talking in other lands; but the practical man of religion, who has carried it into his life, is here and here alone. Talking is not religion; parrots may talk, machines may talk nowadays. But show me the life of renunciation, of
spirituality, of all suffering, of love infinite. This kind of life indicates a spiritual man with such ideas and such noble, practical examples in our country, it would be a great pity if the treasures in the brains and hearts of all these great Yogis were not brought out to become the common property of everyone, rich and poor, high and low, not only in India, but they must be thrown broadcast all over the world. This is one of our greatest duties, and you will find that the more you work to help others, the more you help yourselves. The one vital duty incumbent on you, if you really love your religion, if you really love your county, is that you must struggle hard to be up and doing, with this one great idea of, bringing out the treasures from your closed books and delivering them over to their rightful heirs."

This paragraph is further proof of Swami Vivekananda's patriotism and his love of his religion. He wants every Indian to do what he has done – Lead an intense religious life and give knowledge of religion to one and all.

Swami Vivekananda also emphasizes an important point. He feels that at present Indians are very much prone to getting jealous. Indians are always getting jealous of each other. That is because of slavish mentality. India was under the Muslim rule for nearly 500 years and the British rule for nearly 200 years. Today in India everyone wants to command and no one wants to obey. But he who has first obeyed only can he command better. Swami Vivekananda has precisely identified the problem of Indians. They still do not know how to obey and how to command with dignity and humanity. Only a rationalist of his calibre could identify this more than 110 years ago.
6.4 REAL WORSHIP

"Address at the Rameshwaram Temple on Real Worship" is an important lecture from a rationalist's point of view. It is a short speech of hardly three pages, but Swami Vivekananda consciously summarizes the essentials of religion.

It is in love that religion exists and not in ceremony, in the pure and sincere love in the heart. Unless a man is pure in body and mind, his coming into a temple and worshipping Shiva is useless.

He feels that external worship like rituals and ceremonies should become a symbol of internal worship and love. Without internal worship, external worship is useless. In modern days people have become so degraded that they value only external worship. They even think that they can commit any sin and then go to a holy place or perform a particular ritual and pray and all their sins will be forgiven. In fact it is the other way round. They only add to their sins because insincerity committed in an ordinary place is not as sinful as it is when committed in a holy place. A sin committed in a holy land is even more dangerous because people ruin their faith and the faith of others also. Devotees of a preliminary stage see Lord Shiva (God) in an image or in idol. Advanced devotees see Lord Shiva (God) in man. Service to man is the greatest prayer. A devotee should not just pray and praise God. He must do the will of God. Like Jesus Christ, Swami Vivekananda, made his points very clear through simple parables.

A rich man had a garden and two gardeners. One of these gardeners was
very lazy and did not work; but when the owner came to the garden, the lazy man would get up and fold his arms and say, "How beautiful is the face of my master", and dance before him. The other gardener would not talk much, but would work hard, and produce all sorts of fruits and vegetables which he would carry on his head to his master who lived a long way off. Of these two gardeners, which would be the more beloved of his master? Shiva is that master, and this world is His garden, and there are two sorts of gardeners here; the one who is lazy, hypocritical and does nothing and only worships Shiva, as a ritual. The other is one who does Shiva's will.

The will of Shiva is to do good to others. This is God's will. So he, who wants to serve Shiva should first serve his children – must serve all creatures in this world. He must do Karma Yoga. It makes his mind pure. It is selfishness which makes the mind impure. It is selfishness which makes a man greedy, angry and jealous. He who thinks that he will eat first, he will have more money than others, and he will possess everything is as wicked and selfish, as a man who thinks that he will get to heaven before others, he will get Mukti before others. The unselfish man says that he will not care to go to heaven. He will even go to hell if by doing so he can help his brothers. This is the real quality of a devotee of God.

No rationality will support selfishness, greed, anger, and Jealousy. They are negative values which ruin a person and ultimately the society. What rationality advocates is self-preservation through effort, but certainly not at the cost of others.
6.5 ADDRESS AT RAMNAD

In his 'Reply to the Address at Ramnad"\textsuperscript{6}, Swami Vivekananda makes it very clear that India has a mission towards the West – to give its spiritual knowledge. At the same time India must also learn from the West. India has to learn scientific knowledge, material knowledge, power of organization, ability to handle power and bringing the best results out of the smallest causes. Even on many other occasions Swami Vivekananda has emphasized the need for India to profit from the West especially their scientific knowledge. But to imbibe from the West, the ideal of eating, drinking and merry making would be foolish. And any Westerner who preaches these things in India is misleading.

It is the rationalist in Swami Vivekananda who has urged the Indians to accept the best of both worlds – the East and the West.

Swami Vivekananda feels that the Great Truths of the Holy land – India, are forced on common people who are not yet ready to accept them. All the Shastras (scriptures) preach renunciation – Give up – Give up the material comforts – they say. But renunciation is not everybody's cup of tea. One can renounce only when one has enjoyed the pleasures of life and is fed up with the pleasures as well as the pain that accompanies it.

"We know that this is the ideal – to give up after seeing and experiencing the vanity of things. Having found out that the heart of the material world is a
mere hollow, containing only ashes, give it up and go back. The mind is moving outward, as it were, towards the senses, and that mind has to move inwards .... that is the ideal. But that ideal can only be realized after a certain amount of experience."

In his 'Reply to the Address at Ramnad' Swami Vivekananda ends the speech on a grant note. He says that it is only Hinduism, Advaita, which could conceive of a idea of God who is all embracing.

"The idea of God was nowhere else ever so fully developed as in this motherland of ours, for the same idea of God never existed anywhere else. Perhaps you are astonished at my assertion; but show me any idea of God from any other scripture equal to ours; they have only clan-Gods, the God of the Jews, the God of the Arabs, and of such and such a race, and their God is fighting the Gods of other races. But the idea of that beneficent, most merciful God is here and here alone. And may He who is the Shiva of the Shaivites, Vishnu of the Vaishnavites, the Karma of the Karmis, the Buddha of the Buddhists, the Jina of the Jains, the Jehovah of the Christians and the Jews, the Allah of Mohammedans, the Lord of every sect, the Brahman of the Vedantists, He the all-pervading, whose glory has been known only in this land – (through the concept of Advaita) may He bless us, may He help us, may He give strength and energy unto us, to carry this idea into practice. May that which we have listened to and studied become food to us, may it become
strength in us, may it become energy in us to help each other; may we, the teacher and the taught, not be jealous of each other!"

Swami Vivekananda draws our attention to a Hindu concept of God based on rationality and reason in Advaita Philosophy which everyone in this world can relate to, not just one clan or race. It can happen because in Advaita Philosophy there is no God. There is only 'It' (SELF) which has no attributes.
6.6 ADDRESS AT PARAMAKUDI

In his 'Reply to the Address at Paramakudi', Swami Vivekananda looks into the advantages of European invasion to India. European materialism has come to the rescue of India by throwing open the doors of life to everyone. It has destroyed the exclusive privileges of caste. Europeans have brought rational and scientific thinking along with them to India. So it was possible for Swami Vivekananda to teach Vedanta to everyone of every caste. (that is to those who wanted to learn). Actually before the European and British invasion Indian Philosophy was in the hands of men, "who like dogs in the manger, do not eat themselves and will not allow others to do so." Actually according to Swami Vivekananda, the West is groaning under the tyranny of materialism, to be more precise, under the tyranny of a handful of 'Shylocks' as it were. And India is groaning under the tyranny of the priests. One must analyse the situation rationally and try to solve the problems. To think that either West alone or the East would help the world is a foolish idea. The Lord creator has given some set of virtues to each and everyone and to each and every race. The worst demoniacal man may have some virtues, which the greatest of saints may not have. A poor labourer may not enjoy reading philosophy. His enjoyments may be limited to sense-pleasures. But a wound on his body will heal quickly. This may not happen to a philosopher. So Swami Vivekananda feels that both the East and the West have a lot to learn from each other. It is a give-and-take process. He also feels that the whole Western civilization may crumble to pieces in the next 50 years if there is no spiritual foundation.
In all different sects, philosophies and scriptures of India like Hinduism, Jainism, Buddhism etc. etc. There is only one underlying doctrine. It is the belief in the soul of man, the Atman. This is common to all the sects. And all the sects believe that Atman to be the source of all power and all knowledge. They do not believe that power or perfection can be got from outside. They declare that Atman is pure and perfect already and that impurity and imperfection is a mere super-composition on this perfection. Then what is the difference between Man and God? It is only ignorance. Man is not aware that he is God already; that he is the soul within. The day he knows that, he becomes God.
6.7 LECTURES AT SHIVAGANGA, MANAMADURA AND MADURA

In his 'Reply to the Address of Welcome at Shivaganga and Manamadura',\(^8\) Swami Vivekananda says that he has a few harsh words to say. Many Hindus complain that European Materialism, Mohammedanism and Christianity have invaded India and succeeded in our own country. According to Swami Vivekananda no 'ism' could have succeeded if Indians were strong.

"No bacilli can attack the human frame until it is degraded and degenerated by vice, bad food, privation and exposure; the healthy man passes scathless through masses of poisonous bacilli. But yet there is time to change our ways. Give up all old discussions, old fights about things which are meaningless, which are non-sensical in their very nature. Think of the last six hundred or seven hundred years of degradation when grown-up men by hundreds have been discussing whether we should drink a glass of water with the right hand or the left, whether the hand should be washed three times or four times, whether we should gargle five or six times. What can you expect from men who pass their lives in discussing such momentous questions as these and writing most learned philosophies on them! There is a danger of our religion getting into the kitchen. Most of us are neither Vedantists, nor Pauranics nor Tantriks. We are just 'Don't touchists'. Our religion is in the kitchen, our God is the cooking pot and our religion is, "Don't touch me, I am holy". If this goes on for another century, everyone of us will be in a lunatic asylum. It is a sure sign of softening of the brain when the mind cannot grasp
the higher problems of life; all originality is lost, the mind has lost all its
strength its activity and its power of thought, and just tries to go round and
round the smallest curve it can find. This state of things has first to be thrown
overboard, and then we must stand up, be active and strong; and then we shall
recognize our heritage to that infinite treasure, the treasure our forefathers
have left for us, a treasure that the whole world required today."

In his 'Reply to the Address at Madura', Swami Vivekananda says that
there is a tremendous revival of religion in India. There is danger ahead as
well as glory; for revival sometimes goes to the extreme and breeds
fanaticism. Moreover there is a tremendous Western influence on our culture
and thinking because of the European and British invasions and ultimately,
British rule in India. Swami Vivekananda says that Indians must not imitate
the West straight away. The moment Indians only imitate the Westerners they
will die. Because they have their own culture, their own tradition and their
own religion. It is like pushing back a river which has flown thousands of
miles for thousands of years, back into its own source. It is impracticable and
impossible. So what Indians can do is to borrow the western logic, and
western scientific knowledge and incorporate it into their own life.
Meanwhile they have to strengthen their own religion. For that they have to
study their own religion. It consists of both rituals and philosophy (Karma and
Jnana Kanda). Rituals are true only to a particular set of people at a particular
point of time. But philosophy is true for all times and all types of people. So
a study of this philosophy is what is required now.
Swami Vivekananda puts forward an interesting argument in his speech 'The Mission of the Vedanta' delivered in Kumbakonam. Dr. Barrows, one of the organisers of The World Parliament of Religions and a great friend of Swami Vivekananda felt that Christianity should be the only universal religion. But Swami Vivekananda feels that Vedanta, alone can and should be the universal religion of man. Except Vedanta almost all the other great religions of the world are inevitably connected with the life or lives of one or more of their founders. All their theories, their teachings, their doctrines and their ethics are built round the life of a personal founder, from whom they get their sanction, their authority and their power. If there is one blow dealt to the historicity of that life, then the very foundations of that religion are shattered.

But Vedanta is different. It is not built upon any one or a few historical characters. But it is built upon principles. There is no man or woman who can claim to have created the Vedas and Upanishads. They are the embodiment of eternal principles. Sages discovered them. Sometimes names of some of these sages were mentioned there. But they are not important. Nobody knows anything about their life, family, historicity and other details. Even if their historicity is disproved, it does not matter at all. They never cared for name, fame, wealth and pleasures. They only preached principles. At the same time, just as Hindu God is an impersonal and yet a personal God, so is Hindu religion a most intensely impersonal one – a religion based upon principles –
and yet with an infinite scope for the play of persons; for no religion gives more incarnations, more prophets and more seers; and still waits for infinitely more. In fact the aim of Vedanta is not just worshipping an incarnation like Jesus Christ or Buddha. Vedanta wants everyone to have a mystic experience like they did. If Jesus Christ or Moses saw God, it is not a help to an individual. A man is helped only when he sees God.

Vedanta teaches a man how to see God, how to become a mystic, how to commune with God in all its varieties, and not just in one way. So in pure Vedanta, it is principles and it is philosophy that become more important and not just rituals or just one personality.

Moreover when a man thinks deeply, he will understand that he must value principles more. If principles are safe then hundred Christs and hundred Buddhas can be produced. In fact Christ became Christ and Buddha became Buddha because they adhered to certain principles and not to any historical figure.

The second claim of Vedanta upon the attention of the world is that, of all the scriptures in the world, it is the one scripture the teaching of which is in entire harmony with the results that have been attained by the modern scientific investigations of external nature.

This is the beauty of Vedanta. The ideas of Vedanta especially on mind, matter, space and time and the idea of oneness of things in the universe have
been scientifically proved in modern times. While Swami Vivekananda lectured in the West, his lectures on Vedanta were attended and appreciated by rationalists and men of science, because he never told them anything irrational or unscientific. The modern researches of the West have demonstrated through physical means the oneness and the solidarity of the whole universe; how physically speaking, man the sun, moon and stars are but little waves in the ocean of matter. Indian psychology demonstrated ages ago that, similarly, both body and mind are but mere names or little wavelets in the ocean of matter; and how going one step further, it is also shown in the Vedanta that behind that idea of the unity of the whole show, the real soul is one. There is but one soul throughout the universe, all is but one existence.

The rational West is earnestly bent upon seeking out the rationality, the raison d'être of all of it, philosophy and all its ethics; and everyone knows well that ethics cannot be derived from the mere sanction of any personage, however great and divine he may have been. Such an explanation of the authority of ethics appeals no more to the highest of the World's thinkers; they want something more than human sanction for ethical and moral codes to be binding, they want some eternal principle of truth as the sanction of ethics. The eternal sanction of ethics is found only in the Infinite Reality which is the SELF. The infinite oneness of the soul is the eternal sanction of all morality. This is the dictate of Indian philosophy. This oneness is the rationale of all ethics and all spirituality."
When Swami Vivekananda was lecturing in America, someone complained that he was preaching too much of Advaitha and very little of dualism. Certainly Swami Vivekananda was aware of the grandeur of love, devotion and Bhakthi in dualism. But he feels that the Indians have had enough of weeping. Not only the West, even India needs the Advaitha philosophy today. Indians have become too soft with weeping, devotion and dualism.

"This softness has been with us till we have become masses of cotton and are dead. What our country now wants are muscles of iron and nerves of steel, gigantic wills which nothing can resist, which can penetrate into the mysteries and the secrets of the universe, and will accomplish their purpose in any fashion even if it meant going down to the bottom of the ocean and meeting death face to face. This is what we want, and that can be created, established and strengthened by understanding and realizing the ideal of the Advaitha, the ideal of the oneness of all. Faith, faith, faith in ourselves, faith, faith in God – this is the secret of greatness. (Notice the repetition of the word 'faith' five times! It suggests 'self confidence') If you have faith in all the three hundred and thirty millions of your mythological gods, and in all the gods which foreigners have now and again introduced into your midst, and still have no faith in yourselves, there is no salvation for you. Have faith in yourselves, and stand upon that faith and be strong; that is what we need."
Swami Vivekananda feels that Indians were invaded by foreigners and ruled by them because they had no faith in their abilities. They had no self-confidence, self-belief and faith, on the other hand Swami Vivekananda saw a lot of tremendous faith in the people of the West. An American boy will say, "I am an American and I can do anything." An English boy will say, "I am an Englishman, and I can do anything." But an Indian boy at least in 1890's wouldn't say "I am an Indian and I can do anything." Indians had lost faith in themselves. Therefore to preach the Advaita aspect of the Vedanta was necessary to rouse up the hearts of men, to show them the glory of their souls. It was therefore, that Swami Vivekananda preached Advaita. He did so not as a sectarian, but built it upon universal and widely acceptable grounds.

A man must notice here the use of the word 'sectarian' by Swami Vivekananda. He feels that if there is oneness on Non-dual principle in this world, if there is one God in this world, he belongs to everybody, irrespective of caste, race, or nation.

This brings Swami Vivekananda to the most difficult and vexed question of caste system and of social reformation.

"I must frankly tell you that I am neither a caste breaker nor a mere social reformer. I have nothing to do directly with your castes or with your social reformation. Live in any caste you like, but that is no reason why you should hate another man or another caste and I base my teaching on the great Vedantic truth of the sameness and omnipresence of the soul of the Universe."
The ideal man of Vedanta is the Brahmin. But Swami Vivekananda does not recognize a Brahmin just because a person is born in a Brahmin family. Swami Vivekananda's idea of a Brahmin is given in the Vedanta. The ideal Brahmin is he, in whom, worldliness and selfishness is altogether absent. In him true wisdom is abundantly present. He is the epitome of spiritual and moral good. He lives and works only to acquire and propagate wisdom and true love. True Love is Love of Brahman and Love of God. Wisdom here means a knowledge of Brahman. A Brahmin is a knower of Brahman (God). When the whole world is inhabited by such Brahmans there will be no need of courts, police etc. And there will be no need of a government too because everyone will be good and everyone will be a man of God.

Swami Vivekananda does not want to denounce or degrade anything. It does not do any good. In fact a lot of negative criticism makes people lose faith in themselves and lose their self-confidence. He only wants to place the ideal before them.

Swami Vivekananda does welcome criticism. But it should be positive and constructive. He wants people of India to use their brains, to think and analyse. But he wants them to determine for themselves an ideal and then work for it. Obviously the ideal is to live the philosophy of Advaita in action. To work for others and through that to help oneself spiritually.

There are evils in Indian society, like caste system. But every society has its evils. In the West, Swami Vivekananda observed that there was a caste
system controlled by dollars. There the society was divided on the basis of dollars. All societies are divided on some basis.

So Swami Vivekananda only wants to say "You have done well, only try to do better." His ideal is growth, expansion and development on the lines of Vedanta.

As a rationalist, and a positive thinker, he does not condemn caste-system. On the other hand he wants the people of lower castes to catch up with the people of upper caste. The Brahmins i.e. the people of upper caste should be of service to the people of lower castes, so that the disparity between them is nullified. The upper castes had access to ancient Vedanta Philosophy, but they failed to make good use of it. So it is time they teach or spread this philosophy to the people of all other castes and all other nations, so that they can make good use of it.
6.9 LECTURES AT MADRAS (CHENNAI)

Swami Vivekananda's next important speeches "My Plan of Campaign"; "Vedanta in its Application to Indian Life"; "The sages of India"; "The Work Before Us", "The Future of India" and "On Charity" were addressed in Madras.

He began "My plan of Campaign" with an expression of thanks to the people of Madras, for the kindness he received from them. It was the idea of quite a few people of Madras that Swami Vivekananda should represent Hinduism at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893. They even collected funds for the same cause. Many people in Madras were under the impression that Theosophists also helped him. Swami Vivekananda made it very clear that he received no help from the Theosophical society of India. On the other hand when he became famous in America and was invited by lecture bureaus to deliver lectures, the Theosophists could not tolerate it. They could never digest the fact that an unknown Indian could achieve all this. So they tried to pull him down. Theosophists were advised not to listen to the lectures of Swami Vivekananda. These Theosophists were also joined by Christian missionaries who invented all possible lies against Swami Vivekananda and they even blackened his character. Swami Vivekananda was all alone, friendless and poor in a foreign country. There even if some people became his friends, the Christian missionaries would convert them into his enemies. It was only his boldness, that helped Swami Vivekananda brave all
this. In spite of such adverse conditions, he was able to achieve so much because he spoke and preached what he sincerely felt was Truth and only Truth. Boldness was his only help.

There were many Indians also who tried to blacken his character. Many social reformers said that he was not a Brahmin, he was a Shudra and had no right to become a monk or a Hindu Sanyasi. Swami Vivekananda was a rationalist and a revolutionary. He broke all meaningless customs. Anybody who wants to become a monk can become one, irrespective of his caste and creed, race or nationality. Even today in Ramakrishna Ashram a man can become a monk irrespective of his caste, creed, race or nationality. Only he should be spiritually disposed. Swami Vivekananda also said that he was the disciple of a great man who would in the night clean the latrine of Pariahs with his long hair. He was referring to his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. The Pariahs of Dakshineshwar (the place of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa) would not allow him to enter their house. They felt so inferior and insecure. Even then Paramahamsa would in the night clean their latrine. He did that so that he could become the servant of all. Such a person was this Sri Ramakrishna, and he is the hero of Swami Vivekananda. Sri Ramakrishna did this to prove to the whole world that the pride of being born to a particular caste is the most meaningless thing in the world.

Then Swami Vivekananda discusses about his plan of campaign in India. His plan is to follow the ideas of the great ancient Masters. They were the
great originators of society. They were the great givers of strength and of purity and of life. They were the givers of our religion. Swami Vivekananda feels that each individual nation has one principal note round which every other note comes to form the harmony. In one nation political power is its vitality as in England, artistic life in another and so on. In India, religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life; and if any nation attempts to throw off its national vitality – the direction which has become its own through the transmission of centuries – that nation dies if it succeeds in the attempt. And, therefore, if Indians succeed in the attempt to throw off their religion and take up either politics or society or any other thing as their centre, as the vitality of their national life, the result will be that they will become extinct. To prevent this they must make all and everything work through that vitality of their religion.

So every improvement in India requires first of all an upheaval in religion. Before flooding India with socialistic or political ideas, first India should be deluged with spiritual ideas. The first work that demands our attention is that the most wonderful truths confined in our Upanishads, in our scriptures, in our Puranas must be brought out from the books, brought out from the monasteries, brought out from the forests, brought out from the possession of selected bodies of people and scattered broadcast all over the land from North to South and East to West. Everyone must know them, because it is said, "This has first to be heard, then thought upon and then meditated upon." (Shravana, manana and nidhidyasana says Shankaracharya)
So, according to Swami Vivekananda, we must go back to our ancient sages who have given us this most wonderful philosophy of Vedanta. In his speech, 'The sages of India',\textsuperscript{12} Swami Vivekananda says that his mind goes back to those periods of which history has no record, and tradition tries in vain to bring the secrets out of the gloom of the past. The sages of India are innumerable. This is what the Hindu nation has been doing for thousands of years – produce saints. However Swami Vivekananda takes up a few brilliant ones among them, who are epoch – makers, to study them.

In the first place, Indians have to understand a little about their scriptures. Two ideals of truth are in their scriptures. The one is what is called eternal and the other is not so authoritative, yet binding under particular circumstances, times and places. The eternal relations which deal with the nature of the soul, and the God, and the relations between souls and God are embodied in what we call the Shrutis, the Vedas. (it goes without saying – Upanishads are included). The next set of truths is what Indians call Smritis, as embodied in the words of Manu, Yajnavalkya and other writers and also in the Puranas down to the Tantras. The second class of books and teachings is subordinate to the Shrutis in as much as whenever any one of these contradicts anything in the Shrutis, the Shrutis must prevail. This is the law. The idea is that the frame work of the destiny and goal of man has been all delineated in the Vedas and details have been left to be worked out in the Smritis and Puranas. As for general directions, the Shrutis are enough; for spiritual life, nothing more can be said, nothing more can be known. All that is necessary
has been known, all the advice that is necessary to lead the soul to perfection has been completed in the Shrutis; the details alone were left out, and these the Smritis have supplied from time to time.

Another peculiarity is that these Shrutis have many sages as the recorders of truths in them, mostly men, even some women. Very little is known of their personalities, the dates of their birth and so forth, but their best thoughts, their best discoveries, are preserved there and embodied in the sacred literature of our country, the Vedas. In the Smritis, on the other hand, personalities are more in evidence. Startling, gigantic, impressive, world-moving persons stand before us, as it were, for the first time, sometimes of more magnitude even than their teaching.

Thus it can be seen that the origin of the idea of an Impersonal God and a Personal God are there in Hindu scriptures. The Vedas and Upanishads present an idea of Impersonal God while the other scriptures like Tantras, Puranas, Epics etc. present numerous God-like Personalities suited for different tastes of worship.

It can be seen that the Eternal Truths are already there in the Vedas and the Upanishads. They are the most ancient scriptures. Subsequent saints (including the Prophet Mohammad and Jesus Christ) can only fulfill details and present different personalities to suit different peoples, times and places, so that worship becomes natural and easy.
It should be understood and remembered that mankind cannot do without a Personal God. Jesus Christ straight away has declared that He is the son of God and has become the Personal God to Christians. But Buddha preached only spiritual principles and methods of right living. He made no compromises and even declared against the existence of a Personal God. But fifty years after his death, his disciples made a Personal God out of Him!

It can be seen that the greatest of saints in India were never after a name, fame and other worldly things. They wanted only the life saving principles to exist, not their name. They are called Rishis. Rishi means a seer, a sage and an enlightened one and a recluse in a forest (not always). A Rishi is a knower of God. In the language of Vedanta, "This Atman (God) is not to be reached by too much talk, no not even by the highest intellect, no not even by the study of the Vedas themselves."

"Let us speak to all the nations of the world in the language of the Vedas: Vain are your fights and your quarrels; have you seen God whom you want to preach? If you have not seen, vain is your preaching; you do not know what you say; and if you have seen God, you will not quarrel, your very face will shine. An ancient sage of the Upanishads sent his son out to learn about Brahman, and the child came back, and the father asked, "What have you learnt?" The child replied that he had learnt so many sciences. But the father said, "That is nothing go back." And the son went back, and when he returned the father asked the same question, and the same answer came from the child.
Once more he had to go back. And the next time he came, his whole face was shining; and his father stood up and declared "Ay, today, my child, your face shines like a knower of Brahman. When you have known God, your very face will be changed. You will be a blessing to mankind; none will be able to resist the Rishi. This is the Rishihood, the ideal in our religion." The rest of all these talks and reasonings and philosophies and dualisms and monisms, and even the Vedas themselves are but preparations, secondary things. Those who realized God are the Rishis whom we find in the Vedas; and we understand how this Rishi is the name of the type of a class, which every one of us, as true Hindus, is expected to become at some time in our life, and becoming which, to the Hindu, means salvation. Not belief in doctrines, not going to thousands of temples, nor bathing in all the rivers in the world, but becoming the Rishi, that is freedom, that is salvation.

After the Rishis who have authored the Vedas and the Upanishads, Lord Rama and Lord Krishna who are worshipped throughout India are taken up. They are the greatest kings, incarnations of god, and sages of India.

Lord Rama is worshipped as an Incarnation of God since ages. He is heroic, the embodiment of Truth, of morality, an ideal son, an ideal husband, an ideal father and above all an ideal King. Rama is the hero of the great Hindu epic The Ramayana written by the great Rishi Valmiki. No language can be purer, none chaster, none more beautiful and at the same time simpler than the language in which the great poet has depicted the life of Rama. "And
what to speak of Sita?" says Swami Vivekananda. He feels that in any
literature there cannot be an ideal of womanhood better than Sita. She stands
tall and commands the worship of every man, woman and child throughout the
length and breadth of the land of Aryavarta (India). Here, in the land of
Ramayana, she will always be there, purer than purity itself, all patience and
all suffering. She suffered throughout her life without a murmur. She is the
ideal wife ever-pure and ever-chaste. She is the ideal God because she had
only pure love for the entire Universe. All Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas
may vanish from India, but her character will always be there, worshipped and
revered.

Ramayana, through the characters of Rama and Sita contains all the
message of Vedas and Upanishads. Rama and Sita are the living commentaries
of a philosophy.

The next who is worshipped in India is Lord Krishna. Many
Philosophers feel that he is the greatest incarnation of God because he is the
most perfect. They marvel at the many-sidedness of his character. He is the
preacher of Bhagvad Gita and his entire life is an embodiment of the
philosophy preached in the book. He is the most wonderful Sanyasi (monk)
and householder in one; he had the most wonderful Rajas (political and
economic power) and at the same time the most wonderful renunciation. He
had 16,000 wives and he was a celibate too at the same time. He was the most
active, always doing Karma and at the same time he was the most silent Yogi.
He is the great illustration of non-attachment. He knew the Ultimate Truth and was firmly established in it. The rest was Maya for him. Lord Krishna can never be understood until a man has thoroughly studied the Bhagavad Gita, because he was the embodiment of his own teaching. Even Swami Vivekananda himself, a rationalist could not accept the mad love of Gopika women in Vrindavan towards Lord Krishna. He thought it was mad imagination, not supported by either history or philosophy. However with the blessings of his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa he could understand it. A man must become perfectly chaste, pure and devoted to God to understand it.

In fact this love for God, Lord Krishna, demonstrated by the Gopis is the only solution to the conflict between a Personal God and Impersonal God. However philosophical a man becomes, he always needs a Personal God to pour out the feelings of his soul. The Personal God is therefore the highest conception of human nature. Yet if there is a Personal God, the question arises as to why he has created such an imperfect world; why is there so much suffering, ignorance, unhappiness in this world. He must be a partial God. There is no rational solution to this question. The great love of Gopis to their God, Lord Krishna is the only solution. They loved God only for the sake of love. They did not care if their God was a creator or not. They did not care whether their God was omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient or not. They did not care for his power or riches or blessings. They cared only to love him. They did not even ask for return in love. They said that they did not want
wealth, nor many people, nor did they want learning; no not even did they 
want to go to heaven. They wanted to be born again and again. They wanted 
their God to grant them pure love, and that love was love for love's sake.

A great landmark in the history of religion is here, the ideal of love for 
love's sake, work for work's sake, duty for duty's sake, and it fell for the first 
time from the lips of the greatest of Incarnations, Krishna, and for the first 
time in the history of humanity, upon the soil of India. The religions of fear 
and temptations for heaven were gone forever, and in spite of the fear of hell 
and temptation of enjoyment in heaven, came the grandest of ideals, love for 
love's sake, duty for duty's sake, work for work's sake.

This Love God with all thy mind, all thy heart, all thy will, all thy 
strength with no returns in the bargain is the highest ideal and the only answer 
to all our problems. As long as there is selfishness in the heart, this kind of 
love is not possible. "God I pray to you, so you give me something in return." 
is not the ultimate philosophy of religion. It is only trade, shopkeeping. Such 
a mind can never understand Truth which is Love. Even Bhagawad Gita, with 
all its grand philosophy does not compare with this madness of love 
manifested in the Gopis. In Bhagavad Gita, the disciple is slowly taught how 
to walk towards the goal, but in the madness of love of these Gopis, the 
teacher, the disciple and the goal have all become one. Even the ideas of 
shame, fear, God and heaven have all disappeared and only love remains. It is
forgetfulness of everything and the lover sees nothing except Krishna and her soul itself has become Krishna.

There are many intellectuals who see many historical discrepancies and interpolations in the life of Krishna. Even Swami Vivekananda had such doubts.

He consulted his Guru, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, who said, "Do you not think that they who could create such things must themselves have been the ideal that they held for worship?" ("The Master as I saw Him" by Sister Nivedita, 9th Edition, 23rd Reprint, Page 233).

In fact there are many who doubt the historical existence of Jesus Christ. Obviously a man can conclude that something cannot come out of nothing. There must have been an ideal human being called Christ around whom myths and legends must have added on. Moreover Swami Vivekananda said that his Master Sri Ramakrishna had seen Jesus Christ in a vision. This is a greater proof to say that there was a man called Christ, than all the books and precepts in the world. It could be the same case with Krishna too. There are many devotees who have been blessed with a vision of Lord Krishna. Moreover one does not need a reason to love God.

Swami Vivekananda feels that the Bhagavad Gita is the most perfect commentary on the Upanishads. Other commentators on the Vedas and Upanishads have tortured the texts too much to suit their theories of Dualism.
Qualified Non-Dualism and Non-Dualism. Lord Krishna has given the best commentary on the scriptures in the form of Bhagavad Gita. No better commentary on the Vedas has been written or can be written other than the Gita.

In fact Swami Vivekananda felt that the philosophy of Krishna was more practical and meant to people in all walks of life. But the philosophies of Jesus Christ and Buddha are essentially meant for monks and advanced Yogis. Christ emphasized on forgiveness. He says, "If a man slaps you on the right cheek turn to him the other also." He forgave even his crucifiers. But this is impracticable and impossible. In fact the White man, the Christian, conquered the whole world. He conquered with a sword in one hand and the Bible in the other. These two things never go together – the conqueror's sword and Christ's forgiveness. Likewise Buddha emphasized on Ahimsa – Non-injury to others even animals and insects – again it is an impracticable and impossible philosophy. But Krishna has harmonized all religious ideas and he has preached a philosophy which a king or a beggar, a soldier or a saint can also follow. His philosophy can be understood and practised by all.

After Lord Krishna, the next great saint of India is Lord Buddha. With him begins a rather sadder chapter in the history of India. He is worshipped as an incarnation of God; the greatest and the boldest preacher of morality, the greatest Karma Yogi, a disciple of himself as it were; and an incarnation of Krishna himself who came to show how to make his theories practical. In fact
Buddha lived the greatest philosophy by example. He is the preacher to the poor and the miserable. He even rejected, Sanskrit, the language of the gods to speak in a language of the people (Pali). He wanted to reach out to the common man. In fact he gave up a throne to live with the beggars, the poor and the downtrodden.

The great work and grand character of Buddha is known throughout the world. But his work had one great defect, and for that India is suffering even today. India cannot blame Buddha for this. But unfortunately his high ideals could not be well assimilated by the different uncivilized and uncultured tribes of India.

These races, with varieties of superstition and hideous worship, rushed within the fold of the Aryans and for a time appeared as if they had become civilized, but before a century had passed they brought out their snakes, their ghosts and all the other things their ancestors used to worship and thus the whole of India became one degraded mass of superstition. The earlier Buddhists in their rage against the killing of animals had denounced the sacrifices of the Vedas; and these sacrifices used to be held in every house. There was a fire burning, and that was all the paraphernalia of worship. These sacrifices were obliterated, and in their place came gorgeous temples, gorgeous ceremonies and gorgeous priests, and all that you see in India in modern times. I smile when I read books written by some modern people who ought to have known better, that the Buddha was the destroyer of Brahminical
idolatry. Little do they know that Buddhism created Brahminism and idolatry in India.

Swami Vivekananda's argument looks rational when we consider that Buddha was around in 500 BC. At that time there were only Aryans who were also a tribe and other tribal societies in India. There was no one society for Brahmins to dominate and become gorgeous priests.

Swami Vivekananda gives an example to prove his point. His own words are quoted:

"There was a book written a year or two ago by a Russian gentleman, who claimed to have found out a very curious life of Jesus Christ, and in one part of the book he says that Christ went to the temple of Jagannath to study with Brahmins, but became disgusted with their exclusiveness and their idols, and so he went to the Lamas of Tibet instead, became perfect, and went home. To any man who knows anything about Indian history, that very statement proves that the whole thing was a fraud, because the temple of Jagannath is an old Buddhist temple. We took this and others over and re-Hunduised them. We shall have to do many things like that yet. That is Jagannath, and there was not one Brahmin there then, and yet we are told that Jesus Christ came to study with the Brahmins there. So says our great Russian archaeologist."
Moreover we must remember Swami Vivekananda's earlier argument about Personal Gods. Followers of Buddha did not follow him. They only made a God out of him.

Whatever may be the implications of this argument, Swami Vivekananda concludes one thing for certain. By the time Shankaracharya was born in India in the 8th century, degradation owing to Buddhism was there for everybody to see.

Swami Vivekananda says, "Thus in spite of the preaching of mercy to animals, in spite of the sublime ethical religion, in spite of the hair-splitting discussions about the existence or non-existence of a permanent soul, the whole building of Buddhism tumbled down piece meal; and the ruin was simply hideous. I have neither time nor the inclination to describe to you the hideousness that came in the wake of Buddhism. The most hideous ceremonies, the most horrible, the most obscene books that human hands ever wrote or the human brain ever conceived, the most bestial forms that ever passed under the name of religion, have all been the creation of degraded Buddhism."

But India had to go on and religion had to find its roots back. So we see a new manifestation of divinity in Shankaracharya. It is believed that Shankaracharya had studied all the scriptures and even wrote commentaries on them before he was 16 years old. Even today his achievements are a wonder of the modern world. He wanted to bring back the Indian world to its pristine
purity. But think of the amount of task before him. India was in a terrible situation. The Tartars and Baluchis and all the hideous races of mankind came to India and became Buddhists and assimilated with them, and brought their national customs, and the whole of Indian national life became a huge page of the most horrible and bestial customs. This is what Shankara inherited.

Shankaracharya was a great philosopher and the greatest intellect. He showed that the real essence of Vedanta and Buddhism are not different. The disciples of Buddha could not assimilate what exactly he (Buddha) preached. They could not understand the master and degraded themselves and denied the existence of God and soul, (the intellectuals among Buddhists). They became atheists. But Shankara cleared the jungle and gave a proper perspective to the Hindu philosophy. He is the one who has given the world Jnana Yoga and Advaita philosophy. However Indians had become accustomed to a lot of rituals. Then came the brilliant Ramanuja. According to Swami Vivekananda Ramanuja had a greater heart than Shankara. Ramanuja felt for the downtrodden. He sympathized with them. He took up the ceremonies, the accretions that had gathered, made them pure so far as they could be, and instituted new ceremonies, new methods of worship, for the people who absolutely required them. At the same time he opened the door to the highest spiritual worship from the Brahmin to the Pariah. That was Ramanuja's work. That work rolled on, invaded the North of India and was taken up by some great leaders. The greatest of them, of course, is Chaitanya.
This great sage of North India, Chaitanya represented the mad love of the Gopis. He was a Brahmin. He was born in one of the most rationalistic families of the day and himself was a professor of Logic. He was fond of debates and verbal victories. This he thought was the highest ideal in his life – to win religious debates. But he came under the influence of a saint. He gave up his fight, debates and professorship of logic. Even today he is remembered as the greatest Guru of Bhakti. His Bhakti rolled over the whole land of Bengal. It brought solace to everyone. His love knew no bounds. The saint or the sinner, the Hindu or the Mohammedan, the pure or the impure, the prostitute, the streetwalker – all had a share in his love. All had a share in his mercy. And even to the present day, although greatly degenerated, as everything does become in time, his sect is the refuge of the poor, of the downtrodden, of the outcast, of the weak, and of those who have been rejected by the society.

India had the greatest intellect and an exponent of Vedanta philosophy in Shankaracharya and men of the kindest heart in Ramanuja and Chaitanya. What India wanted was one who had the intellect of Shankara and the wonderfully expansive and infinite hearts of Ramanuja and Chaitanya. One who would see God in every being, one whose heart would weep for the poor, for the weak, for the outcast, for the downtrodden, not only in India, but even outside India. And at the same time whose grand brilliant intellect would conceive of such noble thoughts, that would experience all the religions of the world and bring about a religious harmony. He would preach that all religions
lead a man to the same Truth. The time was ripe for such a man to be born; and he came; and the most wonderful part of it was that his life's work was just near a city which was full of Western thought, a city which had become more Europeanised and English than any other city in India. There he lived, without any book-learning whatsoever; this great intellect could with difficulty read and write rustic Bengali only. Yet the intellects of Calcutta and Bengal came to sit at his feet and learn. He is none other than Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the great saint of Dakshineshwar. He was the son of a poor priest born in a tiny remote village. But today he is worshipped by Lakhs of people all over the world as an incarnation of God. He is the greatest sage India has produced.

In his speech 'Vedanta in its Application to Indian Life', Swami Vivekananda analyses the origin of the word 'Hindu.' Actually 'Hindu' was the name used by the ancient Persians to denote the river called 'Sindhu' in Sanskrit. Whenever there was an 'S' in Sanskrit, the ancient Persians changed it into 'h' due to difficulty in pronunciation. The Greek found it hard to pronounce 'h' and we became Indians, the people on the other side of the river 'Indus' (Sindhu).

Whatever might have been its meaning in ancient times, the word Hindu has lost all its force in modern times; for all the people who live on this side of the Indus no longer belong to one religion. There are the Hindus proper, the Mohammadans, the Parsees, the Christians, the Buddhists and the Jains. The
word 'Hindu' in its literal sense ought to include all these; but as signifying the
religion, it would not be proper to call all these Hindus. It is, therefore, very
hard to find a common name for our religion, seeing that this religion is a
collection so to speak of various religions, of various ideas, various
ceremonials, forms and rituals, all gathered together almost without a name,
without a church and without an organisation.

Even among proper Hindus there are so many sub-castes and sects, it is
difficult to trace common beliefs and rituals.

The only point where—perhaps, all our sects agree is that we all believe in
the scriptures – the Vedas. This perhaps is certain that no man can have a right
to be called a Hindu who does not admit the supreme authority of the Vedas.

Vedas as we have already seen has two branches. The Karma Kanda
(work portion, rituals) and Jnana Kanda (The philosophy portion) also called
the Upanishads. And anybody who cannot find his authority in the
Upanishads, will find his sect to be heterodox Therefore, perhaps the one
name in modern times which would designate every Hindu throughout the
land would be 'Vaidika' (a follower of Vedas) or Vedantist (follower of
Vedanta).

Swami Vivekananda wants to make one more idea clear. Over the years
the word Vedanta has come to mean Advaita philosophy. Actually Advaita
philosophy is only one branch of the various philosophic systems that have
been founded on the Upanishads. The followers of Dwaita (Dualism) and Vishishtadvaita (Qualified Non-dualism) have as much reverence for Upanishads as the followers of Advaita. Again Upanishads are as much an authority for Dwaita and Vishishtadvaita as they are for Advaita. In fact all other sects, like Bhakti cults etc. also claim Vedas and Upanishads to be their authority. In the expositions of the great Advaitic philosopher Shankaracharya, and the school founded by him, we find most of the authorities cited are from the Upanishads and very rarely from Puranas and other scriptures. On the other hand Dwaitic (Dualistic) schools take more refuge in Puranas and epics. Probably this could be the reason that the Advaitist came to be considered as the Vedantist.

Swami Vivekananda says, "However it might have been, the word Vedanta must cover the whole ground of Indian religious life, being part of the Vedas, and by all acceptance, it is the most ancient literature that we have; for whatever might be the idea of modern scholars, the Hindus are not ready to admit that parts of the Veda were written at one time and parts were written at another time. They still of course hold on to their belief that the Vedas as a whole were produced at the same time, rather if I may say so, that they were never produced, but that they always existed in the mind of the Lord."

Swami Vivekananda in his 'Paper on Hinduism' says that "The Hindus have received their religion through revelation, the Vedas. They hold that the Vedas are without beginning and without end. It may sound ludicrous to this
audience, how a book can be without beginning or end. But by the Vedas no books are meant. They mean the accumulated treasury of spiritual laws discovered by different persons in different times. Just as the law of gravitation existed before its discovery, and would exist if all humanity forgot it, so is it with the laws that govern the spiritual world. The moral, ethical and spiritual relations between soul and soul and between individual spirits and the Father of all spirits were there before their discovery, and would remain even if we forgot them. (The discoverers of these laws are called Rishis)"

Thus one can see how Swami Vivekananda traces the origin of all religions, their philosophies and their sects to Vedas. Not only the followers of Vishishtadvaita and Dwaita philosophy but even Buddhism and Jainism, Sikhism and other sects have borrowings and inspiration from the Vedas and Upanishads.

Whenever a man studies the commentary by various philosophers on Vedanta, he finds another difficulty. The follower of one philosophy 'tortures' these texts of Upanishads to suit his philosophy and brings the most queer meaning out of it. Sometimes the 'Unborn' becomes a 'goat', such are the wonderful changes effected. To suit the commentator, 'Aja' the unborn is explained as 'Aja' a she goat. This Sanskrit language is so intricate, the Sanskrit of the Vedas is so ancient and the Sanskrit philology so perfect, that any amount of discussion can be carried on for ages in regard to the meaning of one word. If a Pandit (scholar) takes it into his head, he can render
anybody's prattle into correct Sanskrit by force of argument and quotation of
texts and rules.

These things make it very difficult for anybody to understand exactly the
real purport of Vedanta. However Swami Vivekananda never went by mere
books or scholars. He was a rationalist. He wanted proof. And like Jesus
Christ he taught like one who had authority and not like the scribes or pundits.

In Swami Vivekananda's own words, "It was given to me to live with a
man (He was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the spiritual Guru of Swami
Vivekananda) who was as ardent a dualist, as ardent an Advaitist, as ardent a
Bhakta or a Jnani. And living with this man, first put it into my head to
understand the Upanishads and the texts of the scriptures from an independent
and better basis than by blindly following the commentators; and in my
opinion and in my researches, I came to the conclusion that these texts are not
at all contradictory. So we need have no fear of 'text-torturing at all ! the texts
are beautiful, ay, they are most wonderful; and they are not contradictory, but
wonderfully harmonious, one idea leading upto the other. But the one fact I
found is that in all the Upanishads, they begin with dualistic ideas, with
worship and all that, and end with a grand flourish of Advaitic ideas.

Therefore I now find in the light of Sri Ramakrishna Parmahamsa's life
that the dualist and the Advaitist (and other sects in between these two 'isms')
need not fight each other. Each has a place and a great place in the national
life."
The Upanishads appear to be full of contradictions. In one place they say that Brahman is one without a second. Somewhere else they say that everything is Brahman. In a third place they say this world is false and Brahman alone is Truth. And in a fourth place it is said that there is only one absolute Reality beneath all these diversities. It is difficult to make sense out of these conflicting statements.

There are no contradictions in the teachings of the Upanishads. These teachings are received directly by the great sages in a deep state of contemplation and meditation. When spiritual aspirant starts practicing, he realizes that this apparent world is changeable, while Truth never changes. Then he knows that the world of forms and names which is full of changes is false, and that behind it there exists an absolute Reality that is unchanging. In the second step, when he has known the Truth, he understands that there is only one Truth and that Truth is omnipresent, so there is really nothing like falsehood. In that stage he knows that reality is one and the same in both the finite and infinite worlds. But there is another, higher, state in which the aspirant realizes that there is only one absolute Reality without second, and that that which is apparently false is in reality a manifestation of the absolute One.

These apparent contradictions confuse only that student who has not studied the Upanishads from a competent teacher. A competent Guru (teacher) makes the student aware of the experience one has on various levels.
These are the levels of consciousness, and there is no contradiction in them. The teachings of the Upanishads are not understood by the ordinary mind or even by the intellectual mind. Intuitive knowledge alone leads to understanding them.

The spiritual aspirant must rise above argumentation and allow spiritual intuition to flow uninterruptedly to solve such subtle questions.

According to Swami Vivekananda strength and freedom from bondage is the message of the Upanishads. This is more important than salvation. 'Abhih' (Fearless), is the word which the Upanishads have used to advise man. Swami Vivekananda speaks about his vision.

"In my mind rises from the past the vision of the great emperor of the West, Alexander the great, and I see, as it were in a picture, the great monarch standing on the bank of the Indus, talking to one of our Sanyasis in the forest; the old man he was talking to, perhaps naked, stark naked, sitting upon a block of stone, and the Emperor, astonished at his wisdom, tempting him with gold and honour to come over to Greece. And this man smiles at his gold, and smiles at his temptations, and refuses; and then the Emperor standing on his authority as an Emperor, says "I will kill you if you do not come", and the man bursts into a laugh and says, "You never told such a falsehood in your life, as you tell just now. Who can kill me ? Me you kill, emperor of the material world ! Never ! For I am spirit unborn and undecaying; never was I born and never do I die; I am the infinite, the omnipresent, the omniscient; and you kill
me, the child that you are!" That is strength, that is strength!" That is the strength of the Upanishads. The strength which comes from a practitioner of Advaita philosophy!"

Again and again Swami Vivekananda in his lectures has emphasized on the importance of the Upanishadic message of Strength. He observed that when compared to other races Indians were weak. Weak physically and mentally. He felt that physical weakness is the cause of at least one-third of our miseries. Indians cannot work and cannot combine. They have become lazy and intensely selfish. No three Indians can come together without hating each other, without becoming jealous of each other. Indians have become hopelessly disorganized groups of mobs. For centuries they have been discussing whether a certain mark can be put on the forehead this way or that way. Nothing can be expected of a generation whose whole brain energy is occupied in solving problems of meaningless rituals. Indians speak wonderful things, but do not do them, because they have no strength.

So Swami Vivekananda says, "First of all our young men must be strong. Religion will come afterwards. Be strong, my friends, that is my advice to you. You will be nearer to Heaven through football than through the study of the Gita. These are bold words; but I have to say them, for I love you. I know where the shoe pinches. I have gained a little experience. You will understand the Gita better with your biceps and muscles, a little stronger. You will understand the mighty strength and mighty genius of Krishna better with a
little strong blood in you. You will understand the Upanishads better and the glory of the Atman when your body stands firm upon your feet, and you feel yourselves as men."

Swami Vivekananda is a rationalist who could understand the real problem of India. He gives a solution which not only a rationalist, even an atheist would approve of.

So the only thing worth preaching, according to Swami Vivekananda is the strength of the soul. He says that every child should be told "Thou art the Pure one". He quotes one of the Puranas where the queen Madalasa, as soon as she has a child she puts her baby with her own hands in the cradle. and as the cradle rocks to and fro, she begins to sing, "Thou art the Pure One, the Stainless, the Sinless, the Mighty One, the Great One." Ay, there is much in that. Feel that you are great and you become great.

"What did I get as my experience all over the world, is the question. Christianity may talk about sinners – and if all Englishmen really believed that they were sinners, Englishmen would be no better than the Black people in Central Africa. God bless them that they do not believe it! On the other hand, the Englishman believes that he is born the Lord of the World. He believes that he is great and can do anything in the world; if he wants to go to the sun or the moon, he believes he can; and that makes him great."

In fact Christianity is preoccupied with the concept of sin, original sin etc. etc. Had the Englishman believed only his priests, he would have thought of himself as a miserable sinner barbecued through all eternity. There would
be no British victories. He would have achieved nothing – No conquests, no industrial revolution, no Renaissance ... But he had faith in himself and his abilities. The Englishmen were never blind believers. They were scientific and rational in their outlook. That is why there was a Scientific Revolution in England. Swami Vivekananda wanted Indians to learn from the West, from the British. That is learn their science, technology and scientific outlook. But he wanted Indians to retain their religious outlook. Only a rationalist like Swami Vivekananda could foresee the solutions to an Indian society which was weak, divided and disorganized. Indians were neither scientific, nor did they have faith in themselves.

Swami Vivekananda ends this speech with an important observation. He says, "Liberty is the first condition of growth. It is wrong, a thousand times wrong, if any of you dare to say, "I will work out the salvation of this woman or child." I am asked again and again, what I think of the widow problem and what I think of the woman question. Let me answer once for all – am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense ? Am I a woman that you ask me that question again and again ? Who are you to solve women's problems ? Are you the Lord God that you should rule over every widow and every woman ? Hands off ! They will solve their problems. O tyrants, attempting to think that you can do anything for any one ! Hands off ! The Divine will look after all. Who are you to assume that you know everything ? How dare you think, O blasphphemers, that you have the right over God ? For don't you know that every soul is the Soul of God ? Mind your own Karma (the effects of your past
actions) a load of Karma is there on you to work out. Your nation may put you upon a pedestal, your society may cheer you upto the skies, and fools may praise you; but retribution will sure follow you, here or hereafter."

If a man analyses these lines of Swami Vivekananda closely, he can understand that in the first place a man has liberty only to serve and not to rule, and not even to help. According to Advaitha every soul is divine and each man a manifestation of the Divine. However nobody can escape the effects of his past actions. So a man can only serve others and work out his own Karma.

Secondly a man need not interfere into every other man or woman or child or widow's problems. Each man ultimately has to work out his own Karma and work out his own salvation.

Swami Vivekananda again emphasizes the important, often quoted lines of Bhagavad Gita. "To work you have the right and not to the fruits thereof. Let not your work produce results for you, and at the same time may you never be without work."

So blessed is a man who gets an opportunity to serve others. A man in order to work out his own salvation should see God in the Poor, in the lunatic and the leper and the sinner. Because it is again God himself who has become the poor, the lunatic, the leper and the sinner. This is the real Advaitha.

"May He who taught such grand ideas to our forefathers ages ago help us to get strength to carry into practice His commands!"
The last sentence of this speech is a prayer for strength to act and to work, not just talk. For religion is doing and not talking.

'The Future of India' is a speech again made in Madras. In this speech Swami Vivekananda speaks about some practical things. Many times people say that looking into the past only degenerates and leads to nothing. So we must look to the future. Swami Vivekananda agrees with this.

However he says, "But out of the past is built the future. Look back, therefore, as far as you can, drink deep of the eternal fountains, that are behind, and after that, look forward, march forward and make India brighter, greater, much higher than she ever was."

India is the ancient land where first spiritual laws were discovered. The soil of India has been trodden by the greatest of sages. India is the land of highest ideals of religion and philosophy. Indians of today must recall that first. It gives them strength to solve the problems of India and give a direction to its future.

The problems of India are complicated. Here there are the Aryan, the Dravidian, the Tartar, the Turk, the Mughal, the European – all the nations of the world, as it were, pouring their blood into this land. A man can see the most wonderful conglomeration of languages, manners and customs. In fact there is more difference between two Indian races than between the European and the Eastern races. In this connection Swami Vivekananda wants to discuss an important question especially with regard to Madras. There is a theory in which the people of Madras believe that there was a race of mankind in
Southern India called Dravidians, entirely differing from another race in India called the Aryans, and that the South Indian Brahmins are the only Aryans. They have come from the North. The other people of Southern India therefore belong to an entirely different race – different from Aryans and Brahmins. In fact Swami Vivekananda asked his European friends to distinguish between the North and South Indians. They could not. Only the language of the North Indians and the South Indians was different and nothing else. There is another theory that Shudra caste among the present Indians are the 'aborigines' or 'natives' of this country and that the upper castes are from Aryan origin and they have come from central Tibet. This theory takes a weird shape as many imagine that the Aryans were previously living near Swiss Lakes. Swami Vivekananda feels that there is no evidence to this fact in our scriptures. In fact it is mentioned nowhere. These Aryans probably are natives of India when it is understood that several thousands of years ago when even Afghanistan of today was also a part of India. Swami Vivekananda says that the only explanation is to be found in the 'Mahabharatha', which says that in the beginning of the Satya Yuga there was one caste, the Brahmins, and then by difference of occupations they went on dividing themselves into different castes. And in the coming Satya Yuga all the other castes will have to go back to the same condition.

So to crush out the Brahmin or to degrade him is not a solution for the problem of caste system in India. To become a Brahmin is the ideal. A Brahmin means a knower of Brahman, a man of God. He is the ideal man or
the perfect man. And with all the defects of the caste now, people must be ready to give the Brahmin his due. Swami Vivekananda quotes the English proverb "Give every man his due". Therefore Indians must not forget that the maximum Brahminness by way of philosophy, religion, knowledge and science has come from the Brahmins. So Brahminism must be preserved.

"The solution is not by bringing down the higher, but by raising the lower upto the level of the higher" says Swami Vivekananda. So the non-Brahmins must acquire the philosophy and religion of the Brahmins. They must study the Vedas and Upanishads. They must also study the Western Sciences and Technology. It is also the duty of the Brahmins to distribute the culture, tradition and Upanishadatic knowledge they have acquired to the Indian people. This solution of Swami Vivekananda is the solution of a rationalist.

Swami Vivekananda says that if several thousands of people come together and proclaim themselves Brahmins, nobody can stop them. In fact Swami Vivekananda himself on the day of Sri Ramakrishna Jayanthi called quite a few non-Brahmins and people from the lowest castes and invested them with the 'sacred thread' which only Brahmins wear. He also gave them 'Mantra Diksha' a ritual after which the person who is invested with the 'sacred thread' gets the right to meditate on Goddess Gayatri.

A man when he says 'I am a Brahmin' will not become a Brahmin even if he is born in the caste of Brahmins. Only a knower of Brahman, a man of God becomes a Brahmin. So people must strive to achieve Brahminhood. It is no joke. Not everybody will meditate, become pure and see God. Not everybody
will become Yogis and Rishis and Mystics. It is a matter of hard work. God cannot be reached by argumentation nor by the study of Vedas and scriptures. One must practice the principles prescribed in the scriptures. Only then can a man attain God.

**On Charity**\(^5\): During his stay in Madras the Swami presided at the annual meeting of the Chennapuri Annadana Samajam, an institution of a charitable nature, and in the course of a brief address referred to a remark by a previous speaker deprecating special alms – giving to the Brahmin over and above the other castes. Swamiji pointed out that this had its good as well as its bad side. All the culture, practically, which the nation possessed, was among the Brahmins and they also had been the thinkers of the nation. Take away the means of living which enabled them to be thinkers, and the nation as a whole would suffer. Speaking of the indiscriminate charity of other nations, he said, the outcome of their system of relief was that the vagabond of India contented to receive readily what he was given readily and lived a peaceful contented life: while the vagabond in the West, unwilling to go to the poor-house (for a man loves liberty more than food) turned a robber, the enemy of society, and necessitated the organisation of a system of magistracy, police, jails and other establishments. Poverty there must be, so long as the disease known as civilization existed: and hence the need for relief. So now one has to choose between indiscriminate charity of India, which in ease of the Sanyasins, at any rate, even if they were not sincere men, at least forced them to learn some little of their scriptures before they were able to obtain food; and the discriminate
charity of Western nations which necessitated, a costly system of poor-law relief, and in the end succeeded only in changing mendicants into criminals.  

Swami Vivekananda was a patriot. He never said anything negative about the Indian customs and traditions. He made them meaningful and rational with the help of Western education and science.

Again in this speech of Swami Vivekananda, we see how both the Indian as well as the Western civilizations can profit by studying the ideals of each other. India must establish charitable and missionary institutions like the West. In fact the West must also think of some spiritual development for its vagabonds and the poverty stricken.

Swami Vivekananda was a pioneer when he established the Ramakrishna Mutt and Mission. The Mutt looks into the spiritual development of its inmates, while the Mission engages in charitable works which is institutionalized. Only a rationalist like Swami Vivekananda could synthesise the two aspects of religion and make it a harmonious whole.
6.10 LECTURES AT CALCUTTA

In this 'Address at Calcutta and Reply' a man can see Swami Vivekananda at his best as a patriot. An English friend on the eve of Swami Vivekananda's departure from Europe to Colombo asked him, "Swami, how do you like now your motherland after four years experience of the luxurious, glorious, powerful West?" Swami Vivekananda could only answer, "India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of India has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the Tirtha."

He also expressed his great love for the city and citizens of Calcutta, his birth place. He thanked American people for their great hospitality. He also made an important observation regarding the difference between Indian and Western civilization. In the West poverty and sin go hand in hand. So the moment a Westerner comes to India, he looks at the poverty and feels that India must be a degenerate nation. On the other hand in India poverty does not mean sin. Infact the poorer a man the more moral he is. This is something an Indian and a Westerner take time to understand.

Indians must also patiently study Western institutions. The Indians may not immediately understand the intermingling of the sexes, their customs and manners. It takes time to appreciate the good qualities. However Indians should not blindly accept whatever is Western because each tradition and custom is the outcome of growth of centuries in a particular race and it has a
meaning which may be relevant to that particular race. So a careful study is important.

Swami Vivekananda made another important statement in that speech. He felt that his work in England was more satisfactory than his work in America. The Englishman is bold and brave. He at first resists a new idea. But when once he accepts it, he accepts it thoroughly. It is never lost. The English race is immensely practical and energetic. They always work out an idea. He says that England is a nation of heroes. They are true Kshatriyas. (Warriors and Administrators)

It is to be noted that when Swami Vivekananda made this observation the British empire was all powerful and they had control over more than 70 nations of today.

Swami Vivekananda then said, "Brothers, you have touched another chord in my heart, the deepest of all, and that is the mention of my teacher, my master, my hero, my ideal, my God in life – Shri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. If there has been anything achieved by me, by thoughts, or words, or deeds, if from my lips have ever fallen one word that has helped anyone in this world, I lay no claim to it, it was his. But if there have been curses falling from my lips, if there has been hatred coming out of me, it is all mine and not his. All that has been weak has been mine, and all that has been life-giving, strengthening, pure, and holy, has been his inspiration, his words and he himself."
These words show Swami Vivekananda as a man who practised true devotion, true Bhakthi Yoga. He pays the greatest tribute to his Guru in a public speech. Again in his address in Calcutta, Swami Vivekananda repeats what he spoke in Madras – acquire strength, preach Vedanta to the whole world and realize the ultimate Truth of Advaita.
6.11 LECTURES IN PUNJAB

In his address in Punjab on 'Bhakthi' Swami Vivekananda makes it clear that there can be no one universal religion. That is why so many religions have sprung up. One religion cannot suit everyone. Man is a product of action and reaction – cause and effect. Different actions will have produced different reactions. Moreover man is capable of thinking. He has a mind. If man never thought, then he would be an animal. So to suit different types of reactions, effects and thinking, there have to be different religions. Methods have been vainly tried to force one religion upon everyone. Even when the sword was lifted to make all people follow one religion, history tells us that ten religions sprang up in its place. As the face of one person does not resemble that of another, so the nature of one differs from that of another, and a man should be allowed to act according to his nature.

So Swami Vivekananda said, "Let the religions divide and there be as many religions in this world as there are people in it." One religion for one man. A man might find both Jesus Christ and Sri Ramakrishna inspiring. But he may not profit from Buddha. It is not a problem. Let him sincerely follow both Jesus Christ and Sri Ramakrishna. It will benefit him.

Swami Vivekananda says that a man should never respect a religion which advocates vice and violence. He feels that every religion should preach purity, both internal and external. External purity consists of cleaning the body and wearing clean clothes. Internal purity means to speak truth,
practising morals like abstaining from alcohol, gambling, theft etc. etc. and practising non-injury (ahimsa) to others. Never hurt anyone either through weapons or through words. Only this is not enough. A man must learn to serve others. Service can be provided through physical help, advice, money, career opportunities etc. etc. These things constitute practice of religion. Religion has no meaning, when this kind of internal and external purity is not there. Every religion also insists on this kind of purity. Swami Vivekananda notes that some sort of idol worship is prevalent in every religion. Among the Jews idol – worship is condemned. But they had a temple in which was kept a chest which they called an ark, in which the Tables of the Law were preserved, and above the chest were two figures of angels with wings outstretched, between which the Divine presence was supposed to manifest itself as a cloud. The Roman Catholics, Greek Christians and Protestants all condemn idol-worship. But they worship the image of Jesus Christ and that of his mother Virgin Mary. Among Parsees and Iranians fire worship is carried on. Mohammedans worship their prophets and turn their faces towards Caaba when they pray. These things show that some image or some external symbol is required for a man to show his devotion, his Bhakthi and his love to God. Only when his inner self becomes purified with this devotion, can he move on to more abstract philosophy in religion and metaphysics. So to condemn any religion merely on the basis of its external images is foolishness. Even among devotees of God there are various classes. Some worship God for wealth and pleasures, some for protection etc. etc. But the greatest devotee is he who
loves God for the sake of love of God and for no other material benefit. At the initial stage of religious development a man thinks of God as his Master and himself as His servant. He thanks God for providing him his daily bread and daily wants. But gradually he realizes that God is love personified. That is true Bhakthi. Ultimately he realizes his Oneness with God. That is the end. That is Advaitha. It provides the experience of Non-dualism.
6.12 LECTURES AT LAHORE

In his speech in Lahore on 'The Common Bases of Hinduism' Swami Vivekananda once again stressed the importance of the authority of the Vedas, philosophy of the Vedanta and the belief in Brahman as the common base for all Hindus.

In his lecture on 'The Vedanta' in Lahore Swami Vivekananda again emphasized his Upanishadic philosophy of (Non-dualism) Advaita. In the course of his lecture he saw a development of the idea of Oneness even among the British and German savants who preached the doctrine of evolution. The doctrine of evolution says that the bodies of different animals are really one. The differences that are seen are but different expressions of the same series; that from the lowest worm to the highest and the most saintly man, it is but one – the one changing into the other, and so on, going up and up, higher and higher, until it attains perfection. Indians had that idea also. According to ancient Yogi Patanjali one species changes into another species, he also calls it evolution. Patanjali says that this evolution takes place because of 'the infilling of nature'. The European says, that evolution happens because of competition, survival of the fittest; natural and sexual selection etc. Swami Vivekananda feels that the idea of "the infilling of nature" by Patanjali is a better idea.

An example is given to make the idea the infilling of nature by Patanjali more clear. It is accepted that an amoeba evolves and evolves, goes higher and higher until it becomes a Jesus Christ or a Buddha. It is also certain that at the
same time one cannot get an amount of work out of a machine unless one has put it inside it in some shape or the other. The sum total of the energy remains the same, whatever the forms it may take. If a man wants a mass of energy at one end, then he has got to put it in at the other end; it may be in another form, but the amount of energy that should be produced out of it must be the same. Therefore if the Buddha is the one end of the change and amoeba is at the other end, a man can draw an important conclusion. If the Buddha is the evolved amoeba, the amoeba was the involved Buddha also. The source of energy for both the Buddha and the amoeba is the same. It is the same source of energy which every being possesses. Only in the process of evolution, the way each being manifests that energy is different, (at different stages of evolution), but the energy in all of them is the same. There is only one energy. It is the energy of THAT (Brahman or God).

Then Swami Vivekananda takes up two aspects common to all Vedantic schools – the psychological aspect and the cosmological aspect. He first takes up the cosmological aspect.

He says, "Today we find wonderful discoveries of modern science coming upon us like bolts from the blue, opening our eyes to marvels we never dreamt of. But many of these are only re-discoveries of what had been found ages ago. It was only the other day that modern science found that even in the midst of variety of forces there is unity. It has just discovered that what it calls heat, magnetism, electricity and so forth, are all convertible into one
unit force, and as such, it expresses all these by one name, whatever you may
choose to call it. But this has been done even in the Samhita; old and ancient
as it is, in it we meet with this very idea of force I was referring to. All the
forces, whether you call them gravitation, or attraction, or repulsion, or
magnetism are nothing but the variations of that unit energy. [which is One]
Whether they express themselves as thought, reflected from the inner organs
of man, or as action from an external organ, the unit from which they spring is
what is called Prana.

Again, what is Prana? Prana is spandana or vibration. When all this
universe shall have resolved back into its primal state, what becomes of this
infinite force? Do you think it becomes extinct? Of course not. If it became
extinct what would be the cause of the next wave, because the motion is going
in wave forms, rising, falling, rising again, falling again? Here is the word
Srishti, which expresses the universe. (Generally the word Srishti is translated
as creation) Mark that the word does not mean creation. I have to translate
the Sanskrit word as best as I can. It is Srishti, projection. At the end of a
cycle everything becomes finer and finer and is resolved back into the primal
state from which it sprang (was projected), and there it remains for a time
quiescent, ready to spring forth again.

That is Srishti, projection. And what becomes of all these forces, the
Pranas? They are resolved back into the primal Prana, and this Prana becomes
almost motionless – not entirely motionless; and that is what is described in
the Vedic Sukta (part of Vedas) : "It vibrated without Vibration." ..... And what becomes of what you call matter? The forces permeate all matter ; they all dissolve into Akasha, from which they again come out ; this Akasha is the primal matter. Whether you translate it as ether or anything else, the idea is that this Akasha is the primal form of matter. This Akasha vibrates under the action of Prana, and that is when the next Srishti takes place. As the vibration becomes quicker, the Akasha is lashed into all these wave forms which we call suns, moons and systems (the universe).

This is a part of the cosmological side. There are many details working into it ... But the one idea is here that it is from the finer that the grosser has come."

If one analyses this lengthy quotation from Swami Vivekananda, he can conclude that Swami Vivekananda wants to progress on scientific lines. He wants to logically find out how the process of creation is taking place. As he says, his theory of Vedanta conforms with modern scientific thought processes and comes to talk about this world which is a part of this universe.

It is a cycle. What is created or projected also goes back to its source. And again a new process of creation is initiated.
END NOTES


2. Ibid. P. 166.


4. Ibid, P. 116-134.

5. Ibid, P. 141-143.


10. Ibid, P. 176-199.


15. Ibid, P. 305.


CHAPTER SEVEN

LECTURES AND DISCOURSES

7.1 CREATION OF THE UNIVERSE

The Fourth volume of Swami Vivekananda begins with addresses on Bhakthi Yoga. In his lectures on Bhakthi Yoga he makes certain ideas of "creation" of this universe more clear according to Vedanta.

"There is a deep meaning in the thought that God created everything out of the WORD. God Himself being formless, this is the best way to describe the projection of forms, or the creation. The Sanskrit word for creation is Srishti, projection. What is meant by "God created things out of nothing ?" The Universe is projected out of God. He becomes the Universe, and it all returns to Him, and again it proceeds forth, and again returns. Through all eternity it will go on in that way : We have seen that the projection of anything in the mind cannot be without name and form. Suppose the mind to be perfectly calm, entirely without thought ; nevertheless, as soon as thought begins to rise it will immediately take name and form. In the same way the
very fact of creation, the very fact of projection is eternally connected with name and form. Thus we find that every idea that man has, or can have, must be connected with a certain name or word as its counterpart. This being so, it is quite natural to suppose that this universe is the outcome of mind, just as your body is the outcome of your idea – your idea, as it were made concrete and externalized. If it be true, moreover that the whole universe is built on the same plan, then, if you know the manner in which one atom is built, you can understand how the whole universe is built. If it is true that in you, the body forms the gross part outside and the mind forms the fine part inside, and both are eternally inseparable, then, when you cease to have the body you will cease to have the mind also. When a man’s brain is disturbed, his ideas also get disturbed, because they are but one, the finer and the grosser parts. There are no two such things as matter and mind. As in a high column of air there are dense and rarefield strata of one and the same element air, so it is with the body; it is one thing throughout, layer on layer, from grosser to finer. Again, the body is like the finger nails. As these continue growing even when they are cut, so from our subtle ideas grows body after body. The finer a thing the more persistent it is; we find that always. The grosser it is the less persistent. Thus, form is the grosser and name the finer state of a single manifesting power called thought. But these three are one; it is the Unity and the Trinity, the three degrees of existence of the same thing. Finer, more condensed and most condensed. Wherever the one is, the others are there also. Wherever name is, there is form and thought.
It naturally follows that if the universe is built upon the same plan as the body, the universe also must have the same divisions of form, name and thought. The 'thought' is the finest part of the universe, the real motive power. The thought behind our body is called soul, and the thought behind the universe is called God. (One can call it by any other name. Or one can call it Brahman or THAT.) The name is the Word and Hindus call it OM. The world is homogeneous, and modern science shows beyond doubt that each atom is composed of the same material as the whole universe. If one can know one lump of clay then one can know the whole universe. Man is the most representative being in the universe. So if man knows himself, he knows the whole universe.
7.2.1 THE GREAT TEACHERS OF THE WORLD

The second section of the fourth volume consists of Lectures and Discourses delivered in USA and UK. The next section consists of his writings both prose and poetry.

In his lectures and discourses, he introduced, to the West various Indian stories and epics, which depict Hindu philosophy, like The Ramayana, The Mahabharatha, The Gita, stories of Jada Bharatha and Prahlada. However the most interesting part in this section is his lectures, "The Great Teachers of the World", "On Lord Buddha", "Christ the messenger" and "My Master". The address 'My Master' is about his Guru Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, the prophet of Dakshineshwar.

In his speech, 'The Great Teachers of the World' Swami Vivekananda speaks of the known prophets of the world and their message. The universe, according to the theory of the Hindus, is moving in cycles of wave forms. It rises, reaches its Zenith, then falls and remains in the hollow, as it were, for some time, once more to rise, and so on, in wave after wave and fall after fall. It happens with every nation and every race. At the top of the wave we find the Prophet, the Messenger of God. He puts forth his tremendous power upon society; and society makes him what he is – a great world thinker and Incarnation of God.
Man has an idea that there can be only one religion, only one Prophet and only one Incarnation. But that idea is not true. When a man studies the history of the world, its different races, religions and prophets, he will come to know that each race, religion and prophet was destined to play only a part. The real harmony consists in the sum total of all the contributions of all these races, religions and prophets. No race is born to alone enjoy the world. None dare say so. Each race has a part to play in the divine harmony of nations. Each race has its duty and mission to fulfill. The sum total is great harmony. Similarly not one prophet is born to rule the world forever. Each prophet only contributes a part to the great harmony of world religions.

Man cannot understand a principle or a philosophy just like that. History shows us that he can understand it better when it comes through an ideal person. People understood the philosophy of forgiveness through Jesus Christ and the philosophy of non-violence through Buddha and Gandhi. This shows that man can understand a precept only through the example. Each Prophet, each incarnation of God precisely does that. He teaches mankind religion and philosophy which man needs most at that particular point of time and place. Jesus Christ was right when he said that no man could see the Father, except through the Son. God is an omnipresent Principle. He is everywhere. But ordinary mortals see him when he personifies himself through a saint or a Prophet. These Prophets teach from a direct perception of God and Truth. A man may enquire if there is a God. Another man may give hundred reasons to believe in a God. But just ask a person who has seen a table, if there is a table.
He answers in the positive. He requires neither reason, nor logic, nor argument to say 'Yes' because he has seen it. In the same way these Prophets had a direct vision of God and what they spoke, that is why, have become scriptures. These scriptures have that force and create a faith in the readers, a faith in themselves that they too can see God. It is possible because these Prophets had tremendous faith in themselves.

There is an old Sanskrit verse which says, "I saw the Teacher sitting under a tree. He was a young man of sixteen and the disciple was an old man of eighty. The preaching of the Teacher was silence, and the doubts of the disciple departed."

It is a reference to Dakshinamurthy, an incarnation of Lord Ishwara. The Guru (Teacher) had great faith in himself. He was sixteen and he was teaching a person of eighty and that too through silence. Obviously he was imparting mystical knowledge. What faith had Jesus Christ in his message and in Himself. He taught not like the scribes but as man who had authority.

Each Prophet gives only a partial idea of the whole. Lord Krishna gave the idea that a man should perform his duties without any profit motive. He should perform Karma Yoga. Christ mainly preached love, compassion and forgiveness while the Buddha preached compassion, non-violence and right conduct. At different times man needs different messages. When he is lazy, he should listen to Lord Krishna, when he is angry and revengeful he should
listen to Jesus Christ, and when he is cruel and selfish he should go to Buddha.

So it is possible to worship all of them.

Thus Swami Vivekananda pays a tribute to all the Prophets of the world who are the great real teachers. He concludes his address with a question –

Will other and greater prophets come? Certainly they will come in this world. But do not look forward to that. "I should better like that each one of you became a Prophet of this real New Testament, which is made up of all the Old Testaments. Take all the old messages, supplement them with your own realizations, and become a Prophet unto others. Each one of these teachers has been great; each has left something for us; they have been our Gods. We salute them, we are their servants; and at the same we salute ourselves; for if they have been Prophets and children of God, we are also the same. They reached their perfection, and we are going to attain ours now. Remember the words of Jesus: "The kingdom of Heaven is at hand!" This very moment let everyone of us make a staunch resolution; I will become a Prophet, I will become a messenger of Light, I will become a child of God, nay I will become a God!"

Swami Vivekananda in these lines has given the very essence of religion. Something definitely happens to a man when he lives according to the scriptures. He becomes as great as the one who wrote them. This is what true religion is all about – practise, realize and become ultimately one with God.
7.2.2 LORD BUDDHA

In his speech 'On Lord Buddha' Swami Vivekananda has advised his Western audience not to mistake Buddhism for Brahminism. Buddhism was founded by a great man called Gautama, a prince turned monk. He became disgusted with the eternal metaphysical discussions, cumbersome rituals and more especially with the caste system of his day. He was against priestcraft. He preached a religion in which there was no motive power. He was agnostic about metaphysics and theories of God. He was often asked if was there a God, and he answered that he did not know. When people wanted instruction from him he would say "Do good and be good". Once five Brahmins came to him and asked him to settle their discussion.

One said, "Sir my book says that God is such and such, and this is the way to come to God" Another said, "That is wrong, for my book says such and such, and this is the way to come to God;" and so the others also. He listened calmly to all of them, and then asked them one by one, "Does any one of your books say that God becomes angry, that He ever injures anyone, that He is impure ?" "No Sir, they all teach that God is pure and good." "Then, my friends, why do you not become pure and good first, that you may know what God is ?"

However, Swami Vivekananda says that he does not endorse all his philosophy. He wants a good deal of metaphysics for himself. The spiritual path becomes easy to people who believe in God. But the life of Buddha
shows that even a man who does not believe in God, has no metaphysics, belongs to no sect, and does not go to any church, or temple, and is a confessed materialist, even he can attain to the highest. Perfection does not come from mere belief or faith. Mere talk means nothing. Perfection comes through the disinterested performance of action.

The last words of Buddha were, "None can help you; help yourself; work out your own salvation." He said about himself, "Buddha is the name of infinite knowledge, infinite as the sky; I Gautama, have reached that state; you too will all reach that if you struggle for it."

Buddha preached a religion of love and non-violence. He was prepared to sacrifice himself in a ritual to save a goat which was being sacrificed.
7.2.3 JESUS CHRIST

In his next speech 'Christ, the Messenger' Swami Vivekananda pays a glowing tribute to Jesus Christ. He says that Christ is a prophet who is at the top of the wave where the movement of the universe is cyclical and through waves (as already mentioned). Before him there was a fall where the Jews, the Parsees and Sadducees were primitive, insincere and in a state of stagnation. The wave had to rise and at the top we see Jesus Christ. Swami Vivekananda reminded his audience that he can look at Jesus Christ only as an orient. And according to Swami Vivekananda Jesus Christ was an oriental among orientals.

"With all your attempts to paint him with blue eyes and yellow hair, the Nazarene was still an Oriental. All the similies, the imageries, in which the Bible is written – the scenes, the locations, the attitudes, the groups, the poetry and symbol, - speak to you of the Orient ; of the bright sky, of the heat, of the sun, of the desert, of the thirsty men and animals; of men and women coming with pitchers on their heads to fill them at the wells; of the flocks of the ploughmen, of the cultivation that is going on around; of the water mill and wheel, of the mill-pond, of the mill-stones. All these are to be seen today in Asia."

According to Swami Vivekananda Asia has been the voice of religion. But the voice of Europe is the voice of politics and the voice of military affairs and administration. Each is practical in his own sphere. The oriental is
practical in religious matters and the European is practical in political, military and administrative sphere.

Jesus Christ was a true son of the orient. He was immensely practical in religious matters.

"If we cannot follow the ideal, let us confess our weakness, but not degrade it; let not anyone try to pull it down. One gets sick at heart looking at the different accounts of the life of Christ that the Western people give. I do not know what he was or what he was not! One would make him a great politician; another perhaps, would make of him a great military general; another a great patriotic Jew; and so on. Is there any warrant in the books for all such assumptions? The best commentary on the life of a great teacher is his own life and his own words, "The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man hath not where to lay his head." That is what Christ says as the only way to salvation; he lays down no other way. Let us confess in sackcloth and ashes that we cannot do that. We still have fondness for 'me and mine'. We want property, money, wealth, woe into us! Let us confess and not put to shame that great Teacher of Humanity! And what did Christ preach? He said, "The kingdom of Heaven is within you." "I and my Father are One." "Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God." How can a man become 'pure' and see God and realize that God and Kingdom of Heaven is within him? Only through renunciation. Jesus Christ has made this very clear.
Once a rich young man asked Jesus, "Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him, "One thing thou lackest; go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasures in heaven; and come, take up thy cross, and follow Me." And he (the rich young man) was sad at that saying and went away grieved; for he had great possessions. We are all more or less like that. The voice is ringing in our ears day and night. In the midst of our pleasures and joys, in the midst of worldly things, we think that we have forgotten everything else. Then comes a moment's pause and the voice rings in our ears: "Give up all that thou hast and follow Me." "Whosoever will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life for My sake shall find it." For whoever gives up this life for His sake, finds the life immortal. In the midst of all our weakness there is a moment of pause and the voice rings: "Give up all that thou hast; give it to the poor and follow me."

This is the one ideal Christ did preach. No doubt he preached forgiveness. A man forgives only when he has renounced everything for the sake of God, like Christ himself did. Renunciation leads a man to forgiveness, pure unselfishness and finally to the Ultimate Truth.

Swami Vivekananda also observes that all great prophets including Jesus Christ were completely unselfish. They lived and worked only for others and did not expect anything in return. No, not even name and fame. Suppose Jesus of Nazareth was teaching and a man came and told him that what he taught
was beautiful and that was the way to perfection. He was ready to follow it;
But did not care to worship Jesus as the only begotten Son of God.

Jesus Christ would have answered that it was fine with him. Christ would
advise him to advance in his own way. He did not care whether he gave him
credit for the teaching or not. Jesus Christ would say that he was not a shop
keeper. He did not trade in religion. He only taught Truth and Truth was
nobody's property. Nobody can patent Truth. Truth is God himself.

But what the disciples say nowadays is: "No matter whether you
practice the teachings or not, do you give credit to the Man? If you credit the
Master, you will be saved; if not, there is no salvation for you."

And thus the whole teaching of the Master is degenerated, and all the
struggle and fight is for the personality of the Man. They do not know that in
imposing that difference, they are, in a manner, bringing shame to the very
Man they want to honour, the very Man that would have shrunk with shame
from such an idea. He would not have cared if there was one man in the world
that remembered him or not. He had to deliver his message and he gave it.
And if he had twenty thousand lives, he would have given up them all for the
poorest man in the world. If he had to be tortured for millions of times to save
the most ignorant fool in this world, he would have gone through it. He would
have done all this without wishing to have his name known even to a single
person. He would work quiet, unknown and silent just like His Lord the God
Himself.
And the disciples of Christ think that God can manifest only once. There lies the whole mistake. But throughout Nature, what one has observed is that whatever must have happened before, must also happen in future; whatever happens once must go on and must have been going on. So if God has come to earth once as Christ, He must have come many times before that, & He will come many times after that.

In India also there is an idea that God Himself incarnates as Man and comes down to Earth, to teach mankind. But they do not limit his incarnation to one. He can incarnate many times. In one of God's incarnations as Lord Krishna, he says in "Bhagwad Gita" that "Whenever virtue subsides and immorality prevails, then I body myself forth." So Swami Vivekananda appeals to his listeners to see God not only in Jesus of Nazareth but in other Prophets as well.

In fact Swami Vivekananda says that, in a sense every man is a prophet. Each has to carry a cross in his own sphere of life. But people like Jesus Christ carry a huge cross while others carry smaller ones, only according to their ability. Swami Vivekananda says that there are three ways in which man perceives God. At first the undeveloped intellect of the uneducated man sees God as far away, up in the heavens somewhere, sitting on a throne as a great Judge. He looks upon Him as fire, as a sun, as terror etc. This is not bad. Because one must remember that humanity travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth; it may be, to put it in a better way from lower truth to
higher truth; but NEVER from error to truth. Suppose a man travels from earth towards the Sun in a straight line. The more he travels towards the sun the bigger and brighter will it look. Suppose in his travel, he takes 20,000 photographs, no two photographs will be alike. But one cannot deny that the sun is the same. Only our view point is different. Every religion and every human being must take note of this. Therefore, the religions of the unthinking masses all over the world must be, and have always been of a God who is outside of the universe, who lives in heaven, who governs from that place, who is a punisher of the bad and a rewarder of the good and so on. But as man began to develop spiritually, he began to feel that God was omnipresent, that He must be in him, that He must be everywhere, that He was not a distant God, but clearly the soul of all souls. The spiritually most advanced at last found out that "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." And they found out, at last, that they and the Father were one.

One finds all these three stages of teachings in Jesus Christ. To the common masses, he taught a simple prayer, the 'Common Prayer'. It is intended for the uneducated masses (the one which begins with our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy name). To a higher circle, to those who had advanced a little more he said, "I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you." When the Jews asked him, who he was he declared that he and his Father were one and the Jews thought that that was blasphemy. Swami Vivekananda also reminds us of the saying of earlier Jewish Prophets of the Old Testament who had said, "Ye are Gods and all of you are children of the
Most High." Swami Vivekananda like a rationalist marks the three stages in Christ's teachings very clearly. He also notes that it is easier to begin with the first stage and realize the last stage.

The last word in religion was discovered when it was said, "I and My Father are One". Now what needs to be done is everyone must realize this and experience this.

One must also note Swami Vivekananda's analysis of Jesus Christ's philosophy. He is a rationalist when he analyses that the present followers of Christ are more interested in glorifying the personality of Christ than in following his philosophy which is purity of heart, forgiveness and renunciation.

Swami Vivekananda also said that it is not enough if one praises, and glorifies Jesus Christ. One must see that there is a possibility of every man becoming 'pure in heart' and seeing God like Christ did. That is the purpose of religion. That should be the purpose of Christianity too. Swami Vivekananda's mission in the West was towards the realization of this ideal.
7.2.4 RAMAKRISHNA PARAMAHAMSA

Swami Vivekananda delivered two lectures, one in New York and another in England in 1896. Both these lectures were combined subsequently and published under the present heading 'My Master'. It is about his 'Guru' Ramakrishna Paramahamsa.

In fact Swami Vivekananda has written or spoken very little about his master. That was because he would become very emotional when he spoke of his master. Also he did not want to limit his master to only his understanding of the master. He knew that his master was much more than he had understood. So in the lengthy essay, we see in the first part, Swami Vivekananda describes how the ideal of the East was spirituality and the ideal of the West was political ideology. This subject is already discussed. Then Swami Vivekananda in brief presents a biographical sketch of his Master. And in the end conveys his important message. This is the message of Sri Ramakrishna to the modern world:

"Do not care for doctrines, do not care for dogmas, or sects, or churches or temples; they count for little compared with the essence of existence in each man, which is spirituality; and the more this is developed in a man, the more powerful is he for good. Earn that first, acquire that, and criticize no one, for all doctrines and creeds have some good in them. Show by your lives that religion does not mean words, or names or sects, but that it means spiritual realisation. Only those can
understand who have felt, only those who have attained to spirituality can communicate it to others, can be great teachers of mankind. They alone are the powers of light.

According to Swami Vivekananda, his master preached renunciation and realization. Ramakrishna Paramahamsa is the only great soul who practised all the religions. By turns he became a Shaiva, a Vaishnava, a worshipper of Shakthi, (3 important deities in Hinduism) and practised Islam and Christianity. Ultimately he realized by experience that all religions and sects lead a man to the same goal. He practised every religion and "left every religion undisturbed because he had realised that in reality they are all part and parcel of the one eternal religion."
It was not often that Swami Vivekananda, while in the West, took part in debates. One such occasion in London when he did so was during the discussion of a lecture on, "Can Psychic Phenomena be proved from Scientific Basis?" Referring first to a remark which he had heard in the course of this debate, Swami Vivekananda said:

"One point I want to remark upon. It is a mistaken statement that has been made to us that the Mohammedans do not believe that women have souls. I am very sorry to say it is an old mistake among Christian people, and they seem to like the mistake. That is a peculiarity in human nature, that people want to say something very bad about others whom they do not like. You know I am not a Mohammedan, yet I have had opportunity for studying this religion, and there is not one word in the Koran which says that women have no souls, but in fact it says they have."

Swami Vivekananda here is seen as the voice of Truth in religion. He is a rationalist and he does not want to believe anything without proper evidence. He is not prejudiced. He is prepared to go back to the scriptures and verify truths. He is even prepared to practice religious truths and find out how valid they are. A continuation of the above discussion brings Swami Vivekananda to the question, "Whether psychical subjects are capable of scientific demonstration?"
He says, "First of all, there will be the subjective and the objective side necessary. Taking Chemistry and Physics, with which we are so familiar, and of which we have read so much, is it true that everyone in this world is able to understand the demonstration even of the commonest subjects? Take any boor and show him one of your experiments. What will he understand of it? Nothing. It requires a good deal of previous training to be brought up to the point of understanding an experiment. Before that he cannot understand it at all. That is a great difficulty in the way. If scientific demonstration means bringing down certain facts to a plane which is universal for all human beings, where all beings can understand it, I deny that there can be any such scientific demonstration for any subject in the world. If it were so, all our universities and education would be in vain. Why are we educated if by birth we can understand everything scientific? Why so much study?"

Here Swami Vivekananda makes a valid observation. His logic makes us conclude that just like understanding scientific knowledge requires a lot of education and training, spiritual knowledge also requires a lot of education and training. In fact the amount of training put in to acquire spiritual knowledge is even greater. When a man studies the biographies of Buddha, Christ and Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, he will come to know the hard work, they have put in to gain the knowledge they had acquired. It is no ordinary effort.

Swami Vivekananda continues and says, "So on the face of it, it is absurd if this be the meaning of scientific demonstration, the bringing down of
intricate facts to the plane on which we are now. The next meaning should be the correct one, perhaps, that certain facts should be adduced as proving certain more intricate facts. There are certain more complicated intricate Phenomena, which we explain by less intricate ones, and thus get, perhaps nearer to them; in this way they are gradually brought down to the plane of our present ordinary consciousness. But even this is very complicated and very difficult, and means a training also, a tremendous amount of education. So all I have to say is that in order to have scientific explanation of psychical phenomena, we require not only perfect evidence on the side of the phenomena themselves, but a good deal of training on the part of those who want to see."

Swami Vivekananda also feels that certain phenomena can never be explained, let alone with a scientific explanation, even in an offhand manner.

Swami Vivekananda continues and says:

"Next, as to those hasty explanations that religions are the outcome of dreams, those who have made a particular study of them would think of them but as mere guesses. We have no reason to suppose that religions were the outcome of dreams as has been so easily explained. Then it would be very easy indeed to take even the agnostic's position, but unfortunately the matter cannot be explained so easily. There are many other wonderful phenomena happening, even at the present time, and these have all to be investigated, and not only have to be, but have been investigated all along. The blind man says
there is no sun. That does not prove that there is no sun. These phenomena have been investigated years before. Whole races of mankind have trained themselves for centuries to become fit instruments for discovering the fine workings of the nerves; their records have been published ages ago, colleges have been created to study these subjects, and there are still men and women who are living demonstrations of these phenomena. Of course I admit that there is a good deal of hoax in the whole thing, a good deal of what is wrong and untrue in these things; but with what is this not the case? Take any common scientific phenomenon; there are two or three facts which either scientists or ordinary men may regard as absolute truths, and the rest as mere frothy suppositions. Now let the agnostic apply the same test to his own science which he would apply to what he does not want to believe. Half of it would be shaken to its foundation at once. We are bound to live on suppositions. We cannot live satisfied where we are; that is the natural growth of the human soul. We cannot become agnostics on this side and at the same time go about seeking for anything here; we have to pick. And, for this reason, we have to get beyond our limits, struggle to know what seems to be unknowable; and this struggle must continue.

In my opinion, therefore, I go really one step further than the lecturer, and advance the opinion that most of the psychical phenomenon - not only little things like spirit-rappings or table-rappings which are mere child's play, not merely little things like telepathy which I have seen boys do even - most of the psychical phenomena which the last speaker calls the higher clairvoyance,
but which I would rather beg to call the experiences of the super-conscious state of the mind, are the very stepping stones to real psychological investigation. The first thing to be seen is whether the mind can attain to that state or not. My explanation would, of course, be a little different from his, but we should probably agree when we explain terms. Not much depends on the question whether this present consciousness continues after death or not, seeing that this universe, as it is now, is not bound to this state of consciousness. Consciousness is not co-existent with existence. In my own body, and in all of our bodies, we must all admit that we are conscious of very little of the body, and of the greater part of it we are unconscious. Yet it exists. Nobody is ever conscious of his brain, for example. I never saw my brain, and I am never conscious of it. Yet I know that it exists. Therefore we may say that it is not consciousness that we want, but the existence of something which is not this gross matter; and that that knowledge can be gained even in this life, and that that knowledge has been gained and demonstrated, as far as any science has been demonstrated, is a fact. We have to look into these things, and I would insist on reminding those who are here present on one other point. It is well to remember that very many times we are deluded on this. Certain people place before us the demonstration of a fact which is not ordinary to the spiritual nature, and we reject that fact because we say we cannot find it to be true. In many cases the fact may not be correct, but in many cases also we forget to consider whether we are fit to receive the demonstration or not,
whether we have permitted our bodies and our minds to become fit subjects for their discovery."

This is a rather lengthy quotation from Swami Vivekananda. But it makes one thing clear. There is a basis for spiritual research. Psychic Phenomena can be proved from a scientific basis. Even these are small things. There is an experience which belongs to a super conscious state of mind. Only we should train ourselves to verify the truth. It is a hard training. A man has to train himself as did Buddha and Christ. Then he can renounce a fortune and he can forgive his crucifiers.

Swami Vivekananda has written some prose pieces and poems. He has written essays on immortality of soul, reincarnation, and on some personalities like Dr. Paul Deussen, Max Muller and Pavahari Baba. He has also written essays on those ideas which are already discussed in the study of four yogas and in his message to India.
7.4 REINCARNATION

His essays 'Is the Soul Immortal?' and 'Reincarnation' are important for a rationalist. Anybody who feels that Jnana Yoga is rationally acceptable will also accept the existence of the soul or the 'Self'. Swami Vivekananda begins his essay on 'Reincarnation' with the sentence, "Of the many riddles that have perplexed the intellect of man in all climes and times, the most intricate is himself." Man has studied himself in all aspects. He has studied the body, the mind, man in relation to ethics, society, politics etc. etc. He has also turned his gaze inward and studied his mind, and its relation with this universe. At times he has even touched upon the 'Self' or the soul.

Man many times has become disgusted with the vagueness of many schools and sects. He has also become disgusted with the 'violent superstitions of organized preistcraft'. These are the very things so called intellectuals and rationalists attack. Only they don't want to go beyond these boundaries of despair. So they have given up the search for this 'self' in despair.

However they take a prejudiced view of the surroundings and unessential details of the universe. There are people who have braved all these adversities and have taken up the search for this 'Self'. At present the greater portion of the human race have an organized religion. They believe in a soul. Hinduism and Buddhism have it for their foundation; the educated classes among the ancient Egyptians believed in it; the ancient Persians arrived at it; the Greek
philosophers made it the corner-stone of their philosophy; the Parsees among
the Hebrews accepted it; and the Sufis among the Mohammedans almost
universally acknowledged its truth. The ancient Hebrews never disturbed their
equanimitiy by questioning themselves about the soul. With them death ended all.

Karl Heckel justly says, "Though it is true that in the Old Testament,
preceding the exile, the Hebrews distinguish a life-principle different from the
body, which is sometimes called 'Nephesh' or 'Ruakh' or 'Neshama', yet all
these words correspond to the idea of breath than to that of spirit or soul. Also
in the writings of the Palestinian Jews, after the exile, there is never made
mention of an individual immortal soul, but always only of a life-breath
emanating form God, which, after the body is dissolved, is reabsorbed into the
'Divine Ruakh.'

But at the time of Jesus Christ, the Alezandrian Jews and Parsees already
had faith in an individual soul and even believed in its wanderings through
various bodies. Jesus Christ himself was recognised as the incarnation of an
older prophet (Elisha) and Jesus himself directly asserted that John the Baptist
was the Prophet Elias come back again. ["If ye will receive it, this is Elias,
which was for to come." - Matt. XI.14]

Swami Vivekananda also quotes some European thinkers who have
contemplated on the theory of soul and its reincarnation.
I.H. Fichete speaking about the immortality of the soul says: "It is true there is one analogy in nature which might be brought forth in refutation of the continuance. It is a well known argument that everything that has a beginning in time must also perish at some period of time; hence, that the claimed past existence of the soul necessarily implies its pre-existence. This is a fair conclusion, but instead of being an objection to, it is rather an additional argument for its continuance. Indeed, one needs only to understand that in reality nothing can be created or annihilated, to recognize that the soul must have existed prior to its becoming visible in a physical body."

Schopenhauer, in his book, 'Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung', speaking about Palingenesis says: "What sleep is for the individual, death is for the 'will'. It would not endure to continue the same actions and sufferings throughout an eternity without true gain, if memory and individuality remained to it. It flings them off, and this is Lethe, and through this sleep of death it reappears fitted out with another intellect as a new being; a new day tempts to new shores. These constant new births, then, constitute the succession of the life-dreams of a will which in itself is indestructible, until instructed and improved by so much and such various successive knowledge in a constantly new form, it abolishes and abrogates itself ...... It must not be neglected that even empirical grounds support a palingenesis of this kind. As a matter of fact, there does exist a connection between the birth of the newly appearing beings and the death of those that are worn out. It shows itself in the great fruitfulness of the human race which appears as a consequence of
devastating diseases. When in the fourteenth century the Black Death had for the most part depopulated the old world, a quite abnormal fruitfulness appeared among the human race, and twin births were very frequent. The circumstance was also remarkable that none of the children born at this time obtained their full number of teeth; thus nature, exerting itself to the utmost, was niggardly in details.

This is related by F. Schnurrer in his 'Chronik der Seuchen', 1825. Casper also in his Ueber die Wahrscheinliche Lebensdauer des Menschen, 1835, confirms the principle that the number of births in a given population has the most decided influence upon the length of life and mortality in it, as this always keeps pace with mortality; so that always and everywhere the deaths and the births increase and decrease in like proportion, which he places beyond doubt by an accumulation of evidence collected from many lands and their various provinces. And yet it is impossible that there can be physical, causal connection between my early death and the fruitfulness of a marriage with which I have nothing to do, or conversely. Thus here the metaphysical appears undeniable, and in a stupendous manner, as the immediate ground of explanation of the physical. Every new-born being comes fresh and blithe into the new existence, and enjoys it as a free gift; but there is and can be nothing freely given. Its fresh existence is paid for by the old age and death of a worn-out existence which has perished, but which contained the indestructible seed out of which the new existence has arisen; they are one being."
The great English philosopher Hume, nihilistic though he was, says in the skeptical essay on immortality, "The metempsychosis is therefore the only system of this kind that philosophy can listen to." The philosopher Lessing, with a deep poetical insight, asks, "Is this hypothesis so laughable merely because it is the oldest, because the human understanding, before the sophistries of the schools had dissipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once? ..... Why should not I come back as often as I am capable of acquiring fresh knowledge, fresh experience? Do I bring away so much from once that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back?"

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

Hindu philosophers make use of the theory of reincarnation to explain this world of inequalities. As it is seen that each man has different ability than the other. One is weak while the other is strong. One is intelligent while the other is stupid. One is born rich while the other is born poor. There is no end to this list of inequality in this world. In some cases a child is born to circumstances under which there is no chance of his becoming good. It is seen
that children are born to suffer, perhaps all their lives, and that too owing to no fault of theirs. Then the question arises as to why this inequality should be there. There is obviously no, visible, logical answer to these questions.

There is no other way to vindicate the glory and the liberty of the human soul and reconcile the inequalities and the horrors of this world than by placing the whole burden upon the legitimate cause – man's own independent actions or Karma. Everyman must receive the fruits or rewards of his actions. It may be sweet or bitter according to his actions. "What you sow, that you reap". But he must receive them – if not in this birth, atleast in his next birth-next incarnation. A man gets nothing free in this world. What he has is already what he has earned.

Every theory of the creation of the soul from nothing inevitably leads to fatalism and preordination, and instead of a Merciful Father, places before us a hideous, cruel and an ever-angry God to worship because there is so much inequality and suffering in this world. And so far as the power of religion for good or evil is concerned, this theory of a created soul leading to its corollaries of fatalism and predestination, is responsible for the horrible idea prevailing among some Christians and Mohammedans that the Heathens are the lawful victims of their swords, and all the horrors that have followed and are following still.

But an argument which the philosophers of the Nyaya school have always advanced in favour of reincarnation and which to a man seems
conclusive, is this: Man's experiences cannot be annihilated. His actions (Karma) though apparently disappearing, remain still unperceived (Adrishta), and reappear again in their effect as tendencies (Pravrittis). Even little babies come with certain tendencies – fear of death, for example.

Now if a tendency is the result of repeated actions, the tendencies with which a man is born must be explained on that ground too. Evidently he could not have got them in this life: Therefore the past must be looked into. Then it is also evident that some of the tendencies are the effects of the self-conscious efforts peculiar to man; and if it is true that a man is born with such tendencies, it rigorously follows that their causes were conscious efforts in the past – that is, he must have been on the same mental plane which is called the human plane, before this present life.

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

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

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

Here Swami Vivekananda throws a question for debate, obviously any theory which is confined by materialism cannot answer all our questions. Cellular transmission and hereditary theories will not answer all our questions. If they were absolutely true then we should have had any number of Jesus Christs, Albert Einsteins, Newtons and Buddhas who would have seen subsequently born in their families. There should have been a scientific explanation for all the cruelty and suffering seen around. So one has to conclude that there is something more to this than mere theories of materialism. One has to conclude again that it is the SELF which incarnates again and again in different bodies to workout its Karma (effect of past actions and accumulated tendencies).
7.5.1 SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

Swami Vivekananda has next written a brief experience of his encounter with two men he met during his life time in the West. They are Dr. Paul Deussen and Prof. Max Muller. He has also written a life sketch of Pavahari Baba. These were actually articles contributed to 'Brahmavadin' a journal on spiritual matters in 1896.

On Dr. Paul Deussen⁹, Swami Vivekananda begins his essay with these lines -

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

Prof. Lassen was the lecturer who was expounding a chapter of 'Shakuntala' (a Sanskrit play by Kalidasa) and the student was none other than Dr. Paul Deussen. Dr. Paul Deussen as a student, was extraordinarily brilliant. All his friends expected him to become a great scholar and earn a lot of fame respect and of course a good position and high salary. "But then there was this Sanskrit!" Those days European Scholars had not even heard of Sanskrit. So making money through studying Sanskrit was out of question. But the desire to learn Sanskrit was too strong for Dr. Paul Deussen.
Swami Vivekananda says that he saw quite a few in India, especially in and around ancient cities like Varanasi who want to study Sanskrit at all costs. Most of them are either Sanyasins or young Pandits. They are not well-to-do. Most of them lack even basic facilities and study very ancient dusty and torn manuscripts in candle light.

Swami Vivekananda admires this unselfish and genuine zeal for real scholarship. He feels that for India to rise to occupy among nations a rank worthy of their own historic past, a genuine study of Sanskrit is a must. He feels that Germany is one of the foremost among the nations of the world because she has encouraged study of Sanskrit.

About Sanskrit, Swami Vivekananda says that, "Sanskrit is the language of Upanishads and of Sri Shankaracharya who wrote commentaries on the Upanishads and systems of Vedanta philosophy and Advaita Philosophy. He was the one who brought all arguments that support Advaita philosophy together and organized it into a system of philosophy which is rational and intellectual. It is this study of Sanskrit scriptures with Sri Shankaracharya's commentaries that provide a platform for intellectual enquiries of spiritual truths.

About Paul Deussen, Swami Vivekananda says, "Yes, the desire to learn Sanskrit was strong in the heart of this German student. It was long, uphill work-this learning of Sanskrit; with him too it was the same old-world story of successful scholars and their hard work, their privations and their
indomitable energy - and also the same glorious conclusion of a really heroic achievement. He thus achieved success."

Swami Vivekananda met Dr. Paul Deussen when the latter was the Professor of Philosophy in the University of Kiel. By then Dr. Paul Deussen had become famous in America and Europe as a scholar in Sanskrit. He called himself "Deva Sena" in Sanskrit and impressed Swami Vivekananda as a true friend of India and Indian thought. They met many times in and about London and travelled together through Germany, Holland and London. Swami Vivekananda felt that his meeting Dr. Paul Deussen was one of the pleasant episodes in his life.

Swami Vivekananda feels that the earliest school of Sanskrit in Europe entered into the study of Sanskrit with more imagination than critical ability. They knew very little and expected too much from the little they studied. Many of them even described 'Shankuntala' by Kalidasa as forming the high watermark of Indian philosophy. These were naturally followed by a reactionary band of superficial critics, more than real scholars of any kind, who knew little or nothing of Sanskrit, expected nothing from Sanskrit studies and ridiculed everything from the East. These bold and unsympathetic superficial critics were addressing an audience whose entire qualification for pronouncing any judgement in the matter was their absolute ignorance of Sanskrit. When such critics address such audience, the outcome is obvious. The West had a very poor opinion of Sanskrit studies. If at all Sanskrit was studied, it was done so to ridicule.
"It has now been found out that mere adventure without some amount of the capital of real and ripe scholarship produces nothing but ridiculous failure even in the business of Oriental research, and that the traditions in India are not to be rejected with supercilious contempt, as there is really more in them than most people ever dreamt of."

Swami Vivekananda here emphasizes the importance of hard work and scholarship. Nobody can ridicule anything before having thoroughly studied and understood it. It is only prejudice.

Fortunately a new type of Sanskrit scholars are seen in Europe and USA who are reverential and sympathetic. They are reverential because they are better caliber of men and sympathetic because they are learned. And the link which connects the new portion of the chain with the old one is of course, Prof. Max Muller. If Max Muller is the old pioneer of the new movement, Dr. Paul Deussen is certainly one of its younger advance guard. Here Swami Vivekananda pays a rich tribute to Max Muller.

"We Hindus certainly owe more to him than to any other Sanskrit scholar in the West, and I am simply astonished when I think of the gigantic task which he, in his enthusiasm undertook as a young man and brought to a successful conclusion in his old age. Think of this man without any help, poring over old manuscripts hardly legible to Hindus themselves, and in a language to acquire which takes a lifetime even in India - without even the help of any needy Pandit whose "brains could be picked", as the Americans say, "for ten shillings a month. Think of this man spending days and
sometimes months in elucidating the correct reading and meaning of a word or a sentence in the commentary of Sayana and in the end succeeding in making an easy road through the forest of Vedic literature for all others to go along."

Swami Vivekananda says that he does not endorse whatever Prof. Muller has written. But agreement or no agreement he admires the man for his achievement. Philological interest had hidden long from view the gems of thought and spirituality to be found in the mine of our ancient scriptures. Max Muller brought out a few of these gems and exhibited them to public gaze. He was also able to compel attention because he was a philosopher well versed in ancient Greece and modern Germany. He took up the cue and jumped into the metaphysical depths of the Upanishads. He found them to be fully safe and satisfying. And then he boldly declared the Truth he discovered in them. He was uninhibited, in the sense that he would not bother about what others would say of him. What he felt was the Truth, he declared it freely.

Swami Vivekananda feels that, today, India needs such Westerners who would not only discover the great and hidden Truths in the ancient scriptures, but also see how these Truths have become superstitions and destroyed the country. Today Indians are at diagonally opposite extremes. They have a set of slavish Indians who cling to every village superstition as the very essence of our scriptures. They also have a set of Indians who claim to be intellectuals and rationalists and who denounce everything that is Indian. They want to blast all the social and spiritual organisations of our ancient land of religion and philosophy. They blindly accept everything Western. Swami
Vivekananda wants Indians to study from such Westerners like Dr. Paul Deussen and Prof. Max Muller. Swami Vivekananda begins his essay on Max Muller with a quotation from Bhagavat Gita "To work thou hast the right, but never to the fruits thereof." This should be the ideal of 'Brahmavadin', the magazine for which Swami Vivekananda contributed this essay. 90% of the people in this world work for some motive, either lust or money or fame. And of the remaining ten percent, nine per cent are cases which require the tender care of physicians more than the attention of the metaphysicians. The first great thing in life is to obtain a character. This applies equally to individuals and to organized bodies of individuals. Because people take up these days religion as a means to some social or political end.

"Beware of this", says Swami Vivekananda, "Religion is its own end. That Religion which is only a means to worldly well-being is not religion, whatever else it may be ; and it is sheer blasphemy against God and man to hold that man has no other end than the free and full enjoyment of all the pleasure of his senses."

Truth, purity and unselfishness, these three ingredients constitute religion (or spirituality). When these three things are present, there is no power in this world which can crush them. Equipped with these, an individual is able to face the whole universe in opposition.

"Who is the support for such a man. His own Truth, purity and unselfishness. His Atman is his own support. Whose support do you stand in need of ? Wait with patience and love and strength ; if helpers are not ready
now, they will come in time. Why should we be in a hurry? The real working force of all great work is in its almost unperceived beginnings."

One such person equipped with Truth, purity and unselfishness was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa, of Dakshineshwar. And Max Muller was the first Western scholar who noticed him. He wrote an article on Shri Ramakrishna for the 'Nineteenth century' and would have been glad to write a larger and fuller account of his life and teachings.

Swami Vivekananda paid Max Muller a visit when he was in England because to Swami Vivekananda meeting a person who wrote on Sri Ramakrishna was like going on a pilgrimage.

Max Muller wanted to know about the power behind, which led to sudden and momentous changes in the life of the late Keshab Chandra Sen, the great leader of Brahma Samaj. He came to know that it was Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa. Since then he became an earnest student and admirer of the life and teachings of Sri Ramakrishna. When Swami Vivekananda met him, he said to Max Muller, "Ramakrishna is worshipped by thousands today Professor". Max Muller replied, "To whom else shall worship be accorded, if not to such."

The Professor was kindness itself according to Swami Vivekananda. He invited Swami Vivekananda and Mr. Sturdy to lunch with him. Mr. Sturdy was Swami Vivekananda's admirer and also stenographer. He showed them round several colleges in Oxford and the Bodleian library. He also
accompanied them to the railway station. He did all this because, as he said, "It is not everyday one meets a disciple of Ramakrishna Paramahamsa."

"The visit was really a revelation to me. That nice little house in its setting of a beautiful garden, the silver headed sage, with a face calm and benign, and forehead smooth as a child's in spite of seventy winters, and every line in that face speaking of a deep-seated mine of spirituality somewhere behind; that noble wife, the help-mate of his life through his long and arduous task of exciting interest, overriding opposition and contempt, and at last creating a respect for the thoughts of the sages of ancient India - the trees, the flowers, the calmness, and the clear sky - all these sent me back in imagination to the glorious days of Ancient India, the days of our Brahmarshis and Rajarshis, the days of the great Vanaprasthas, the days of Arundhatis and Vasisthas." When Swami Vivekananda says that he was reminded of the ancient sages of India when he saw Max Muller, it was the highest compliment he could have paid. Swami Vivekananda also saw neither a philologist nor a scholar in Max Muller, but he saw a soul that was everyday realising its oneness with the Brahman and a heart that was expanding every moment to reach oneness with the Universal. Where others lose themselves in the desert of dry details, he had struck the well-spring of life. He had caught the heartbeat of the Upanishads "Know the Atman alone, and leave off all other talk."

Although Max Muller was a great scholar and philosopher, his learning only led him higher and higher to the realisation of the Brahman, the spirit.
He had also realized the Sanskrit saying "Knowledge gives humility. Knowledge whether textual or through experience has only one use - make the man realize Brahman. In this sense Max Muller was a Vedantist among Vedantists. "And what was Ramakrishna Paramahamsa ?" says Vivekananda. "He is the practical demonstration of this ancient principle, Vedanta".

Another great aspect of Max Muller that Swami Vivekananda liked so much was his love for India. Swami Vivekananda asked him, "When are you coming to India ? Every heart there would welcome one who has done so much to place the thoughts of their ancestors in the true light." The face of the aged sage brightened up - there was almost a tear in his eyes, a gentle nodding of the head, and slowly the words came out : "I would not return then; you would have to cremate me there." Further questions seemed an unwarrantable intrusion into realms wherein are stored the holy secrets of man's heart. Swami Vivekananda ends with these lines : "His life has been a blessing to the world, and may it be many, many years more, before he changes the present plane of his existence !"

With these short biographical essays a man gets an idea as to what kind of people Swami Vivekananda admired. In previous pages it is seen that he quotes from Jesus Christ, Buddha, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa and Vedas and Upanishads. Among the Westerners he loved Paul Deussen and Max Muller because they not only studied Sanskrit but lived according to the injunctions of the Sanskrit scriptures. For Swami Vivekananda rationality is not just in words or in thought but it is in action. That is why he admired the people mentioned
above. People who not only study scriptures but also live according to it. For Ramakrishna Paramahamsa scriptures are only like a list which a man carries to a grocery shop. In the list it is written buy \( \frac{1}{2} \) kg tamarind, 3 kg rice etc. If he keeps on reading the list, nothing happens. He has to buy what is written in the list, throw the list and go home. Practice is the watch word in Vedanta.

Jesus Christ said, "Knock and it will be opened to you". He was describing the efficacy of prayer. But for God to open the door one must pray earnestly, sincerely, and intensely for a long long time. If one doesn't pray like that God will not open the door.
7.5.2 SKETCH OF THE LIFE OF PAVAHARI BABA

Swami Vivekananda begins the biographical sketch with these words: "To help the suffering world was the gigantic task to which the Buddha gave prominence, brushing aside for the time being almost all other phases of religion; yet he had to spend years in self-searching to realise the great truth of the utter hollowness of clinging to a selfish individuality. A more unselfish and untiring worker is beyond our most sanguine imagination: yet who had harder struggles to realise the meaning of things than he? It holds good in all times that the greater the work, the more must have been the power of realisation behind. Working out the details of an already laid out masterly plan may not require much concentrated thought to back it, but the great impulses are only transformed great concentrations."

What Swami Vivekananda wants to say here is that every great action is first backed up by thinking and by an ideal. Without a prior plan, prior decision, and without an ideal no great action (For ex. like that of the Buddha) can be achieved. Action is doing things practically. Therefore the truth of the ideal is in the practical. The ideal may be vast. Yet it is the multiplication of little bits of the practical. The ideal is the summed up, generalised, practical units. Through the practical, the ideal is brought down to our sense-perception, changed into a form fit for our assimilation. It is only with the practical that a man can make the steps to rise to the ideal. It is the ideal which gives hope and the courage to work.
A man who manifests the ideal in his life is more powerful than legions whose words can paint it in the most beautiful colours and spin out the finest principles.

Without the "practical", systems of philosophy mean nothing to mankind. It is only intellectual gymnastics. They have to be blended with religion and a group of men must struggle to bring them down to practical life. Most of the men cannot keep their activities on a par with thought-lines. Some blessed ones can. Most of them lose the power of work as they think deeper, and the power of deep thought if they work more. That is why most great thinkers have to leave to time the practical realisation of their great ideals. Their thoughts must wait for more active brains to work them out and spread them.

However Swami Vivekananda gets a vision of one man who is an exception to this rule, and that is Lord Krishna who preached Bhagawad Gita to Arjuna in the battle field. Lord Krishna says, "He who finds rest in the midst of activity and activity in rest, he is the wise amidst men, he is the Yogi, he is the doer of all work." This is the complete ideal (Gita IV 18) 

But few can reach that state of Lord Krishna. Man can only take things as they are, and be contented to piece together different aspects of human perfection, developed in different individuals. In religion there is the man of thought and the man of action. The man of thought is the man of meekness,
humility and self-realisation. The man of action is bold and brings help to others.

Pavahari Baba was a man of humility and self-realisation. He was born of Brahmin parents in a village near Guzi, Varanasi. Not much is known about his early life. He came to live and study with his uncle in Ghazipur, (when as a boy). His uncle belonged to the Ramanujacharya or Shri sect and was a Naishthika Brahmacharin, i.e. one who takes the vow of lifelong celibacy. He had a piece of land on the banks of the Ganga near Ghazipur. Having several nephews he took Pavhari Baba into his home and adopted him, intending him to succeed to his property and position.

Pavahari Baba is remembered here as a diligent student of Vyakarana (Grammar) and Nyaya (A system of Hindu philosophy) and the theology of his sect. He was quite good looking and jolly. He even played practical jokes at the expense of his fellow students. Thus he went through the routine duties of Indian students of the old school. There was nothing remarkable in his life upto this stage.

Then something happened which made the young scholar feel, perhaps for the first time, the seriousness of life. His uncle passed away. The boy lost a mentor who had loved him dearly. The boy was struck with grief. He wanted to bridge the gap between him and his uncle with a vision that would never change. He was in search of the Eternal. In India spiritual seekers must
have a Guru. Books provide only the outlines. The living secrets must be handed down from Guru to disciple.

So, our boy went in search of a Guru. There is a saying:

"The water is pure that flows,
The monk is pure that goes."

As a rule those who pursue religious life become celibates or monks. They lead on itinerant life. They never stay in a place for more than 3-4 days. Pavahari Baba was once found on the top of mount Girinar in Kathiawar. It was here that he was first initiated into the mysteries of Yoga.

The next turning point in the life of Pavahari Baba was on the banks of the Ganga, somewhere near Varanasi. He met a monk (Sanyasi) who practised Yoga and lived in a hole dug in the high bank of the river. It was through him that he learnt to live inside a tunnel. It is always advisable for saints to live in such a tunnel or a hole or a cave, where the temperature is even and where sounds do not disturb them. Pavahari Baba also learnt Advaita system of philosophy from this saint.

After years of travel, study and discipline, the young Pavhari Baba came back to Ghazipur. Then he dug a cave in the ground, like the Sanyasi on the banks of the Ganga. Then he began to remain there for hours. Gradually his contact with the outer world became less and less. He would remain in the
cave more and more. For many days he would not come out of his cave at all. Nobody knew what he ate. So the people around him started calling him Pavahari (i.e., air-eater) Baba (i.e, Father).

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

Swami Vivekananda asked him many times the reason of his not coming out of his cave to help the world. He said, "Do you think that physical help is the only help possible? Is it not possible that one mind can help other minds even without the activity of the body?"

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

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

Neither was his humility kindred to that which means pain and anguish
or self-abasement. It sprang naturally from the realisation of that which he
once so beautifully explained to us, "The Lord is the wealth of those who have
nothing - yes, of those of have thrown away all desires of possession, even that
of one's own soul."

From these words one gets an idea as to how many times a man should
forgive and to what extent should he be humble. Only the humility,
forgiveness and non-violence of a man who has no desires of material
enjoyments like money, power, fame, lust etc. are genuine. The rest are only
play-acting.

Pavhari Baba never assumed the role of a teacher because that would
mean placing himself above others. But when any one asked for any advice it
would be given with infinite wisdom. Yet his replies were always gentle and
indirect.
For the last ten or more years of his life, he had withdrawn himself entirely from the gaze of mankind. A few potatoes and a little butter would be placed behind the door of his room. Sometimes during the night this was taken in when he was not in Samadhi and was living above ground. When inside his cave he did not even require these. Thus his silent life went on, witness to the science of Yoga, and a living example of purity, humility and love. A smoke also sometimes indicated his coming out of Samadhi. One day the smoke smelt of burning flesh. The people could not guess what was happening; but when the smell became overpowering, and the smoke was seen to rise up in volumes, they broke open the door, and found that the great Yogi had offered himself as the last oblation to his sacrificial fire and very soon a heap of ashes was all that remained of his body.

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

Pavahari Baba did not wish to cause trouble to any even after his death and performed the last sacrifice (ritual) of an Aryan, in full possession of body and mind.

"The present writer (Swami Vivekananda) owes a deep debt of gratitude to the departed saint and dedicates these lines, however unworthy, to the memory of one of the greatest Masters he has loved and served."
7.6 FUNDAMENTALS OF RELIGION

"The Fundamentals of Religion" is an incomplete essay which was found in the papers of Miss S.E. Waldo. The title is given by the publisher.

Swami Vivekananda in this essay says that he can best grasp the religions of the world, ancient or modern, dead or living, through this fourfold division:

1. **Symbology**: The employment of various external aids to preserve and develop the religious faculty of man.

2. **History**: The philosophy of each religion as illustrated in the lives of divine or human teachers acknowledged by each religion. This includes mythology; for what is mythology to one race, or period, is or was history to other races or periods. Even in cases of human teachers, much of their history is taken as mythology by successive generations.

3. **Philosophy**: The rationale of the whole scope of each religion.

4. **Mysticism**: The assertion of something superior to sense-knowledge and reason which particular persons possess under certain circumstances. It may be a part and parcel of other divisions mentioned here.

All the religions of the world, past or present, embrace one or more of these principles, the highly developed ones having all the four.
Of these highly developed religions again, some had no sacred book or
had books and they have disappeared. But those which were based on sacred
books are living to the present day. As such, all great religions of the world
today are founded on sacred books.

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


3. The Avestic on the Avesta.

4. The Buddhistic on the Tripitaka.


6. The Mohammedan on the Koran.

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

Strictly speaking, there are no absolutely racial religions. Yet a man can
argue that the first three religions, the Vedic, the Mosaic and the Avestic are
confined to the races to which they originally belonged. But the Buddhistic,
the Christian and the Mohammedan religions have been from the beginning
spreading religions. Obviously there will be a struggle between the
Buddhistic, and the Christian and the Mohammedan religions to conquer the
world. The racial religions must also unavoidably join in the struggle. Each one of these religions, racial or spreading has already split itself into various branches and those various branches are split into sects and further sub-sects.

This shows that there can be no single religion which suits the whole world. Each religion is the effect or the product of certain peculiarities of the race from which it came. That religion only fights to preserve the peculiarities of that race. It represses other peculiarities of other races and religions. Thus one religion to become universal would be dangerous and disastrous to man.

If the history of the world is studied, then it will be known that mankind had two dreams, one of a universal political Empire and that of a universal religious Empire. But they have been thwarted again and again. Every conqueror has been frustrated by the splitting up of his territories even before he could conquer a little part of the earth; and similarly every religion has been split into sects before it was fairly out of its cradle.

Yet it is true that the solidarity of the human race, social, political as well as religious, with a scope for infinite variation, is the plan of Nature; and if the line of least resistance is the true line of action, it seems to Swami Vivekananda that this splitting up of each religion into sects is the preservation of religion by frustrating the tendency to rigid sameness, as well as the clear indication to us of the line of procedure.
The end seems, therefore, to be not destruction but a multiplication of sectors until each individual is a sect unto himself. Finally, there will be as many religions or spiritual paths to be precise as there are people in this world.

Thus there can be no universal unity in mythologies and religious symbols which are different for every sect. There can be unity only in philosophy and in defining a necessity of various paths to attain mystic knowledge.
END NOTES


2. Ibid, P. 120-134.

3. Ibid, P. 135-137.


CHAPTER EIGHT

EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

The Fifth volume of The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda begins with a series of Epistles. In all Swami Vivekananda has written more than 520 letters spread over volumes 5, 6, 7 and 8. He has written another 230 letters in recently published volume 9. These epistles are a reflection of his personality and his moods. They also provide a means to understand and analyse his philosophy. I have quoted six letters as a sample here. (Refer to Appendix 2)

The letters of Swami Vivekananda have a personal touch. He writes from the bottom of his heart and his love and concern is there to be seen and felt. Whoever received his letter must have received his love, personal attention, a philosophy which embraces the whole world and above all Bethovan like phrases! They provide the receiver with a vision of life, with a common sense which is rational and with a blend of philosophy which is scientific drawn from the occidental and spiritual drawn from the oriental.
These letters of Swami Vivekananda reveal that he had a keen sense of observation. He had a photographic memory. His description of Hong Kong, China and Japan are not only photographic, but also bring out the strong points of their citizens and civilization. Swami Vivekananda was always positive in his outlook and observed and appreciated the good things he saw in a civilization. He is extremely appreciative of the hardworking qualities of the Chinese and Japanese. It is the rationalist in him who says that Indians should visit China and Japan by thousands and learn from them. He has appreciated their army, their factories, their technology and he wants Indians to march forward along with them.

At the same time we see his rational tongue heap a caustic satire on the Indians, their tradition ridden customs and their mentality. He says, "Come be men! kick out the priests who are always against progress ..... Do you love your country ? Then come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back." He is also very caustic in his criticism of young India who are simply repeating undigested European ideas only to get a clerkship or become a lawyer. He wants Indians to become self-reliant like the Japanese. He wants Indians to internalize European Science and Technology, and at the same time contribute to the world thought the gems of Vedanta.

However caustic Swami Vivekananda's criticism might look one can also understand his love for Indians. It is his love that has made him caustic.
One can also appreciate the power of Swami Vivekananda's prose in these letters. His English prose is not only lucid, it is at once powerful and dramatic. It sends an electric thrill into the reader. Even the laziest reader will be inspired to get up and do something meaningful. One can also appreciate the underlying humanity in Swami Vivekananda's words. He has no prejudice at all. He is quick to appreciate the values of the West, of Japan and China. He wants Indians to borrow from them and compete with them in a healthy way. He wants India to march along with other nations towards progress.

Not only does he see good in Japan and China, but also in U.S.A. Look at his appreciation for American women. He compares them to Goddess Lakshmi. They are pure and stainless as snow. They also go to schools and colleges. They earn money and at the same time preserve their culture.

He contrasts the condition of Indian women with that of American women. He laments that Indian women are very badly treated. Women can contribute to the society just like a man. At present (at least during the times of Swami Vivekananda) it is not happening. He wants India to change. He wants Indian women to be liberated, educated and become earning members of the family and the society. Indian women can represent Indian culture and spirituality better than men. It should happen as early as possible.

Letters of Swami Vivekananda reveal his whereabouts. They have helped his biographers a lot. They also reveal his busy schedule. He led an itinerant life. His energy level must have been very high to lead such a busy, itinerant
and hard working life. To achieve what he did in a life span of 39 years makes him one of the greatest human beings ever born.

He met various people in his life. The people he met came from different strata of society. He met beggars, kings, rich people, saints, sinners etc. He met women too. He met people from higher castes as well as lower castes. He reacted to their problems and conditions extempore. In a way he is responsible for the renaissance of India. He has given India a new philosophy and new ideas to work upon. He has given a new direction to the entire country. He is the architect of modern India.

These letters of Swami Vivekananda has helped the writers of his philosophy a lot. His Vedanta is called Neo-Vedanta. He has synthesized the different branches of Vedas and Upanishads along with modern scientific and rational thought.

In short one can conclude with these letters that Swami Vivekananda had a keen sense of observation, photographic memory, a positive mindset and the zeal of a reformer. They describe his philosophy also.
CHAPTER NINE

POEMS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

Scattered through the Volumes 4, 5, 6, 7 and 8 are the poems of Swami Vivekananda. Most of the poems of Swami Vivekananda are mystical and they describe his mystic experiences. I do not recommend them straight away to a rationalist because to understand mystic poetry one has to be a 'Sahrudayi'. It means that one must have the same heart as that of the writer. However there are a few poems of Swami Vivekananda which emphasize his philosophy of Advaita and his practice of renunciation to experience the philosophy of Advaita. Here I quote two of his poems.(Refer to Appendix 3)

One can enjoy the poetry of Swami Vivekananda only when one has become a more serious student of him, rather than just be a rationalist.

Swami Vivekananda has already made it very clear that mere words do not take a man anywhere in spiritual life. A man has to practice and verify the spiritual principles which he finds are sensible and rational.

'The Song of the Sannyasi' is a poem which brings out the temperament and attitude of a monk. Only monks in India were trained to practise the
philosophy of Advaitha. The renunciation of a monk should be perfect. He is not disturbed by the dualities like birth and death; heat and cold; happiness and misery. He is beyond these dualities which constitute the world of Maya. He is beyond Time, Space and Causation. He is the SELF. He should exhibit only the attributes of the SELF; or to be precise the lack of them, because we have defined the SELF as something which is beyond all attributes of the relative universe.

In the first stanza Swami Vivekananda says that 'The Song of the Sannyasi' had its birth in mountain caves and glades of forest deep. In ancient India monks and sages (Rishis) lived in forests. They had completely renounced their desire for sex, wealth and fame. They practised only to attain knowledge, truth and bliss. Every stanza ends with the lines 'Om Tat Sat Om'. It means that the Sannyasi has only good wishes for others. He hates no one. He loves all.

Swami Vivekananda says that darkness should go. Darkness symbolizes ignorance. Even light which is knowledge only brings a thirst for life. It leads a man from birth to death and to birth again. So the Sannyasin should realize that he is beyond light and darkness, above birth and death. He should never yield to these dualities of life. He should conquer his self and know that he is the SELF.
The Sannyasi is even beyond Karma Yoga. Ordinary mortals reap what they sow. They either enjoy or suffer the consequences of their actions. But the Sannyasin is beyond name and form. He is the Atman. He is the SELF.

There is no sex for the SELF nor are there any relationships. He does not even strive for either freedom, or mukti or yoga because he is not bound by anything. He is the ever free Atman; the SELF.

The Sannyasin is not bothered if people praise him or blame him. It is the same Atman who is present in both the praised and the praiser; blamed and the blamer. A Sannyasin must completely renounce any desire for sex and money. He is not bothered about what house he lives in, what he eats and what he drinks. All these things along with pleasures and pains of life belong to the realm of Maya. A Sannyasi rejects Maya. He is even beyond birth and death. This poem inspires a Sannyasi and even a householder (married man) to practise the philosophy of Advaita in real life. It also shapes the right attitude for a Jnana Yogi.

The poem, 'No one to Blame' begins with the ideas of Karma Yoga. It makes every individual responsible for his own fate. Every man makes or mars his own life because each action of his begets a reaction. A good action brings about a good reaction and a bad action brings about a bad reaction (result or consequence). It should not make a man pessimistic because if each man is a result of all his past actions, then the future is in his own hands to shape.
What we give in life that we get back. Love comes reflected as love and hate breeds more fierce hate. So the poet ultimately decides to give up, love, hate and everything. Even his thirst for life is gone. He wants Nirvana which is eternal death. He wants to salute the Lord, the perfect soul, who will awaken in him the knowledge that he is the eternal SELF. Both these poems preach the spirit of renunciation.
CHAPTER TEN

CONVERSATIONS, DIALOGUES AND DISCOURSES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

In vol. 5, 6 and 7 of the complete works of Swami Vivekananda we find 'Conversations and Dialogues'. These conversations and dialogues are recorded by the direct disciples of Swami Vivekananda during their interaction with him. These disciples are (1) Shri Surendranath Das Gupta (2) Shri Surendra Nath Sen (3) Shri Priya Nath Sinha and last but not the least, (4) Shri Sharat Chandra Chakravarty. In vol. 7 there are also a few newspaper interviews.

In his conversation with Shri Surendranath Das Gupta¹, Swami Vivekananda said that a man must always think of death. At first such a thought might make a man gloomy. But after some persistence he will realize the truth behind the saying "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity!" In other words he will understand the impermanence of life and impermanence of the world. That should make him least selfish and work more and more for the sake of others.
Some of the disciples complained that they were poor and had no power to help others. Then Swami Vivekananda replied, "Leave aside your thoughts of poverty! In what respect are you poor? Do you feel regret because you have not a coach and a pair or a retinue of servants at your beck and call? What of that? You little know how nothing would be impossible for you in life if you labour day and night for others with your heart's blood! And lo and behold! the other side of the hallowed river of life stands revealed before your eyes - the screen of Death has vanished, and you are the inheritors of the wondrous realm of immortality!"

In his conversation with Surendra Nath Sen\(^2\), Swami Vivekananda said that the people of India have lost Shraddha. Shraddha means faith in their own self. Strength is life and weakness is death. It is by losing this idea of Shraddha that Indians have become weak. What India wants is real men. They want that education by which character is formed, strength of mind is increased, the intellect is expanded, and by which one can stand on one's own feet. Real men are self dependent. They are dedicated. They have given their body, mind and soul to the service of others. They are one pointed and focused. They want to serve others and obtain their own freedom. Shraddha gives them power. Even the least work done for others, without any trace of selfishness brings tremendous power. Indians should develop such Shraddha. But today it is not there. It is because of slavery. Indians were ruled by foreign forces for hundreds and hundreds of years. So they have come to understand that they are weak. They have lost faith in themselves. Swami
Vivekananda felt that Indians should take strength from the message of the Upanishads, "We are the Atman, deathless and free; pure by nature." Strength is life, weakness is death. When the disciple argued that it is the duty of the ruler (or the state or the government) to solve Indians' problems, Swami Vivekananda replied:

"Never are the wants of a beggar fulfilled. Suppose the government gives you all you need, where are the men who are able to keep up the things demanded? So make Men first. Men we want, and how can men be made unless Shraddha is there."

By Men Swami Vivekananda meant people who are completely selfless, completely without fear and who are prepared to give up their life serving others. At present the people of India have become slaves, cowards, and men of ordinary intellect. He first wanted Indians to become physically strong, intelligent and people who had faith in themselves. That was the top priority. He was rational enough to foresee that unless the people develop awareness, a government can do nothing. In fact it can only become corrupt, like the present government. The Indian government is corrupt because it is elected by the people who are corrupt and who have no awareness.

The next day, to the same person and group Swami Vivekananda explained that the ultimate goal of both knowledge (Jnana Yoga) and devotion (Bhakthi Yoga) is the same. According to Bhakthi Yoga God is 'All-Love'. One cannot even say "I love Him", because God is All love. There is no Love
outside Himself. "The love that is in the heart with which you love Him is even He Himself. In a similar way, whatever attractions or inclinations one feels drawn by are all He Himself."

The thief steals, the harlot sells her body, the mother loves her child - in each of these too is He. One world system attracts another - there also is He. Everywhere is He.

According to Jnana Yoga also, it is God Himself who has become everything - even this universe. This is where Jnana Yoga and Bhakti Yoga are reconciled. In fact all the four yogas seek the same Ultimate Truth. Swami Vivekananda also made it clear that there was no such thing as absolute good or evil in this world. One thing which is good in a particular circumstance can become evil in a different circumstance. Fire in a stove cooks the meal. Fire uncontrolled will burn the body. He also said that matter and spirit though to all appearances they seem to be two distinct things, are really two different forms of one substance; and similarly, all the different forces that are known to us, whether in the material or in the internal world, are but varying forms of the manifestation of one Force. A thing is called matter, where that spirit force is manifested less; and living, where it shows itself more; but there is nothing, which is absolutely matter at all times and in all conditions. The same force which presents itself in the material world as attraction or gravitation is felt in its finer and subtler state as love and the like in higher spiritual stages of realisation.
This is a point to ponder for scientists who study the origin of life and the theory of evolution. They should also study Jnana Yoga and Bhakthi Yoga of Swami Vivekananda. There are many scientists who wonder how an amoeba could go through the process of evolution and become a man. It is not matter that goes through evolution. It is the spirit, the consciousness behind matter that goes through this process of evolution.

During his conversations and dialogues with Surendra Nath Sen, Swami Vivekananda also condemned child marriage system prevalent in India. As a rationalist he stressed the importance of education. He felt that boys and girls of India should observe strict Brahmacharya (continence) until their education is completed. Only then they should marry. He also encouraged intermarriages among subdivisions of a Varna (Caste). It is rational and scientific to marry after human beings attain full sexual maturity and complete their education. They are fit to settle down in life as married. It is also scientific and rational to marry outside one's clan because it gives exposure to new customs and ideas and provides nature a greater variety of producing quality off-spring.

During his conversations and dialogues with Priya Nath Sinha, Swami Vivekananda said that the British have given enough for India. They have given their railways, telegraph and above all their science. Indians have only behaved like beggars before them. They have become so poor and lazy they feel that they are unfit to give the Britishers and Westerners anything. Actually when one studies the history of the world, one comes to know how
the greatest of ideas have originated in India and have travelled to Arabia and Greece. The English are also here today to gather the highest ideals of Vedanta. It is the duty of the Indians to give it to them.

Then Priya Nath Sinha asked Swami Vivekananda a question about the Swamiji’s lectures in the West, where he has frequently and eloquently dwelt on Indians' characteristic talents and virtues, and many convincing proofs that he has put forward to show the whole-souled love of religion. But at present Swamiji is saying that Indians are full of Tamas (laziness and darkness); and at the same time the Swamiji is accrediting Indians as the teachers of the eternal religion of the Rishis to the world. Priyanath Sinha wonders if that is possible. Then the Swamiji replied:

"Do you mean to say that I should go about from country to country, expatiating on your failings before the public? Should I not rather hold up before them the characteristic virtues that mark you as a nation? It is always good to tell a man his defects in a direct way and in a friendly spirit to make him convinced of them, so that he may correct himself- but you should also trumpet forth his virtues before others. Shri Ramakrishna used to say that if you repeatedly tell a bad man that he is good, he turns out in time to be good; a good man becomes bad if he is incessantly called so. There in the West, I have said enough to those people of their shortcomings. Mind, upto my time, all who went over to the West from our country have sung paeans to them in praise of their virtues and have trumpeted out only our blemishes to their ears. Consequently, it is no wonder that they have learnt to hate us. For this reason
I have laid before them your virtues and pointed out to them their vices, just as I am telling you of your weaknesses and their good points. However full of Tamas you may have become, something of the nature of the ancient Rishis, however little it may be, is undoubtedly in you still - atleast the framework of it. But that does not show that one should be in a hurry to take up at once the role of a teacher of religion and go over to the West to preach it. First of all one must completely mould one's religious life in solitude, must be perfect in renunciation and must preserve Brahmacharya without a break. The Tamas has entered into you - What of that ? Cannot the Tamas be destroyed ? It can be done in less than no time ! It was for the destruction of this Tamas that Bhagvan Shri Ramakrishna came to us."

This reply of Swami Vivekananda assumes historic proportions. He knows how the Indians have behaved like slaves and beggars before the British. He could also understand the contempt the British had for a conquered race. He wanted the British and the Americans to understand their faults and also appreciate the good things that are there in India. Similarly he wanted the Indians to come out of their beggarly condition, fight for their independence and earn self-respect.

He also understood the fault of too much criticism. He always wanted to say positive things about Indians, and make them come out of their negative mindset. All the criticism he has heaped on Indians has only made Indians better citizens of India than they were because he loved India. His criticism is genuine love for India.
He is also extremely rational and perfect in his analysis of the Indian mind set. They are full of Tamas (laziness and darkness) and they have mistaken it for Satwa (goodness).

In his discourse on 'Concentration and Breathing' Swami Vivekananda says that the main difference between men and the animals is the difference in their power of concentration. It is there for everybody to see. High achievements in Art, Music, Science etc. are the results of high levels of concentration. An animal has very little power of concentration. Those who have trained animals find much difficulty in the fact that the animal is constantly forgetting what is told him. He cannot concentrate his mind long upon anything at a time.

The difference between a man and another man also lies in his ability to concentrate.

A rationalist might wonder if the concentration of the mind could be developed and increased. Yogis agree. In fact all the four Yogas, especially Raja Yoga, when studied carefully, reveal that they are techniques to increase the concentration of our mind. A pure concentrated mind is God. Techniques of breathing and posture in Raja Yoga all contribute to the development of concentration.

Swami Vivekananda's discourse on "The Importance of Psychology" makes interesting reading. Psychology is not a well developed science in the West. Psychology is the science of sciences; but in the West it is placed upon
the same plane as all other sciences; that is, it is judged by the same criterion - utility.

But people seem to forget that ninety percent of man's knowledge cannot be applied in a practical way to life. Only a small fraction of scientific knowledge has application in practical life. And even this only contributes to sensual pleasures and to lessen physical and mental 'work' as such. Here work means not Karma Yoga. It is the daily routine done to earn money and satisfy desires.

Swami Vivekananda says that men all are slaves of their senses and slaves of their minds, conscious as well as subconscious. In fact the conscious mind is like a drop of water in a mighty ocean of subconscious mind.

"The reason why a criminal is a criminal is not because he desires to be one, but because he has not his mind under control and is therefore a slave to his own conscious and subconscious mind. He must follow the dominant trend of his own mind; he cannot help it; he is forced onward inspite of himself, in spite of his own better promptings, his own better nature"

Man has become a slave of his mind. "Deep down in our subconscious mind are stored up all the thoughts and acts of the past, not only of this life, but of all other lives we have lived. This great boundless ocean of subjective mind is full of all the thoughts and actions of the past. Each one of these is striving to be recognised, pushing onward for expression, surging, wave after
wave, out upon the objective mind, the conscious mind. These thoughts, the stored-up energy we take for natural desires, talents etc."

It explains man's terrible pre-occupation with sex, food, alcohol etc. etc. Even a monk finds it difficult to overcome these urges even if he badly wants to. Man does not realize the origin of these urges and becomes a slave to them.

Unfortunately the mind uncontrolled and unguided will drag a man down. If he follows only the dictates of his mind, he will become wayward and gets interested only in laziness, comfort, sex, food, drink and sleep. So he must learn to control the mind. He must make it work, and achieve goals. The highest thing to be achieved is freedom from the senses, and a pure mind. A pure and still mind is God. This is mentioned again and again by Swami Vivekananda in very clear terms.

To study any material or physical science sufficient data is obtained and analysed and a knowledge of the science is the result. But in the study and analysis of the mind, there are no data, no facts acquired from without. The mind is analysed by itself. This makes psychology the greatest science. If physicists and scientists conduct experiment, and analyse the data they have observed, they get the same results. (i.e. if they are efficient) But in psychology it is different. Each mind is different in its own way. Here there are no common data. The experience of each mind in the same situation is likely to be different.
In the West, the powers of the mind, especially unusual powers are looked upon as bordering on witchcraft and mysticism. The study of higher psychology has been retarded by its being identified with mere alleged psychic phenomena, as is done by some mystery-mongering order of Hindu fakirs.

A controlled mind has unusual powers and it is up to everyman to realize its powers. To train and control the mind one must go deep down into the subconscious mind, classify and arrange in order all the different impressions, thoughts etc. stored up there and control them. This is the first step. By the control of the subconscious mind one gets control over the conscious.

In his discourse on "Formal Worship" delivered in San Francisco on 10th April 1900, Swami Vivekananda analyses the Bible. The Jewish history and Jewish thought have been produced by two types of teachers - priests and prophets. The priests represent the power of conservatism and the prophets the power of progress. But the irony is after a passage of time the followers of a prophet become priests. They make the teachings of a prophet conservative because they have no ability to look beyond. So a new prophet has to arrive and challenge the old conservatism every time.

Volume 7 of Swami Vivekananda begins with 'Inspired Talks'. Here Swami Vivekananda did not lecture to large audiences as a rationalist. He taught his intimate disciples the way to God, hoping that small and intimate groups can absorb better what he had to say.
In his 'Conversations and Dialogues' with his disciple Sharat Chandra Chakraborty he says that all depressed castes must be raised to the level of Brahmins. So on the Birth Anniversary celebrations of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahamsa he asked his disciple to bring holy threads worn by Brahmins. He invested all the lower caste devotees who came to the Math with the sacred thread and 'Gayatri Mantra'.
END NOTES


5. Ibid, P. 356-357.


CHAPTER ELEVEN

CONCLUSION

In the course of his conversation with Swami Vivekananda on Advaita (Jnana Yoga), Sharat Chandra Chakraborthy asked a question. Swami Vivekananda had said that creation, maintenance and dissolution of this universe are superimposed on Brahman, and have no absolute existence. The disciple wonders if it can be true because one can never have the delusion of something that one had not already experienced. Just as one who has never seen a snake cannot mistake a rope for a snake, a man who has not experienced this creation, cannot mistake Brahman for the creation. Therefore creation must have been, or is, to have given rise to the delusion of creation. But this brings in a dualistic position.

Swamiji replied that the man of realisation will in the first place refute Sharat Chandra's objection by stating that to his vision, creation and things of that sort do not at all appear. He sees Brahman and Brahman alone. He sees the rope and not the snake. If it is argued that at any rate, seeing this creation,
or snake - then a man of realisation will try to bring home the real nature of the rope, with a view to curing defective vision. When through his instructions and disciple's reasoning, he will be able to realise the truth of the rope, or Brahman, then this delusive idea of the snake, or creation will vanish. Then this delusive idea of creation, maintenance and dissolution can only be a super imposition on the Brahman. If this appearance of creation etc. has continued as a beginningless series, let it do so; no advantage will be gained by settling this question. Until Brahman is realised as vividly as a fruit on the palm of one's hand this question cannot be adequately settled, and then neither such a question crops up, nor is there need for a solution. The tasting of the reality of Brahman is then like a dumb man tasting something nice, but without the power to express his feelings.

Sharat Chandra asked then what would be the use of reasoning about it so much.

Swamiji replied that reasoning and rationality are necessary to understand the point intellectually. But the Reality transcends reasoning and rationality. Brahman cannot be reached through reasoning.

Volume 8 of Swami Vivekananda begins with 'Discourses on Jnana Yoga'.

Swami Vivekananda says in his 'Discourses on Jnana Yoga' that all reasoning ends in finding Unity. The greatest teacher of Vedanta was
Shankaracharya. By solid reasoning he extracted from the Vedas the truths of Vedanta, and on them built up the wonderful system of Jnana that is taught in his commentaries. He unified all the conflicting descriptions of Brahman (God) and showed that there is only One Infinite Reality. The essence of Vedanta is that there is but one Being and that every soul is that Being in full, not a part of that Being. All the sun is reflected in each dew-drop. Similarly each man and his soul appearing in time, space and causality is one Reality.

All unselfishness or all spiritual endeavour is denial of this lower self - this appearance and an affirmation of that One Reality.

Science in general, Physics in particular, is bound on both sides by metaphysics. So it is with reason and rationality - it starts from non-reason and ends with non-reason. Science studies matter and this universe. It can never explain the origin of matter and this universe. Nor can it explain the end. If this enquiry is pushed far enough in the world of perception, then it must reach a plane beyond perception. Reason is really stored up and classified perception, preserved by memory. A man can never imagine or reason beyond his sense perceptions. The question then arises, if man has got an instrument that transcends reason and rationality. Saints of all ages say "Yes." But it is impossible to translate their experiences into language even for them. Religion, therefore, is the science which explains the transcendental in nature through the transcendental in man. A man knows little of himself and consequently he knows little of this universe.
The true rationalist, therefore, must go on and fearlessly follow his reason to its farthest limits. It will not help to stop anywhere on the road. When a man begins to deny, all must go until he reaches what cannot be thrown away or denied, which is the real 'I' (SELF). This 'I' (SELF) is the witness of the universe, it is unchangeable, eternal, infinite. At present, layer after layer of ignorance covers it. The intellectual person, when once he comes to know that something is unreal, he should give it up. He should stop depending on it. Ultimately his reason will make him realize that this whole world is changeable, impermanent and unreal. Only the 'SELF' is real.

These ideas have been very clearly and elaborately substantiated by Swami Vivekananda in his Complete Works that constitute the primary source of this thesis.

Chapter one has defined the Aims and Objectives of the thesis and also laid out the review of the literature. It has defined the methodology adopted. It has also discussed the need for the study. It introduces the hypotheses.

This introductory chapter confirms that there has been no book hitherto written on this topic in discussion and hence the study becomes significant as well as a pioneering venture. It substantiates views of Bertrand Russell followed by views of Swami Vivekananda. It defines rationality according to Bertrand Russell and examines the views of Swami Vivekananda in that light.
Chapter two has covered the rationality behind Karma Yoga. Inaction in man means death. Even a thought is an action at the mental level. So a man has to work. Karma Yoga explains rationally that a man should work. Ultimately a man should work but should not desire for the fruits of his actions. He should be without desires and motives.

Chapter three has deliberated the rationality behind Raja Yoga. It explains the eight steps of Raja Yoga and discusses that every step in Raja Yoga is rational. Every step when practised causes an experience in man. It is this experience that provides verification for the theories of Raja Yoga.

Chapter four has substantiated that Jnana Yoga is in tune with the latest discoveries of Science. Jnana means knowledge. It is the knowledge of SELF. It explains that the physical world and the universe which we see around us is Maya. SELF alone is real. To understand the SELF is the real purpose of man's life. It is rational to overcome Maya which is unreal and search for the SELF which is real.

Chapter five has proved that Bhakthi Yoga is rational. When a man accepts a God, it is easy to love Him. In fact Bhakthi Yoga is the easiest method to search the SELF. However there is one danger in Bhakthi Yoga. Every practitioner of Bhakthi Yoga feels that his God is the greatest. Other Gods are not great. This is fanaticism. Rationality will help to overcome this.
Chapter six has deliberated Swami Vivekananda's message to India. Swami Vivekananda wanted Indians to be strong and self-sufficient. In fact, India is facing a lot of problems because Indians have become weak and slavish. They have no confidence. Swami Vivekananda wanted Indians to develop self-confidence. He wanted Indians to learn Science and Technology from the British and the West. He wanted Indians to give the West Vedanta philosophy, which is unique in the world. Only a rationalist like Swami Vivekananda can think like this.

Chapter seven has covered some of the important lectures and discourses of Swami Vivekananda. He has covered some important biographies of great religious leaders of the world, both past and present. Swami Vivekananda says that they were all rational in their approach to life and spirituality at the same time.

Chapter eight has discussed the letters of Swami Vivekananda. These letters explain the philosophy of Swami Vivekananda in simple terms which is rational.

Chapter nine has discussed the poems of Swami Vivekananda. The poems of Swami Vivekananda here preach renunciation which is the foundation of spirituality.

Chapter ten has deliberated on the problems of modern India. Swami Vivekananda feels that learning from the ancient Vedas and Upanishads will
help young men of India in solving the problems of modern India. Strength is the message of Upanishads. Indian young men must become strong and selfless. They must serve the society.

In the conclusion it is made clear that reasoning and rationality are essential for a man to understand that the whole world is unreal and SELF alone is real. So the man of reason, science and logic must pursue rationality till the end. He will understand that SELF alone is worth pursuing. The conclusion being the concluding part of the thesis, gives chapter wise summary and suggests the scope for further research in this topic.
11.1 SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH:

Though an exhaustive work is done there in this thesis, it has its own limitations and a lot more areas have not been touched upon.

i. All available religious and spiritual knowledge can be made more rational and scientific.

ii. More focus can be made on poems of Swami Vivekananda.

iii. Swami Vivekananda can be compared with others like Shankaracharya and Buddha of his own caliber.
A certain king used to inquire of all the Sanyasis who came to his country, "who is the greater man - he who gives up the world and becomes a Sanyasi or he who lives in the world and performs his duties as a householder? Many wisemen sought to solve the problem. Some asserted that the Sanyasi was the greater, upon which the king demanded that they should prove their assertion. When they could not, he ordered them to marry and become householders. Then others came and said, "The householder who performs his duties is the greater man", of them too, the king demanded proofs. When they could not give them, he made them also settle down as householders.

At last there came a young Sanyasi, and the king similarly enquired of him also. He answered, "Each, O King, is equally great in his own place.", "Prove this to me" asked the king. "I will prove it to you" said the Sanyasin, "but you must first come and live as I do for a few days, that I may be able to prove to you what I say." The king consented and followed the Sanyasin (in disguise) out of his own territory and passed through many other countries
until they came to a great kingdom. In the capital of that kingdom a great ceremony was going on. The king and the Sanyasi heard the noise of drums and music, and heard also the criers; the people were assembled in the streets in gala dress and a great proclamation was being made. The king and the Sanyasi stood there to see what was going on. The crier was proclaiming loudly that the princess, daughter of the king of that country, was about to choose a husband from among those assembled before her.

It was an old custom in India for princesses to choose husbands in this way. Each princess had certain ideas of the sort of man she wanted for a husband. Some would have the handsomest man, others would have only the most learned. Others again the riches and so on. All the princes of the neighbourhood put on their best attire and presented themselves before her. Sometimes they too had their own criers to enumerate the advantages and the reasons why they hoped the princess should choose them. The princess was taken round on a throne, in the most splendid array, and looked at and heard about them. If she was not pleased with what she saw and heard, she said to her bearers, "Move on", and no more notice was taken of the rejected suitors. If, however, the princess was pleased with any one of them, she threw a garland of flowers over him and he became her husband.

The princess of the country to which our king and the Sanyasi had come was having one of these interesting ceremonies. She was the most beautiful princess in the world, and the husband of the princess would be ruler of the kingdom after her father's death. The idea of this princess was to marry the
handsomest man, but she could not find the right one to please her. Several times these meetings had taken place, but the princess could not select a husband. This meeting was the most splendid of all, more people and princes than ever had come to it. The princess came in on a throne, and the bearers carried her from one prince to the next. She did not seem to care for any one, so everyone became disappointed that this meeting also was going to be a failure. Just then came a young man, a Sanyasi, handsome as if the sun had come down to the earth, and stood in one corner of the assembly, watching what was going on. The throne with the princess came near him, and as soon as she saw the handsome Sanyasi, she stopped and threw the garland over him. The young Sanyasi seized the garland and threw it off, exclaiming, "What nonsense is this? I am a Sanyasi. What is marriage to me?" The king of that country thought that perhaps this man was poor and so dared not marry the princess, and said to him, "With my daughter goes half my kingdom now, and the whole kingdom after my death!" and put the garland again on the Sanyasi. The young man threw it off once more, saying "Nonsense! I do not want to marry" and walked quickly away from the assembly.

Now the princess had fallen so much in love with this young man that she said, "I must marry this man or I shall die"; and she went after him to bring him back. Then our other Sanyasi, who had brought the king there, said to him, "King, let us follow this pair"; so they walked after them, but at a good distance behind. The young Sanyasi who had refused to marry the princess walked out into the country for several miles. Then he came to a forest and
entered into it, the princess followed him, and the other two followed them. Now this young Sanyasi was well acquainted with that forest and knew the intricate paths in it, He suddenly passed into one of these and disappeared, and the princess could not follow him. After trying for a long time to find him she sat down under a tree and began to weep, for she did not know the way out. Then our king and the other Sanyasi came to her and said, "Do not weep; we will show you the way out of this forest, but it is too dark for us to find it now. Here is a big tree; let us rest under it, and in the morning we will go early and show you the road."

Now a little bird and his wife and their three little ones lived on that tree, in a nest. This little bird looked down and saw the three people under the tree and said to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do? Here are some guests in the house, and it is winter, and we have no fire." So he flew away and got a bit of burning firewood in his beak and dropped it before the guests, to which they added fuel and made a blazing fire. But the little bird was not satisfied. He said again to his wife, "My dear, what shall we do? There is nothing to give these people to eat, and they are hungry. We are householders; it is our duty to feed anyone who comes to the house. I must do what I can, I will give them my body." So he plunged into the midst of fire and perished. The guests saw him falling and tried to save him, but he was too quick for them.

The little bird's wife saw what her husband did, and she said, "Here are three persons and only one little bird for them to eat. It is not enough; it is my
duty as a wife not to let my husband's effort go in vain; let them have my body also." Then she fell into the fire and was burned to death.

Then the three baby birds, when they saw what was done and that there was still not enough food for the three guests, said, "Our parents have done what they could and still it is not enough. It is our duty to carry on the work of our parents; let our bodies go too". And they all dashed down into the fire also.

Amazed at what they saw, the three people could not of course eat these birds. They passed the night without food, and in the morning the king and the Sanyasin showed the princess the way, and she went back to her father.

Then the Sanyasi said to the king, "King, you have seen that each is great in his own place. If you want to live in the world, live like those birds, ready at any moment to sacrifice yourself for others. If you want to renounce the world, be like that youngman to whom the most beautiful woman and a kingdom were nothing. If you want to be a householder, hold your life as a sacrifice for the welfare of others; and if you choose the life of renunciation, do not even look at beauty and money and power. Each is great in his own place, but the duty of one is not the duty of the other."
APPENDIX – 2

Letter - 1

Allahabad
5th January, 1890

My dear Fakir.

. . . A word for you. Remember always, I may not see you again. Be moral. Be brave. Be a heart-whole man. Strictly moral, brave unto desperation. Don't bother your head with religious theories. Cowards only sin, brave men never, no, not even in mind. Try to love anybody and everybody. Be a man and try to make those immediately under your care, namely Ram, Krishnamayi and Indu, brave, moral, and sympathizing. No religion for you, my children, but morality and bravery. No cowardice, no sin, no crime, no weakness – the rest will come of itself. . . . And don't take Ram with you ever or ever allow him to visit a theatre or any enervating entertainment whatever.

Yours affectionately

Vivekananda.

My dear Ram, Krishnamayi and Indu,

Bear in mind, my children, that only cowards and those who are weak commit sin and tell lies. The brave are always moral. Try to be moral, try to be brave, try to be sympathising.

Yours,

Vivekananda

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Bombay
20th September, 1892

Dear Panditji Maharaj,

Your letter has reached me duly. I do not know why I should be undeservingly praised. "None is good, save One, that is, God", as the Lord Jesus hath said. The rest are only tools in His hands. "Gloria in Excelsis", "Glory unto God in the highest", and unto men that deserve, but not to such an undeserving one like me. Here "the servant is not worthy of the hire"; and a Fakir, especially, has no right to any praise whatsoever, for would you praise your servant for simply doing his duty?

. . . My unbounded gratitude to Pandit Sundarlalji, and to my Professor for this kind remembrance of me.

Now I would tell you something else. The Hindu mind was ever deductive and never synthetic or inductive. In all our philosophies, we always find hair-splitting arguments, taking for granted some general proposition, but the proposition itself may be as childish as possible. Nobody ever asked or searched the truth of these general propositions. Therefore independent thought we have almost none to speak of, and hence the dearth of those sciences which are the results of observation and generalisation. And why was it thus? - From two causes; The tremendous heat of the climate forcing us to love rest and contemplation better than activity, and the Brahmins as priests never undertaking journeys or voyages to distant lands. There were voyagers and people who travelled far; but they were almost always traders, i.e., people from whom priestcraft and their own sole love for gain had taken away all capacity for intellectual development. So their observations, instead of adding to the store of human knowledge, rather degenerated it; for their observations were bad and their accounts exaggerated and tortured into fantastical shapes, until they passed all recognition.
So you see, we must travel, we must go to foreign parts. We must see how the engine of society works in other countries, and keep free and open communication with what is going on in the minds of other nations, if we really want to be a nation again. And over and above all, we must cease to tyrannise. To what a ludicrous state are we brought! If a Bhangi comes to anybody as a Bhangi, he would be shunned as the plague; but no sooner does he get a cupful of water poured upon his head with some mutterings of prayers by a Padri, and get a coat on his back, no matter how threadbare, and come into the room of the most orthodox Hindu - I don't see the man who then dare refuse him a chair and a hearty shake of the hands! Irony can go no further. And come and see what they, the Padris, are doing here in the Dakshin (south). They are converting the lower classes by lakhs; and in Travancore, the most priestridden country in India - where every bit of land is owned by the Brahmins . . . nearly one fourth has become Christian! And I cannot blame them; what part have they in David and what in Jesse? When, when, O Lord, shall man be brother to man?

Yours,

Vivekananda

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Dear Alasinga, Balaji, G.G. Banking Corporation, and All my Madras Friends,

Excuse my not keeping you constantly informed of my movements. One is so busy every day, and especially myself who am quite new to the life of possessing things and taking care of them. That consumes so much of my energy. It is really an awful botheration.

From Bombay we reached Colombo. Our steamer remained in port for nearly the whole day, and we took the opportunity of getting off to have a look at the town. We drove through the streets, and the only thing I remember was a temple in which was a very gigantic Murti (image) of the Lord Buddha in a reclining posture, entering Nirvana ....

The next station was Penang, which is only a strip of land along the sea in the body of Malaya Peninsula. The Malayans are all Mohammedans and in old days were noted pirates and quite a dread to merchantmen. But now the leviathan guns of modern turreted battleships have forced the Malayans to look about for more peaceful pursuits. On our way from Penang to Singapore, we had glimpses of Sumatra with its high mountains, and the Captain pointed out to me several places as the favourite haunts of pirates in days gone by. Singapore is the capital of the Straits Settlements. It has a fine botanical garden with the most splendid collection of palms. The beautiful fan-like palm, called the traveller's palm, grows here in abundance, and the bread-fruit tree everywhere. The celebrated mangosteen is as plentiful here as mangoes in Madras, but mango is nonpareil. The people here are not half so dark as the people of Madras, although so near the line. Singapore possesses a fine museum too.
Hong Kong next. You feel that you have reached China, the Chinese element predominates so much. All labour, all trade seems to be in their hands. And Hong Kong is real China. As soon as the steamer casts anchor, you are besieged with hundreds of Chinese boats to carry you to the land. These boats with two helms are rather peculiar. The boatman lives in the boat with his family. Almost always, the wife is at the helms, managing one with her hands and the other with one of her feet. And in ninety per cent of cases, you find a baby tied to her back, with the hands and feet of the little Chin left free. It is a quaint sight to see the little John Chinaman dangling very quietly from his mother's back, whilst she is now setting with might and main, now pushing heavy loads, or jumping with wonderful agility from boat to boat. And there is such a rush of boats and steam launches coming in and going out. Baby John is every moment put into the risk of having his little head pulverised, pigtail and all; but he does not care a fig. This busy life seems to have no charm for him, and he is quite content to learn the anatomy of a bit of rice-cake given to him from time to time by the madly busy mother. The Chinese child is quite a philosopher and calmly goes to work at an age when your Indian boy can hardly crawl on all fours. He has learnt the philosophy of necessity too well. Their extreme poverty is one of the causes why the Chinese and the Indians have remained in a state of mummified civilisation. To an ordinary Hindu or Chinese, everyday necessity is too hideous to allow him to think of anything else.

Hong Kong is a very beautiful town. It is built on the slopes of hills and on the tops too, which are much cooler than the city. There is an almost perpendicular tramway going to the top of the hill, dragged by wire-rope and steam-power.

We remained three days at Hong Kong and went to see Canton, which is eighty miles up a river. The river is broad enough to allow the biggest steamers to pass through. A number of Chinese steamers ply between Hong
Kong and Canton. We took passage on one of these in the evening and reached Canton early in the morning. What a scene of bustle and life! What an immense number of boats almost covering the waters! And not only those that are carrying on the trade, but hundreds of others which serve as houses to live in. And quite a lot of them so nice and big! In fact, they are big houses two or three storeys high, with varandahs running round and streets between, and all floating!

We landed on a strip of ground given by the Chinese Government to foreigners to live in. Around us on both sides of the river for miles and miles is the big city - a wilderness of human beings, pushing, struggling, surging, roaring. But with all its population, all its activity, it is the dirtiest town I saw, not in the sense in which a town is called dirty in India, for as to that not a speck of filth is allowed by the Chinese to go waste; but because of the Chinaman, who has, it seems, taken a vow never to bathe! Every house is a shop, people living only on the top floor. The streets are very very narrow, so that you almost touch the shops on both sides as you pass. At every ten paces you find meat-stalls, and there are shops which sell cat's and dog's meat. Of course, only the poorest classes of Chinamen eat dog or cat.

The Chinese ladies can never be seen. They have got as strict a zenana as the Hindu of Northern India; only the women of the labouring classes can be seen. Even amongst these, one sees now and then a woman with feet smaller than those of your youngest child, and of course they cannot be said to walk, but hobble.

I went to see several Chinese temples. The biggest in Canton is dedicated to the memory of the first Buddhistic Emperor and the five hundred first disciples of Buddhism. The central figure is of course Buddha, and next beneath Him is seated the Emperor, and ranging on both sides are the statues of the disciples, all beautifully carved out of wood.
From Canton I returned to Hong Kong, and from thence to Japan. The first port we touched was Nagasaki. We landed for a few hours and drove through the town. What a contrast! The Japanese are one of the cleanliest peoples on earth. Everything is neat and tidy. Their streets are nearly all broad, straight, and regularly paved. Their little houses are cage-like, and their pine-covered evergreen little hills form the background of almost every town and village. The short-statured, fair-skinned, quaintly-dressed Japs, their movements, attitudes, gestures, everything is picturesque. Japan is the land of the picturesque! Almost every house has a garden at the back, very nicely laid out according to Japanese fashion with small shrubs, grass-plots, small artificial waters, and small stone bridges.

From Nagasaki to Kobe. Here, I gave up the steamer and took the land-route to Yokohama, with a view to see the interior of Japan.

I have seen three big cities in the interior - Osaka, a great manufacturing town, Kyoto, the former capital, and Tokyo, the present capital; Tokyo is nearly twice the size of Calcutta with nearly double the population.

No foreigner is allowed to travel in the interior without a passport.

The Japanese seem now to have fully awakened themselves to the necessity of the present times. They have now a thoroughly organised army equipped with guns which one of their own officers has invented and which is said to be second to none. Then, they are continually increasing their navy. I have seen a tunnel nearly a mile long, bored by a Japanese engineer.

The match factories are simply a sight to see, and they are bent upon making everything they want in their own country. There is a Japanese line of steamers plying between China and Japan, which shortly intends running between Bombay and Yokohama.
I saw quite a lot of temples. In every temple there are some Sanskrit Mantras written in Old Bengali characters. Only a few of the priests know Sanskrit. But they are an intelligent sect. The modern rage for progress has penetrated even the priesthood. I cannot write what I have in my mind about the Japs in one short letter. Only I want that numbers of our young men should pay a visit to Japan and China every year. Especially to the Japanese, India is still the dreamland of everything high and good. And you, what are you? . . . . talking twaddle all your lives, vain talkers, what are you? Come, see these people, and then go and hide your faces in shame. A race of dotards, you lose your caste if you come out! Sitting down these hundreds of years with an ever increasing load of crystallised superstition on your heads, for hundreds of years spending all your energy upon discussing the touchableness or untouchableness of this food or that, with all humanity crushed out of you by the continuous social tyranny of ages - what are you? And what are you doing now? . . . promenading the sea-shores with books in your hands-repeating undigested stray bits of European brainwork, and the whole soul bent upon getting a thirty-rupee clerkship, or at best becoming a lawyer-the height of young India's ambition - and every student with a whole brood of hungry children cackling at his heels and asking for bread! Is there not water enough in the sea to drown you, books, gowns, university diplomas, and all?

Come, be men! Kick out the priests who are always against progress, because they would never mend, their hearts would never become big. They are the offspring of centuries of superstition and tyranny. Root out priest-craft first. Come, be men! Come out of your narrow holes and have a look abroad. See how nations are on the march! Do you love man? Do you love your country? Then come, let us struggle for higher and better things; look not back, no, not even if you see the dearest and nearest cry. Look not back, but forward!
India wants the sacrifice of at least a thousand of her young men-men, mind, and not brutes. The English Government has been the instrument, brought over here by the Lord, to break your crystallized civilization, and Madras supplied the first men who helped in giving the English a footing. How many men, unselfish, thorough going men, is Madras ready now to supply, to struggle unto life and death to bring about a new state of things - sympathy for the poor, and bread to their hungry mouths, enlightenment to the people at large - and struggle unto death to make men of them who have been brought to the level of beasts, by the tyranny of your forefathers?

Yours etc.,

Vivekananda.

PS. Calm and silent and steady work, and no newspaper humbug, no name-making, you must always remember.
Dear Haripada,

It is very strange that news of my Chicago lectures has appeared in the Indian papers; for whatever I do, I try my best to avoid publicity. Many things strike me here. It may be fairly said that there is no poverty in this country. I have never seen women elsewhere as cultured and educated as they are here, well-educated men there are in our country, but you will scarcely find anywhere women like those here. It is indeed true, that 'the Goddess Herself lives in the houses of virtuous men as Lakshmi' I have seen thousands of women here whose hearts are as pure and stainless as snow. Oh, how free they are! It is they who control social and civic duties. Schools and colleges are full of women, and in our country women cannot be safely allowed to walk in the streets! Their kindness to me is immeasurable. Since I came here, I have been welcomed by them to their houses. They are providing me with food, arranging for my lectures, taking me to market, and doing everything for my comfort and convenience. I shall never be able to repay in the least the deep debt of gratitude I owe to them.

Do you know who is the real "Shakti-worshipper"? It is he who knows that God is the omnipresent force in the universe and sees in women the manifestation of that Force. Many men here look upon their women in this light. Manu, again, has said that gods bless those families where women are happy and well treated. Here men treat their women as well as can be desired, and hence they are so prosperous, so learned, so free and so energetic. But why is it that we are slavish, miserable, and dead? The answer is obvious.
And how pure and chaste are they here! Few women are married before twenty or twenty-five, and they are as free as the birds in the air. They go to market, school, and college, earn money, and do all kinds of work. Those who are well-to-do devote themselves to doing good to the poor. And what are we doing? We are very regular in marrying our girls at eleven years of age lest they should become corrupt and immoral. What does our Manu enjoin? "Daughters should be supported and educated with as much care and attention as the sons." As sons should be married after observing Brahmacharya up to the thirtieth year, so daughters also must observe Brahmacharya and be educated by their parents. But what are we actually doing? Can you better the condition of your women? Then there will be hope for your well-being. Otherwise you will remain as backward as you are now.

If anybody is born of a low caste in our country, he is gone for ever, there is no hope for him. Why? What a tyranny it is! There are possibilities, opportunities, and hope for every individual in this country. Today he is poor, tomorrow he may become rich and learned and respected. Here everyone is anxious to help the poor. In India there is a howling cry that we are very poor, but how many charitable associations are there for the well-being of the poor? How many people really weep for the sorrows and suffering of the millions of poor in India? Are we men? What are we doing for their livelihood, for their improvement? We do not touch them, we avoid their company! Are we men? Those thousands of Brahmanas—what are they doing for the low, downtrodden masses of India? "Don't touch", "Don't touch", is the only phrase that plays upon their lips! How mean and degraded has our eternal religion become at their hands! Wherein does our religion lie now? In "Don't touchism" alone, and nowhere else!

I came to this country not to satisfy my curiosity, nor for name or fame, but to see if I could find any means for the support of the poor in India. If God helps me, you will know gradually what those means are.
As regards spirituality, the Americans are far inferior to us, but their society is far superior to ours. We will teach them our spirituality and assimilate what is best in their society.

With love and best wishes,

Yours,

Vivekananda
Dear Friends,

Your letters have reached me. I am surprised that so much about me has reached you. The criticism you mention of the interior is not to be taken as the attitude of the American people. That paper is almost unknown here, and belongs to what they call a 'blue-nose Presbyterian paper', very begoted. Still all the 'blue-noses' are not ungentlemanly. The American people, and many of the clergy, are very hospitable to me. That paper wanted a little notoriety by attacking a man who was being lionised by society. That trick is well known here, and they do not think anything of it. Of course, our Indian missionaries may try to make capital out of it. If they do, tell them, "Mark, Jew, a judgment has come upon you!" Their old building is tottering to its foundation and must come down in spite of their hysterical shrieks. I pity them—if their means of living fine lives in India is cut down by the influx of oriental religions here. But not one of their leading clergy is ever against me. Well, when I am in the pond, I must bathe thoroughly.

I send you a newspaper cutting of the short sketch of our religion which I read before them. Most of my speeches are extempore. I hope to put them in book form before I leave the country. I do not require any help from India, I have plenty here. Employ the money you have in printing and publishing this short speech; and translating it into the vernaculars, throw it broadcast; that will keep us before the national mind. In the mean time do not forget our plan of a central college, and the starting from it to all directions in India. Work hard. ...
About the women of America, I cannot express my gratitude for their kindness. Lord bless them. In this country, women are the life of every movement, and represent all the culture of the nation, for men are too busy to educate themselves.

I have received Kidi's letters. With the question whether caste shall go or come I have nothing to do. My idea is to bring to the door of the meanest, the poorest, the noble ideas that the human race has developed both in and out of India, and let them think for themselves. Whether there should be caste or not, whether women should be perfectly free or not, does not concern me. "Liberty of thought and action is the only condition of life, of growth and well-being." Where it does not exist, the man, the race, the nation must go down.

Caste or no caste, creed or no creed, any man, or class, or caste, or nation, or institution which bars the power of free thought and action of an individual - even so long as that power does not injure others - is devilish and must go down.

My whole ambition in life is to set in motion a machinery which will bring noble ideas to the door of everybody, and then let men and women settle their own fate. Let them know what our forefathers as well as other nations have thought on the most momentous questions of life. Let them see specially what others are doing now, and then decide. We are to put the chemicals together, the crystallisation will be done by nature according to her laws. Work hard, be steady, and have faith in the Lord. Set to work, I am coming sooner or later. Keep the motto before you - "Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion."

Remember that the nation lives in the cottage. But, alas! nobody ever did anything for them. Our modern reformers are very busy about widow remarriage. Of course, I am a sympathiser in every reform, but the fate of a nation does not depend upon the number of husbands their widows get, but
upon the condition of the masses. Can you raise them? Can you give them back their lost individuality without making them lose their innate spiritual nature? Can you become an occidental or occidentals in your spirit of equality, freedom, work, and energy, and at the same time a Hindu to the very backbone in religious culture and instincts? This is to be done and we will do it. You are all born to do it. Have faith in yourselves, great convictions are the mothers of great deeds. Onward for ever! Sympathy for the poor, the downtrodden, even unto death—this is our motto.

Onward, brave lads!

Yours affectionately,

Vivekananda

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Dear Mrs. Bull,

I lectured at Brooklyn last Sunday, Mrs. Higgins gave a little reception the evening I arrived, and some of the prominent members of the Ethical Society including Dr. Jain [Janes] were there. Some of them thought that such Oriental religious subjects will not interest the Brooklyn public.

But the lecture, through the blessings of the Lord, proved a tremendous success. About 800 of the elite of Brooklyn were present, and the very gentlemen who thought it would not prove a success are trying for organizing a series in Brooklyn. The New York course for me is nearly ready, but I do not wish to fix the dates until Miss Thursby comes to New York. As such Miss Phillips who is a friend of Miss Thursby's and who is arranging the New York course for me will act with Miss Thursby in case she wants to get up something in New York.

I owe much to the Hale family and I thought to give them a little surprise by dropping in on New Year's day. I am trying to get a new gown here. The old gown is here, but it is so shrunken by constant washings that it is unfit to wear in public. I am almost confident of finding the exact thing in Chicago.

I hope your father is all right by this time.

With my love to Miss Farmer, Mr. and Mrs. Gibbons, and the rest of the holy family, I am ever yours.

Affectionately,

Vivekananda.
PS. I saw Miss Couring at Brooklyn. She was as kind as ever. Give her my love if you write her soon.

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END NOTES


2. Ibid, P. 4.

3. Ibid, P. 5.


5. Ibid, P 27.

APPENDIX – 3

THE SONG OF THE SANNYASIN¹

Wake up the note! the song that had its birth
Far off, where worldly taint could never reach,
In mountain caves and glades of forest deep,
Whose calm no sigh for lust or wealth or fame
Could ever dare to break; where rolled the stream
Of knowledge, truth, and bliss that follows both.
Sing high that note, Sannyasin bold! Say—
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Strike off thy fetters! Bonds that bind thee down,
Of shining gold, or darker, baser ore;
Love, hate - good, bad - and all dual throng,
Know, slave is slave, caressed or whipped, not free;
For fetters, though of gold, are not less strong to bind;
Then off with them, Sannyasin bold! Say—
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Let darkness go; the will-o' the-wisp that leads
With blinking light to pile more gloom on gloom
This thirst for life, for ever quench; it drags
From birth to death, and death to birth, the soul.
He conquers all who conquers self. Know this
And never yield, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

"Who sows must reap," they say, "and cause must bring
The sure effect; good, good; bad, bad; and none
Escape the law. But whoso wears a form
Must wear the chain." Too true; but far beyond
Both name and form is Atman, ever free,
Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

They knew not truth who dream such vacant dreams
As father, mother, children, wife, and friend.
The sexless Self! whose father He? whose child?
Whose friend, whose foe is He who is but One?
The Self is all in all, none else exists;
And thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

There is but One- The Free - Knower - Self!
Without a name, without a form or stain.
In Him is Maya dreaming all this dream.
The witness, He appears as nature, soul.
Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Where seekest thou? That freedom, friend, this world Nor that can give.
In books and temples vain
Thy search. Thine only is the hand that holds
The rope that drags thee on. Then cease lament,
Let go thy hold, Sannyasin bold! Say -

"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Say, "Peace to all: From me no danger be
To aught that lives. In those that dwell on high.
In those that lowly creep, I am the Self in all!
All life both here and there, do I renounce,
All heavens and earths and hells, all hopes and fears."
Thus cut thy bonds, Sannyasin bold! Say -

"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Heed then no more how body lives or goes,
Its task is done. Let Karma float it down;
Let one put garlands on, another kick
This frame; say naught. No praise or blame can be
Where praiser praised, and blamer blamed are one
Thus be thou calm, Sannyasin bold! Say -

"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Truth never comes where lust and fame and greed
Of gain reside. No man who thinks of woman
As his wife can ever perfect be;
Nor he who owns the least of things, nor he
Whom anger chains, can ever pass thro' Maya's gates.
So, give these up, Sannyasin bold! Say -

"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Have thou no home. What home can hold these, friend?
The sky thy roof, the grass thy bed; and food
What chance may bring, well cooked or ill, judge not,
No food or drink can taint that noble Self
Which knows Itself. Like rolling river free
Thou ever be, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Few only know the truth. The rest will hate
And laugh at thee, great one; but pay no heed.
Go thou, the free, from place to place, and help
Them out of darkness, Maya's veil. Without
The fear of pain or search for pleasure, go
Beyond them both, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"

Thus day by day, till Karma's powers spent
Release the soul for ever. No more is birth,
Nor I, nor thou, for God, nor man. The "I"
Has All become, the All is "I" and Bliss.
Know thou art That, Sannyasin bold! Say -
"Om Tat Sat, Om!"
NO ONE TO BLAME

The sun goes down, its crimson rays
    Light up the dying day ;
A startled glance I throw behind
    And count my triumph shame ;
    No one but me to blame.

Each day my life I make or mar,
    Each deed begets its kind,
Good good, bad bad, the tide once set
    No one can stop or stem ;
    No one but me to blame.

I am my own embodied past;
    Therein the plan was made;
The will, the thought, to that conform,
    To that the outer frame ;
    No one but me to blame.

Love comes reflected back as love,
    Hate breeds more fierce hate,
They mete their measures, lay on me
    Through life and death their claim;
    No one but me to blame.

I cast off fear and vain remorse,
    I feel my Karma's sway
I face the ghosts my deeds have raised -
    Joy, sorrow, censure, fame ;
    No one but me to blame.
Good, bad, love, hate, and pleasure, pain
    Forever linked go,
I dream of pleasure without pain,
    It never, never came ;
    No one but me to blame.

I give up hate, I give up love,
    My thirst for life is gone;
Eternal death is what I want,
    Nirvanam goes life's flame ;
    No one but me to blame.

One only man, one only God, one ever perfect soul,
One only sage who ever scorned the dark and dubious ways
One only man who dared think and dared show the goal-
That death is curse, and so is life, and best when stops to be.

Om Nama Bhagavate Sambuddhaya
Om, I salute the Lord, the awakened.

END NOTES


2. Ibid, P. 175.
BIBLIOGRAPHY

PRIMARY SOURCE


SECONDARY SOURCES


