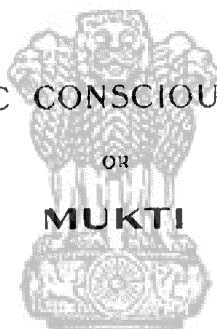


COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

OR

MUKTI



सत्यमेव जयते

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS

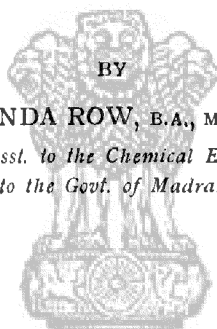
OR THE VEDANTIC IDEA OF
REALISATION OR MUKTI

(In the light of Modern Psychology)

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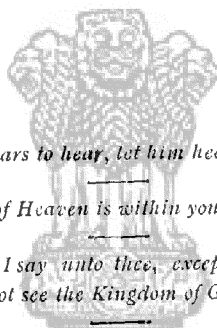
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सत्यमेव जयते

DEDICATED
TO ALL
INDEPENDENT AND SERIOUS
THINKERS

"Whose minds are full of
Obstinate questionings of sense and outward things."



"He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

"The kingdom of Heaven is within you."

*"Verily, Verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born
anew he cannot see the Kingdom of God."*

*"I thank thee, O Father, Lord of Heaven and Earth,
because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and
the prudent and hast revealed them unto babes."*

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PREFACE

IN bringing out, at the request of many friends, the paper I read at the 76th Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, in this form, I have had to re-write many portions and make many additions. In so doing I have had three objects in view :—(1) to clear away some of the misconceptions that have gathered round the Vedantic idea of Mukti or Liberation by the study of the analyses of particular cases in the light of modern psychology and to show to the Indians educated on Western lines of thought how and why it is the goal of human evolution ; (2) to show that Sri Ramakrishna was one of those that has attained liberation; in other words, that he

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possessed the special characteristics and essential symptoms of Cosmic Consciousness as described by Western psychologists ; and (3) to show that this attainment of Cosmic Consciousness, Supra-consciousness, Liberation or Mukti, by whatever name it may be called, is the basic truth of the teachings of all great religions and thus to find a common platform on which "a composite nationality in India, which the present generation is called upon to actualise in the social, economic and political relations of the country," can be built up and practically realised. As far as many different religions are concerned, it is the recognition of this great truth alone that can bring about a harmonious feeling amongst them and conduce to their co-operation for the growth of a common national consciousness and the achievement of a

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common nationality whereby this mighty nation, consisting of so many different races and religions, may once again become independent and great as of yore. How far this essay will help in bringing about such a conviction in the minds of my readers, I leave it to them to judge.

I am indebted to that epoch-making work of Prof. James of America, called "The Varieties of Religious Experience," and the contributions of the late Dr. Richard Maurice Buck on the subject of Cosmic Consciousness for all the psychological explanations of this supreme state, but I have not been careful enough in indicating the sources of all information with due regard to accuracy. Inasmuch as I claim no spark of originality in thought or expression, and inasmuch as truth is truth, from whatever source it may be derived, I crave the indulgence of my readers for this negligence.

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An unfortunate tendency is inherent in the mind of man to venerate that which he incompletely understands and to weave an element of mystery over such attainments as transcend his understanding. So much so, that when any of these attainments are explained away in a simple, clear manner, the mind accustomed to such mystification hardly believes in the simple explanation. This is the case with regard to the idea of Liberation or Mukti. It is considered to be something beyond the conception of man; and any explanation of the state on modern lines of thought is likely to be not easily believed in by those who always like some mystery to hang about the conceptions of their ideal. Similar was my own state before I came in contact with the life and teachings of a simple, unlettered Brahmin lady (*Sri Sakkarai-ammah of Komalesvaramalam*) whose

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one claim to greatness was that she was supremely happy; and I have not met with another learned or unlearned, rich or poor, great or small, among men and women who had this bliss depicted, as it were, in every pore of the body, in every word uttered and in every gesture made. A childlike simplicity of personal character, free from self-interest, and ignorant or careless of any *policy* of self-control, though habitually guided and regulated by noble emotions; a resolute loyalty to duty and obedience to all her elders and superiors in authority; a lofty and an independent spirit not caring to refute any odd stories that were current regarding her conduct or demeanour; open-minded, neither parading nor concealing any fact from others; never caring for any sort of aid from anyone nor even for her food and other necessities of life; unlettered as she was, her lucid exposition of her

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attainment and explanation of all intricate problems of Vedanta with such apt and simple illustrations and analogies never before heard of, which kept the whole audience of learned pandits and philosophers spell-bound and dumb-stricken for hours and hours together and made them wonder at the source of that wisdom and knowledge ; her dinning into the ears of her audience over and over again, the immortal, eternal and infinite nature of man and all creation ; the bliss-laden atmosphere and the influence she cast upon the whole assembly for the time being, in making them forget the petty dealings of this world and soar to higher regions along with her ; her simple life of holiness, not of the usual quality which manifests itself in an outward show of cold and austere behaviour but of that essential beauty of inward grace, so aptly defined by Lord Morley,

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who in his recent book of miscellanies says :—

“By holiness do we not mean something different from virtue? It is not the same as duty; still less is it the same as religious belief. It is a name for an inner grace of nature, an instinct of the soul, by which, though knowing of earthly appetites, of the worldly passions, the spirit purifying itself of these and independent of all reason, argument and the fierce struggles of the will dwells in living, patient and confident communion with the seen and the unseen Good”—;

and above all her admirable and so peculiarly loving nature and the delightfully charming smile with which she received every one that went to her,—these were the main lines that marked her entire career. She pre-eminently possessed all the characteristic signs of Liberation as described in this essay under “Effects of Liberation.” The constant and unremittent struggle for attainment for ten years preceding the sudden change that came on her in her thirtieth year; the vision and

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the phenomenon of light at the moment the change took place—which made her exclaim :

“ Oh *Veli*, (Light) *Paraveli*, (Holy Light) that art the very essence of my life ! Thou existed from all eternity, Thou wert with me while I was an infant, when I grew into a girl and then into a woman and in fact always. Is it to realise Thee that I had to struggle so hard these ten years and undergo all this tribulation and mental suffering ? Thou wert never without me and I never without Thee.

“ Thou art mine own, mine equal and my Spouse,
My complement, without whom I were nought ;
So in mine eyes thou art more fair than I,
For in thee only is my life fulfilled. ”

Oh ! now, that I have realised Thee, birth and death are at an end. I see I am unchangeable ; I am all bliss ; I am ever-existent ; I am all-pervading ; naught else exists but me. How happy I am ! I have become “*Kritharthal*” (i.e.) one that has completed all duties and attained the highest to be attained, etc.” ;—

the ecstatic bliss which was such a marked feature with her ; the intellectual illumination whereby, as already mentioned, she was able to elucidate the most intricate subjects of Vedanta and solve the problems of life, with such apt similies

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and homely analogies to the wonder and admiration of all that listened to her ; her sense of immortality and oneness with all creation ; the loss of the sense of sin and shame and of the fear of death ;—these signs and symptoms were so marked in her, that the moment I read the works of Prof. James and Dr. Maurice Buck above referred to, I realized how great were her attainments, and how hers was a complete case of Cosmic Consciousness. She often used to say, “ I never read any book, I do not know your Gita or your Upanishads ; but when pandits versed in these works came and told me all about the attributes of the Atman, it struck me as if they were exposing my very inner being and describing my own experiences. In fact, it is I who confirm the truth of the Gita and the Upanishads and they in their turn confirm my experiences.” In short, she

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was a living exposition of the truths contained in these great works.

It will be one of my proud achievements if I shall ever be blessed with Her grace to bring out Her life and teachings and show to the world how Liberation or Mukti is not a mysterious thing; how it can be attained by each and every one who earnestly struggles to attain it, even in this life; and how, in fact, it is the birth-right of every one, and how man is, in his very essence, immortal.

In the meantime, I trust that this essay will be a prelude to the work I have in view, and serve to clear the ground and show that difficult as the attainment of Liberation may be, there is no mystery attached to that state which is the goal of human evolution—a goal we are all bound to achieve sooner or later.

MYLAPORE, MADRAS, }
INDIA. }
October 1909.

M. C. N.

REALIZATION OR MUKTI

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

We have met here this day to celebrate the 76th birthday of Lord Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa. And what is it that specially marks him off from the rest of humanity ? Surely it was not his learning, for he was practically an unlettered man ; it was not his culture, for to many about him he looked a half-naked boor ; it was not his wealth and charity, for he was a man who could not touch a single coin throughout his life and hence had not a pie in his possession. He was not a politician, he was not a great philanthropist. He built no chatrams, no hospitals for men or animals ; he in-

stituted no colleges. In fact, he was a retired man who did not mix in any of the affairs of this world ; and yet he is now worshipped as a great soul, as an Avatar, over the whole world. Then, what is it that has made him so adorable, so godlike and so divine ? We can only say that it was his attainments, his realization or liberation.

What, then, is this realization which separates him and many others like him from the whole mass of humanity ? This was the subject that forced itself on me when I was asked to read a paper on this occasion by our Swamiji Ramakrishnananda ; and I stand before you to do so knowing full well my own imperfections. I make no apology for bringing this subject to your notice this evening, partly because of its intrinsic interest and partly because to many of us the idea is extremely hazy.

PREVAILING MISCONCEPTIONS

The life and doings of Sri Ramakrishna and his mission, as given to us by our revered Swami Vivekananda, have been most ably dealt with by many who have had the privilege of reading papers here on former occasions. So I shall not take up much of your time in going over the same ground. I shall only mention such incidents and teachings of our Master as throw any light on the subject under consideration and show him to be one who has attained liberation.

PREVAILING MISCONCEPTIONS

Many are the misunderstandings regarding the true conception of the state described by Vedantins as Realization or *Mukti*. Even the most learned of our pundits, such as are versed in the Vedas, Puranas, and the Six Systems of Philosophy, persons who can discourse fluently and logically on any intricate

question, on any subject forming part of those philosophies, even they do not possess any clear idea of the nature of that state. Some think that it is not possible to attain it in this life, with all the imperfections of the body, and that one must take several births before being liberated. Others think, again, that liberation comes only after the body has been cast away; while some, a little more advanced, perhaps, say that in order to attain liberation, a man must give up this world and go into the forest and make *tapas* there. Not a few declare that so long as a man is a householder, he cannot enter that state, that he must take *sanyas* (retire from the world and become an ascetic) before he can even hope for it. Yet more say that those who attain liberation become merged in *Samadhi*, and never return again, quoting the following lines of the Gita :—

PREVAILING MISCONCEPTIONS

Another sun gleams there ! another moon !
Another light—not dusk, nor dawn, nor noon
Which they who once behold return no more
They have attained my rest, life's utmost boon."

The above lines no doubt describe the attainment of *Mukti*, but one cannot form any clear conception from the description ; and if each of us tried to put down in writing what we understand by them, or have made out of them, it is certain that we should differ very materially in our conceptions. Then, again, the marks of those who are fit to reach liberation have been thus described in the Gita :—

" Fearlessness, singleness of soul, the will
Always to strive for wisdom, open-hand,
And governed appetites, and piety
And love of lonely study, humbleness,
Uprightness, heed to injure naught that lives
Truthfulness, slowness unto wrath, a mind
That lightly letteth go what others prize,
And equanimity and charity
Which spieth no man's faults, and tenderness
Towards all that suffers ; a contented heart
Fluttered by no desires, a bearing mild,
Modest and grave, with manhood nobly mixed
With patience, fortitude and purity ;

An unrevengeful spirit, never given
To rate itself too high—such be the signs
Oh, Indian Prince ! of him whose feet are set
On that fair path that leads to heavenly birth."

And in another place, Sri Krishna
says :—

"That viewless path shall scarce be trod by
man bearing flesh."

Such teachings as the above, if not
rightly understood, are sure to cause
despair, and make us think that, in view
of human imperfections, liberation cannot
be attained in this life.

Here again is what Shishir Kumar
Ghose, the author of "Life of Lord
Gouranga," says about liberation in his
paper on "The Religious Convention
and its work" written for the Conven-
tion of Religions held in Calcutta :—

"But what is 'Moksha'? It is liberation,
liberation from what? Liberation from re-birth.
Popularly, liberation means practical annihila-
tion. The liberated man loses his identity and
his soul. A child can understand that loss of

PREVAILING MISCONCEPTIONS

identity means annihilation. In short, so repugnant is this idea of parakal (after life) that men, believing in rebirth theory, prefer annihilation to external life. According to them, and very properly so, better annihilation than to be born again and again, each time in a different man, each time being separated externally from those whom we have dearly loved; and that is what rebirth means. So those who believe in rebirth naturally pray for annihilation."

A grosser misconception of the state cannot be imagined.

Therefore, the conception of realization is as vague as it can be; and the reason for this is that in books on Vedanta, as far as we can see, there is no clear analysis of this state made on modern lines of thought. Liberation and its effects on the lives of those who have attained it are described in many practical Vedantic works; but the descriptions are from so many different standpoints, and at times so conflicting one with another, that confusion

worse confounded is the result. Hence many of us are now divided among ourselves, not possessing any definite and clear conception of liberation or realization. It is given but to a few only to experience even a glimpse of that consciousness which alone clears all doubts and leads to freedom. It is, therefore, of the utmost importance that we should try to understand it, as far as possible, with a view to making conscious efforts towards its attainment ; for it is nothing less than the goal of human evolution, the goal of all religions, the state to which the Buddhist saint aspires as "the highest aim and highest good" and, which Jesus the Christ called "the Kingdom of Heaven," because of the peace and bliss that belong to it and that are, perhaps, its most characteristic features.

THE STAGES OF MENTAL EVOLUTION

In the whole of creation, comprising the mineral, vegetable and animal worlds, science is tending to prove that there is hardly any sharp line of demarcation between one state of matter and another. In the ultimate analyses of things there is no wide difference between the sentiency manifested by the mineral and that manifested by the vegetable, or between that manifested by the vegetable and that by the animal. Similarly, the distinction in a general way between animals and human beings is also not sharply defined. Yet, by observation of the intellect and doings of animals and those of human beings in the very lowest rung of the

ladder of evolution, *e.g.*, the wild man of the forest, psychologists have been able to discern, though dimly, a fundamental distinction between the consciousness manifested by animals and that manifested by the least developed of human beings. It is not the purpose of this paper to go into an examination of the facts and observations which have enabled these psychologists to formulate this distinction. It is enough to take their general conclusions with a view to apply the same for our purpose. To briefly state those conclusions as gathered from the works of Prof. James, and Richard Maurice Buck :—

In the study of the evolution of intelligence as manifested in man and other animals we find four distinct steps. The mind, as we know it, in its least developed form, has its seat in the collection of nerve cells which does duty

for a brain in the lower forms of life, such as the jelly fish, amœbae, etc. It consists merely of a series of sense impressions, or, as they are called, "*percepts*," and the animal is possessed of no consciousness of any sort outside itself. It is only susceptible to outside stimuli, but is not capable of converting those stimuli into an image projected into space outside itself so as to have a consciousness of the outside world. This mind is called the *perceptual mind*.

As evolution progresses, this low form of life, by whatever name it may be called, begins to accumulate these "*percepts*" or sense-impressions, and the constant repetition of these percepts, calling for further registration, leads to an accumulation of cells in the central sense ganglia. The multiplication of these nerve cells makes further registration possible; that again makes further

growth of ganglia necessary, and so on. At last a condition is reached in which it becomes possible for the more highly developed form of life, *i.e.*, the more highly developed animals, to combine groups of these "percepts" of varying complexity into what are called "*recepts*;" *i.e.*, similar percepts are registered one over the other until they are generalized into one compound percept; and this compound percept is what is called a "recept," * whereby, when any sense-stimuli are received, the animal becomes capable of converting those stimuli into an image projected in space outside itself and thus becomes conscious of outside things. This *receptual mind* marks the stage of what is called *simple consciousness*, as manifested amongst higher animals.

Now, the work of accumulation begins

* For a fuller explanation, *vide* Note 1.

again on a higher plane. The sensory organs keep steadily at work manufacturing percepts ; the receptual centres keep steadily at work manufacturing more and yet more receipts from the old and the new percepts, and the capacities of the central ganglia are constantly taxed to do the necessary registration of percepts, the necessary elaboration of these into receipts and the necessary registration of these receipts. As evolution proceeds, there comes a time when the mind of the animal we are considering has reached the highest possible point of purely receptual intelligence ; the accumulation of percepts and receipts has gone on until no greater store of impressions can be laid up and no further elaboration of these can be accomplished on the plane of receptual intelligence. Then, another break is made and the higher receipts are replaced by what are called

"*concepts*". A recept is, as has been mentioned above, a composite image of hundreds or thousands of percepts. It is itself an image abstracted from many images, but a concept is that same composite image, the same recept named, ticketed, and, as it were, dismissed from view to be called up from memory whenever the animal wishes to do so. A concept is in fact neither more nor less than an idea of the same image ; that is, the mental sign standing henceforth for the thing itself. In the case of the receptual mind, the animal possesses only the faculty of throwing into space an image of the object which gives rise to any sensation in the animal, thus becoming conscious of something outside itself; but in the case of conceptual mind the animal is not only capable of projecting such an image of the object when it is actually present, but is also capable

of thinking about it, *i.e.* forming an idea of the same object even when the object itself is not present. The relation of a concept to a receipt is somewhat similar to the relation of algebra to arithmetic. The concept is only a single simple sign in the mental processes for an unmanageable mass of receipts and is analogous to an algebraical symbol. It is therefore clear to anyone who gives the least thought to the subject, that the revolution by which concepts are substituted for receipts increases the efficiency of the brain for thought as much as the use of algebra increases the power of the mind in mathematical calculations. But, as already hinted above, in order that a receipt may be replaced by a concept, it must be named, or, in other words, marked with a sign which stands for it. In other words, the race that is in possession of concepts is also

necessarily in possession of language. Further, the possession of concepts and language is coincident with, that is, marks the birth of what is called *self-consciousness*. That means that there is a moment in the evolution of mind when the receptual intellect, capable of simple consciousness only, becomes almost or quite instantaneously a conceptual intellect in possession of language and self-consciousness. It is this birth of self-consciousness which divides man from the higher animals.

We have now in our analysis reached the point where we each individually stand, the point, namely, of the conceptual, self-conscious mind. In acquiring this new and higher form of consciousness, it must not for a moment be supposed that we have dropped either our receptual intelligence or our old perceptual mind. Our intellect to-day is

made up of a very complex mixture of percepts, receipts and concepts.

The next chapter in the story is the accumulation of concepts. This is a double process. As man progresses, he accumulates year after year a larger and larger number of concepts, while at the same time the individual concepts are becoming constantly more and more complex, *e.g.*, the concepts in the mind of a boy must increase not only in number but also in complexity as the boy adds on knowledge by education and by personal experience. By the time the boy becomes an old man, the number and complexity of concepts accumulated in his mind must be enormous ; and when the old man dies and his imperishable self takes birth* again, he begins to gather

* As all Indians believe in the fact of the imperishable self of man called Jiva taking birth after birth in order to become perfect or complete its evolution, I have not tried to prove that the hypothesis of Rebirth or Reincarnation is the only solution that can satisfactorily solve the problem of evolution and supply the missing link of Darwin.

more and more concepts and adds them on to the accumulated concepts of previous births ; and this goes on from one life to another and thus for several lives. It is this accumulation of concepts of previous births with which a child is born that accounts for the difference in intelligence between one child and another.

Is there to be any limit to this growth of concepts in number and complexity ? Whoever will seriously consider that question will see that there must be a limit. No such process could go on to infinity. Should Nature attempt such a feat, the brain would have to grow until it could no longer be fed, and a condition of deadlock would be reached which would forbid further progress. We have seen that the expansion of the perceptual mind had a necessary limit ; that its own continued life led it

inevitably up to and into the *receptual mind*. Also, that the receptual mind by its own growth was inevitably led up to and into the *conceptual mind*. *A priori* considerations make it certain that a corresponding outlet will be found for the conceptual mind also. But we need not depend on abstract reasoning to demonstrate the necessary existence of the supra-conceptual mind, since it exists and can be studied with no more difficulty than other natural phenomena. The supra-conceptual intellect, the elements of which instead of being *concepts* are *intuitions*, is already an established fact and the form of consciousness that belongs to that intellect has been called *supra-consciousness* or *cosmic-consciousness*.

Thus we have four distinct stages of intellect, all abundantly illustrated in the animal and human worlds about us.

These four stages are :—first, the *perceptual mind*, the mind made up of percepts or sense impressions as manifested amongst the lowest of the animal creation; second, the *receptual mind*, the mind made up of percepts and receipts and capable of idealising the sense impressions into images projected into space outside itself, that is, the mind of *simple consciousness* as manifested amongst higher animals; third, we have the mind made up of percepts, receipts and concepts called the *conceptual mind* capable of forming ideas of objects, or otherwise the self-conscious mind or mind of self-consciousness as manifested in man; and fourth and last, we have the *intuitional mind*, the mind whose highest element is not a receipt or a concept but an *intuition*. This is the mind in which *sensation*, *simple consciousness* and *self-consciousness* are

supplemented and crowned with *supra-consciousness* as manifested amongst the liberated great ones of all religions.

The same four stages can be roughly seen in the development of a new-born child. When the child is born, it is only capable of sense impressions and has not the capacity for idealising these sense impressions as objects in space. According to the capacity and inherent intelligence of the child, or, in other words, its accumulated concepts of previous births, it becomes capable of recognizing the face of its mother and other surrounding objects sooner or later. It is here, one may say, that it shows signs of having acquired simple consciousness. This may happen from the second week to the third month of its growth. From that time onwards it has only simple consciousness until it reaches its third year, after which it shows signs of having

acquired self-consciousness, and it continues to accumulate concepts on the plane of self-consciousness until it can transcend this and attain liberation or cosmic consciousness in the course of its evolution.

Let me make the nature of these four stages and their relation to one another a little more clear :—

The perceptual or sensational stage of intellect is mostly seen amongst the least developed of animals, such as the fresh-water polypes, jelly-fish, amœbæ, &c., and in the minds of these, which are made up wholly of percepts, there is no consciousness of any sort, beyond possessing an excitability to external stimuli, such as light, sound, etc.

When, however, the receptual mind comes into existence as in higher animals, *simple consciousness* is born, which means that animals are conscious of the

things they see about them just as man is ; but they do not know that they are conscious of these things, neither are they conscious of themselves as distinct entities or personalities. In other words, the animal cannot stand outside of itself and look at itself as any self-conscious creature can. This, then, is *simple consciousness*.

Over and above this simple consciousness which is possessed by man as by animals, man has another which is called *self-consciousness*, which is the beginning of the idea of "I" or Ego in him. By virtue of this faculty, man is not only conscious of all the things that he sees around him, but he knows that he is conscious of them. Also, he is conscious of himself as a separate entity and personality ; he can stand apart from himself and contemplate himself, and can analyse and

judge the operations of his own mind as he would analyse and judge anything else. This self-consciousness is only possible after the formation of concepts and the consequent birth of language. Upon self-consciousness or egoism is based all distinctively human life so far.

Seeing the amount of intelligence displayed by such animals as the ants, white-ants, bees, wasps, etc., and the methodical way in which they govern their kingdoms, so to speak—and who that has read of the doings of the bees, their training of the young ones for their respective duties, their division of labour, their queen, their soldiers, their architects, their honey collectors, their drones employed as nurses to the young ones, their parliamentary government, etc., cannot but wonder at the amount of refined intelligence displayed—it has been

asked :—" How do you know that animals cannot think in the same manner as man thinks"? All that we can say in answer to this is that there is no evidence that animals can so think. Between two creatures living together as dogs, horses and men, each self-conscious, it would be the simplest matter in the world to open up communication. As we have already seen, language is the objective of which self-consciousness is the subjective. Self-consciousness and language (two in one, for they are two halves of the same thing) are the *sine qua non* of human social life, of manners, institutions, of industries of all kinds, and of all arts useful and fine. If any animal possessed self-consciousness, it seems certain that it would, upon the master faculty build a superstructure of language, of reasoned-out customs, indus-

tries and arts. But no animal has done this, and therefore it is inferred that no animal has self-consciousness. The possession of self-consciousness and language by man creates an enormous gap between him and the highest creature possessing simple consciousness merely.

Finally, the third form of consciousness, which is what has already been called supra-consciousness or cosmic consciousness, is as far above self-consciousness as self-consciousness is above simple consciousness. The birth of supra-consciousness in the individual man is very similar to the birth of self-consciousness. The mind becomes overcrowded as it were with concepts and these are constantly expanding, becoming larger, more numerous and more complex. Some day, the conditions being all favourable, the fusion of several of them with certain moral

elements takes place. The result is an intuition and the establishment of an intuitional mind, or, in other words, supra-consciousness. This belongs to a plane of intelligence in which elements instead of being concepts are intuitions, and in which the illuminated mind is enabled to view the cosmos from an entirely new and higher standpoint which is altogether outside the range of the present intellect of man!

This consciousness shows the cosmos to consist not of dead matter governed by unconscious, rigid and unintending law, it shows it, on the contrary, as entirely immaterial, entirely spiritual and entirely alive; it shows that death is an absurdity and that every one and every thing has eternal life; it shows that the universe is God and God is the universe, and that no evil ever did or ever will enter into it. A great

many of these intuitive truths, from the point of view of self-consciousness or the ordinary human standpoint, may seem absurd ; they are, nevertheless, undoubtedly true and they will strike all that have had even glimpses of supra-consciousness as clear truths.

As on self-consciousness is based the human world as we see it with all its works and ways so on supra-consciousness are based the higher religions and the higher philosophies.

It is interesting to note in this connection that the great father of Yoga philosophy, Patanjali, who lived several centuries ago, has not only mentioned about this attainment of supra-consciousness but has also clearly explained that such an attainment is nothing more than the manifestation of one's own inherent perfect nature ordinarily hidden by veils of

ignorance, and that these accumulations of concepts and their fusion with moral elements, leading to the establishment of an intuitional mind, or attainment of supra-consciousness, as stated above, are only so many processes whereby the veils of ignorance, or obstacles, are removed one after the other and the inherent inner light of perfection is allowed to manifest itself. It is this pure manifestation of one's own perfect nature which is called Realization or Liberation. The two aphorisms by which Patanjali explains this subject run as follow:—

(1) *The change into another species is by the filling in of nature; i.e., by the accumulation of concepts.*

(2) *Good and bad deeds (representing here the effects produced by the accumulation of concepts) are not the direct causes in the transformation of nature, but they act as breakers of obstacles to*

the evolution of nature : as the farmer removes the obstacles to the course of water, which then runs down by its own nature.

Swami Vivekananda, giving a running commentary on the last aphorism, says :—

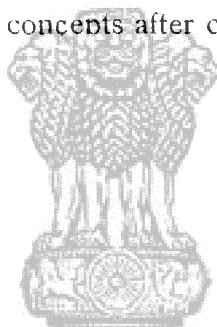
“The water for irrigation of the fields is already in the canal, only shut in by gates : the farmer opens these gates, and the water flows in by itself, by the law of gravitation.

“So, all progress and power are already in every man; perfection is man's nature, only it is barred in and prevented from taking its proper course. If anyone can take the bar off, in rushes nature. Then the man attains the powers which are his already. Those we call wicked become saints as soon as the bar is broken and nature rushes in. It is nature that is driving us towards perfection, and eventually she will bring

every one there. All these practices and struggles to become religious and attain perfection are only negative work, to take off the bars, and open the doors to that perfection which is our birthright, our nature.' The great ancient evolutionist, Patanjali, declares that the true secret of evolution is the manifestation of the perfection which is already in a potential condition in every being; that this perfection has been barred, and the infinite tide behind is struggling to express itself. These struggles and competitions are but the results of our ignorance because we do not know the proper way to unlock the gate and let the water in. This infinite tide behind must express itself ; it is the cause of all manifestation. *In the animal the man was suppressed; but as soon as the door was opened, out rushed man. So in man there is the potential god, kept in by the locks and*

bars of ignorance. When knowledge breaks these bars the god becomes manifest."

I have italicised the last two sentences to show how clearly Patanjali's ideas correspond with those given above. And knowledge which breaks these bars of ignorance is but the result of the accumulation of concepts after concepts,



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FROM the foregoing general considerations let us now turn our attention to the stages of intellect as manifested among mankind. "Man is a compound of animality, humanity and divinity," said Swami Vivekananda and in that concise statement he has marked the three broad stages of intellect into which all human beings can be divided. These stages may, suitably to our mode of thinking as shewn above, be called a stage of simple consciousness, which is possessed by animals generally; a stage of self-consciousness possessed by human beings; and a stage of cosmic, or supra-consciousness which is experienced by liberated

souls and which marks them off from ordinary men. All men possess these three states of consciousness in a greater or less degree ; but as one state predominates over the other, so do men range themselves as being more animal, more human or more divine in their instincts and actions.

SIMPLE CONSCIOUSNESS

With the bulk of the human race, simple consciousness plays a far greater part than even self-consciousness. Most men inhabit the sphere of instinctivity; they are born, they eat, propagate, work and die without rising to that degree of human intelligence that may be called abstraction, or self-consciousness. They live the life of an animal, with no thought about themselves beyond satisfying their animal needs. Abstract ideas of good and evil do not trouble them; they are contented and happy if their

animal cravings are satisfied. They are the *animal men* of Swami Vivekananda, namely, those in whom the animal qualities preponderate. These men, who live almost entirely in their experiences of simple consciousness, float on the stream of time, as do the animals, drift with the seasons, the food-supply, etc., as a leaf drifts on a current, not self-moved, or self-balanced, but moved by outer influences and balanced by the forces of nature, as are the animals.

SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS

The next division of human beings consists of those who have a more developed idea of the Ego, or self-consciousness, and in whom *abstraction* plays a large part. These form themselves into societies, and constitute the bulk of the civilized nations of the world. These are, so to speak, the *human-men*. Self-consciousness, as already hinted above, gives

rise to laws, arts, interests, social ideas, etc. The fully self-conscious man takes stock of himself, and is, so to speak, self-centred. He feels himself to be a fixed point, and he calls this point "myself." Outside "myself" there is nothing fixed. The self-conscious man may or may not have a religion. He may trust in what is called God, or he may not trust in Him; he may be a deist, an atheist, a Christian, a Mahomedan, a Hindu, or a Buddhist. He may believe in science, but science is always changing and rarely gives him any fixed hold. The self-conscious man is a needle pivoted by its centre, fixed at one point, namely, "his self," but revolving freely on that centre. Subject to all passing influences of desire, sense-objects and passions, the needle is in an incessant state of oscillation, to and fro, and knows no stoppage or rest; and this very aptly typifies the restless

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and vain activities of the various nations of the world, in search of peace and happiness, through the acquisition of external objects of desire, such as wealth, women, name, fame, etc.

This state has been described by Balzac in his novel "Louis Lambert" as "the glory and the scourge of the world," glorious because it creates societies but baneful because it prevents man from entering the path which leads to the next highest state of consciousness by alluring him and making him forget his real birth-right, his own true self. Yet self-consciousness is the necessary and the only road that leads to the goal.

LIBERATION OR SUPRA-CONSCIOUSNESS

' Lastly come the few, the very few indeed, who, having gathered the fruits of worldly enjoyments from the accumulated experiences of several births, and having thereby realised the vanity

of all things and thus become disgusted with the world on account of the misery consequent on incessant, restless, worldly activities, are fortunate enough to throw off this egoism, this self-conscious state, and emerge out of it into the larger consciousness, the supra-consciousness, the true heritage of man.'

Says Sri Ramakrishna :—"The Perfect Liberation of the soul is within the reach of him alone who hath learnt the lesson of complete self-abnegation and absolute forgetfulness of 'I' 'me' and 'mine'. The truly wise man is he who hath seen the vision and attained to this Liberation." On the same subject says Swami Vivekananda, in his Gnana Yoga : "Every one will admit that extreme self-abnegation is the centre of all morality : and what is perfect self-abnegation ? What remains ? Self-abnegation means the abnegation of this apparent self, the

abnegation of all selfishness. This idea of 'me' and 'mine' is the result of past superstition, and the more this apparent self rolls away, the more the Real Self becomes manifest in its full glory. This is real self-abnegation, the centre, the basis, the gist of all moral teaching. 'And whether men know it or not, the whole world is slowly going towards that, practising that more or less; only the vast majority of mankind does it unconsciously. Let them do it consciously, let them make the sacrifice knowing that it is not the real self, and that this apparent self is nothing but a limitation. One glimpse of that Infinite Reality which is behind, one spark of that Infinite Fire, that is the All, represents the present man. But that Infinite is his true nature.'

The same idea is beautifully expressed by the great Mahomedan Sage and Poet Sadi in his "Book of Love" translated

by Sir Edwin Arnold into verse as follows :—

“ That which doth set thee free from self shall
 bring
 Nighness to God ! This is a subtle thing.
 The selfless only know. Not self-possessing
 Art thou thine own—but self-abandoning.”

It is this dropping off of self-consciousness, on the wake or birth of supra-consciousness that has been described as “the rebirth,” both by Christ and the Vedantins. Christ says:—
 “ The kingdom of heaven is within you.”
 “ Except ye be born again, ye cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.” “ The real Brahmana,” says the Vedantin, “ is one who has known the Brahman ; and he is the real dwija or the twice-born.”
 It is when self-consciousness is supplemented by supra-consciousness or becomes merged in it, that a man sees intuitively into the heart of things and realizes his true nature, his true self, and also the purpose of creation and

his unity with all things. It is this merging of self-consciousness or its apparent vanishing on the wake of the larger supra-consciousness that is described in the vedantic works as Realisation, Liberation or Mukti; as Nirvana by Buddhists; Paradise by Mahomedans; and Heaven by Christians.

The term Nirvana has been translated by the early writers on Buddhism as annihilation according to its root meaning, and many misconceptions have resulted in the proper understanding of the state described by Buddha as not only having been attained by himself, but also of having by his explanation of the law conducted many to Nirvana while still living. Buddha also speaks of men in the knowledge of the law after attaining Nirvana. How could he do so if Nirvana were annihilation? Nirvana, therefore, is certainly something that a man may

acquire while he is still living. The Thibetan rendering of the term as translated by Bernouf means "the state of him who is delivered from sorrow." One of the Suttas says :— "That mendicant alone conducts himself well who has conquered sin by means of holiness, from whose eyes the veil of error has been removed, who is well trained in religion, and who, free from yearning, and skilled in knowledge, has attained unto Nirvana." Therefore, Nirvana is not extinction of soul as ordinarily understood. It is said to be the extinction of that sinful, grasping condition of the self-conscious mind and heart, which would otherwise, according to the great mystery of Karma, be the cause of renewed individual existence. It is, in fact, the state in which egoism, or self-consciousness, has become extinct in the wake of the higher life, or supra-consciousness.

The Paradise of Mahomed equally refers to this state, and is not the popularly supposed Heaven. Just as Christ says :—
 “The kingdom of Heaven is within you.”
 We find in the Koran such phrases as,
 “The Paradise shall be brought near to the pious—not far off.” “The life of the world is nothing but a sport and a play, but verily the abode of the next world (the higher supra-conscious life)—that is life, if they did but know”; and Gabriel, the angel who is said to have appeared to Mahomed from time to time, speaking to the Prophet at the time of his enlightenment, says:—“Thou wert heedless of this, and we withdrew the veil from thee, and to-day is thine eyesight keen.” “This is what you are promised to every one who turns frequently (to God) and keeps His Commandments, who fears the Merciful in secret and brings a repentant heart; enter into it in

peace, this is the day of eternity, namely, of attainment, immortality, or cessation of the idea of death." Thus it will be seen that all great religious teachers refer to this attainment of supra-consciousness as the end and aim of life and the one purpose for which this life has to be lived birth after birth.

A man who has attained Liberation becomes conscious not only of himself, but also of the cosmos around him, and is thus fixed both without and within. Recollecting the analogy of a needle moving on a pivot, used before to describe the state of a self-conscious being, the liberated man, the *Jivanmukta*, the *arrahant*, or any name he may be called by, is now the same needle, but magnetised. The needle is still fixed by its centre but it points steadily to the north ; it has found something real and permanent towards which it can

steadily look. The liberated man, while remaining the same man as before, has, as it were, shifted his mental equilibrium from Self-centre to God-centre ; and God being the ideal omnipresent power, has been realised both without and within. " There is little chance of a ship running astray," once said Sri Ramakrishna, " so long as its compass points towards true north. So, if the mind of man, the compass needle of the ship of life, is turned always towards the Parabrahm without oscillation, it will steer clear of every danger." This, then, is the realisation which our Master Sri Ramakrishna had, which marked him off from the rest of humanity. This realisation or liberation is the loftiest expression of man, the link which connects the visible to the superior worlds. The liberated man feels and acts through his inner being ; the self-conscious man

thinks and acts ; and the man of simple consciousness, acts only. In other words, the man of simple consciousness, desires deeds ; the man of self-consciousness turns to ideas ; and the liberated man—the man of cosmic consciousness—sees the end, aspires to God, inwardly perceives God, and feels himself to be one with God. He is the divine man, the God-man.

“To him all eyes instinctively turn,” writes William Lloyd in his Dawn-Thought, “He is the courage and hope of millions, for by an obligatory, inner necessity it is the attained man that we are all looking for. He restores our faith, he is the guarantee of our success ; he is Saviour, Master, Messiah, the Incarnate God. It was this superiority, this soul supreme, this serene life, that the philosophers of old contemplated in some form or other, and made their

dream and ideal. And it was this grandeur of ideal and attainment that has fixed them like mountain peaks of the Lighted Land for all succeeding ages ; for we all have the same yearning, the same innate need, and attainment is happiness and attainment is heaven.''

However, there is no sharp line of demarcation between the three grades of consciousness, and beings are often found in whom the attributes of two or more states of consciousness mix together. The man of genius, for example, is one who, while not transcending the bounds of self-consciousness, as in the case of the fully liberated soul, catches glimpses of the state of supra-consciousness and brings that knowledge to bear on all his thoughts and actions, and is generally so far ahead of his time and surroundings that people call him crazy or mad.

Again, some may be like Solomon, who having had glimpses of this higher consciousness, called then the Vision of God, is said to have been blessed with wisdom beyond his years. Yet, in his case, there was some amount of backsliding and he lapsed into worldliness, married many women and in the dissipation that followed, he forgot his God and is said to have mentally suffered much thereby. Many such cases of backsliding have been recorded by Prof. Starbuck and such backsliding has been chiefly found amongst those who have had only passing glimpses of the higher consciousness and who having felt some of the exalting effect of even that fleeting vision, have yielded to the temptation of becoming religious teachers or gurus. Such in after life have become victims to the influence of women and wealth and to the ambition

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of building a mutt or propagating a creed.

But while the passage from simple to self-consciousness is gradual and imperceptible, the passage from self-consciousness to supra-consciousness is commonly made with a sudden and startling jump. The sudden change has been described as re-birth, liberation (from the bondage of egoism), regeneration, conversion, attainment of grace, crucifixion of the lower self, resurrection from the dead, etc.; because a self-conscious man, before entering upon the true life, is practically dead to the glories that may be revealed in him.

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EFFECTS OF LIBERATION

LET us now consider the fruits of liberation, and the experiences of the liberated ones. It may be said at the very outset that what they experience is beyond all intellectual understanding, and cannot be described in self-conscious language. Many, however, both in the past and the present, have attempted to describe their several experiences, each in his own way. There are also descriptions of the conduct and doings of these people both before and after liberation, given by outside observers, and from the analysis of these descriptions it is possible to discern, though dimly, an underlying, common quality or perception of the

change brought about. Such a task of analysis has been undertaken by Professor James of America and Richard Maurice Buck ; and one cannot do better than give, as briefly as possible, the conclusions arrived at by these great Psychologists regarding the experiences of those who have attained cosmic consciousness or Liberation, or "Saintship", as they call it.

The description of the phenomena varies according to the temperament of the liberated person, and according to his intellectual attainments, but that the conclusions drawn are partially true in some cases and wholly true in others we who have had a knowledge of Liberation from our Upanishadic writings, can vouch for. I have therefore added to those conclusions, some explanations and quotations from our writings in confirmation of those conclusions.

What then happens when this change takes place?

(i) SUBJECTIVE LIGHT

The person, suddenly and without warning, has a sense of being immersed in a flame, a sweet, cooling, brilliant light, rose-coloured perhaps; or rather, he feels that his heart is filled with such a light; and at the same instant he is, as it were, bathed in an emotion of joy, assurance, triumph or salvation.

This luminous phenomenon is of frequent occurrence, especially among those on whom the change comes suddenly as amongst those who attain this state through Bhakti Yoga or the Path of Love; and it is described by psychologists as a form of sensory automatism which gives rise to hallucinatory or pseudo-hallucinatory vision. This vision, which leaves a lasting impression on the hearts of the illumined ones,

is always accompanied with emotional exaltation. It is this phenomenon which is described in our writing as *Joti, Paran-joti, Paraveli, Parakasam, Chidambaram, Akhandajoti, etc.*

Here is a stanza which is given for meditation in one of the books on practical Vedanta which dwells on this light as our very self and indicates it as an object for meditation.

Antarjoti bahirjoti
Pratyakjoti paratparam.
Jotirjoti Svayanjoti
Atmajjoti Sivosmyaham.

This means, "Light inside, light outside, a light unique and holy of holy. It is a light that lights all light, uncaused and it is the light of Atman. It is Sivam and that am I."

St. Paul's blinding heavenly vision and Constantine's brilliant cross in the sky are probably phenomena of this sort.

Prof. Starbuck, in his *Psychology of Religions*, has given examples from the recorded experiences of some of the more recent cases of liberation, in which the light phenomenon was very marked. "One of them, after recovering from the Samadhi, or trance, into which he had fallen at the time, thus describes his experiences :—

"When I came to myself, there was a crowd around me praising God, the very heavens seemed to open and pour down rays of light and glory not for a moment only, but all day and night floods of light and glory seemed to pour through my soul and oh ! how I was changed and everything became new."

Another says :—

"All at once the glory of God shone upon and around about me in a manner almost marvellous. A light perfectly ineffable and sweet and cool shone in

my soul, that almost prostrated me to the ground ; the light seemed like the brightness of the sun in every direction. It was too intense for the eyes. I think I knew something then by actual experience of the light that prostrated Paul on the way to Damascus. It was surely a light such as I could not have endured long."

Another says :—

"The realization of this change was very vivid, like a ton's weight being lifted from my heart ; a strange light, which seemed to light up the whole room (for it was dark), a conscious, supreme bliss which caused me to repeat :—' Glory to God ' for a long time."

One more example from the manuscript collection of Prof. Starbuck as given by Professor James, which describes that when the grace is obtained, one feels as if it came from an external holy

Presence, which is variously expressed as Lord, God, Father, Mother, Beloved, etc., according to the mental attitude of the devotee towards his ideal of God, and shows why many Hindu and Christian Saints have described the same phenomena as "an act of grace," one that they did not deserve and for which there was no compensation. He says:—"The particular accompaniments of the experience were entirely unexpected. I was quietly sitting at home singing some religious songs. Suddenly there seemed to be something sweeping into me, inflating my entire being—such a sensation as I have never experienced before. When the experience came, I seemed to be conducted round a large, capacious, well-lighted room. As I walked with my invisible conductor, and looked around, the Holy Spirit impressed me that I was surveying my own soul.

Then for the first time in all my life, did I know that I was cleansed from all sin, and filled with the goodness of God."

It is said of Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa that, one day, as he was going through the corn-fields of Anur, a village near his birthplace, Kamrakpur, he suddenly saw a vision of glory and lost all sense-consciousness. People said it was a fainting fit, but it was really, as he described it, that "calm and serene mood, that super-conscious state brought on by God vision." And Sri Ramakrishna himself, speaking to Dr. Sarcar, has given a very vivid description of that Light. He said "The Living Light to which the earnest devotee is drawn doth not burn. It is like the light coming from a gem, shining yet soft, cool and soothing. It burneth not, it giveth peace and joy."

When, after severe struggle lasting over twelve years, this change came upon Sri Ramakrishna, he felt, as it was described by him subsequently, that "a torrent of spiritual light came then deluging his mind and giving him peace."

When Lord Buddha, after six years of incessant practice and search, attained Nirvana, under the Bodhi tree, he is said to have exclaimed "*Amithabha !*" "unbounded light."

Walt Whitman describing this experience speaks of it as "ineffable light—light rare, untellable, lighting the very light—beyond all signs, description and language."

It is said of Mahomed that he gradually absented himself from society and sought the solitude of a cavern on Mount Hara (about three leagues from Mecca) where he remained days and nights engaged in prayer and meditation. As Mahomed,

in the silent watches of the night, lay wrapped in his mantle, he heard a voice calling him. Uncovering his head, a flood of light broke upon him of such intolerable splendour that he swooned away. Upon this Mahomed instantly felt his understanding illuminated with celestial light and was able to understand the decrees of God which he promulgated afterwards in the Koran.

Swami Vivekananda used to sing a song of Rama Prasad which is translated by M., the Boswell biographer of Sri Ramakrishna, as follows :—

O my mind, meditate thou upon the Lord, the essence of Spirit, Him who is free from all impurity.

Unparalleled is His glory, charming is His shape, dear is He now to the heart of the devotees !

Behold His Beauty ! It putteth into the shade the lustre of a million moons

put together ! Verily the lightning flasheth out of this glorious Beauty and the Blessed Vision causeth the hairs to stand on end.

Behold the Beloved Form of matchless beauty, now that the mind enjoyeth peace and the eyes are filled with Divine Love.

(ii) THE ECSTASY OF HAPPINESS OR BLISS

Along with this light, which some may experience and some may not, is the other phenomenon brought on by such a change, namely, the ecstasy of happiness or bliss produced which is always an accompaniment of Liberation, as would have been seen from the cases quoted above. When the ecstasy occurs, it seems as if the person illuminated became aware of a Presence, of a higher and friendly Power, of Universal Life, which seems to wrap him round with friendliness and swallow him up in bliss. He is

conscious of a wider life than this world's selfish little interests ; he feels the existence of an Ideal Power, and willingly surrenders himself to its control and feels no responsibility for his doings after that. And along with these sensations, convictions, or whatever else they may be called, is an immense elation and freedom, as if the outlines of confining selfhood had melted away. Personal motives and ambitions, commonly so omnipotent with ordinary man, become too insignificant for notice, and new reaches of patience and fortitude stretch out. Fears and anxieties go, and blissful equanimity takes their place. Come heaven, come hell, it makes no difference now.

Once sang Sri Ramakrishna :—

Oh Lord, Thou hast blessed me with
Thy vision and Thou has sent away all
my troubles. A charm has thou thrown
over my soul !

Beholding thee as a Reality, the Seven Worlds have forgotten their grief !

The Light phenomenon may occur in some cases and not in others. But the experience of ecstatic bliss is the fundamental characteristic, or the Fruit of Liberation. It is the one thing experienced by the great ones of all religions. This is the state to which such terms as *Anandaghana* (Mass of Bliss), *Anandamaya* (Full of Bliss or All Joy), *Niratisayananda* (Incomparable Bliss), etc., are applied by Hindus, the term 'Paradise' by Mahomedan Sufis, and the "Kingdom of Heaven" and "the Peace that passeth all understanding" by Christians. In fact, all religions recognise the attainment of this state as the *summum bonum* of life and describe it as sweeter than all the pleasures of the world put together, and emphatically assert that no sacrifice, not even the giving up of one's life, is too

great to make in order to attain it. Manikyavasagar, a great Tamil saint of Southern India, asks :—

“Why go about sucking from each flower the droplet of honey (*i. e.*, enjoying the paltry pleasures of this world) when the heavy mass of pure and sweet honey is available (*i. e.*, the ecstatic bliss of Liberation or Cosmic Consciousness)?” And Christ compared the Kingdom of Heaven to a merchant seeking goodly pearls, who having found one pearl of great price went and sold all he had and bought it.

It should be borne in mind that this experience is interpreted or expressed in two ways, namely, in its personal and impersonal aspect. In its personal aspect, which is by far the most common, the devotee speaks of the Holy, Loving Power which swallows up his individuality, as it were, in bliss, as a vision of

his Ideal God to whom he used to appeal for deliverance before the attainment. This experience of the Loving Presence, though a subjective phenomenon, is thus objectified, and it is this which has led to the conception of a personal God, with various attributes, the conception being according to the intellectual advancement and the degree of tender feeling of the devotee, towards his ideal God.

Thus Moses and Solomon called it "The God of the Hosts", and "Lord God", Mahomed described it as the "Angel Gabriel". St Paul spoke of it as the "Holy Spirit", Walt Whitman wrote of it as "My Soul", Dante thought of it as "Beatrice", and Sri Ramakrishna called it "My Mother", "My Lord", "My Beloved", and so on.

But a few, especially the more intellectual and philosophical ones, have interpreted the same in its impersonal

aspect, because they have felt that the Holy Presence is not only outside them but also in their heart of hearts, and that it extends through infinite space, and is in, above, under and around them. These, especially among the Hindus, have described it as *Akhanda Satchidananda*—"Indivisible or Infinite Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute." These have laid stress on the feeling of the utter annihilation of the sense of "I", and have identified themselves with the Holy Presence and considered it to be their very Self, or Atman.

A few again have described it both in its personal and impersonal aspect, and one of such was Sri Rama Krishna. It must be remembered, however, that to the person who has attained Cosmic Consciousness the words "subjective" and "objective," as we understand them,

lose their old meaning and "gross objects" and "unseen soul" become one, and thus they see God in all things, at all times, and in all places. We can thus reconcile the personal and the impersonal aspects of Liberation, the experience being the same, but the descriptions varying so much as to give rise to various religions.

It is the experience of being swallowed up in bliss by a higher, friendly, loving Power, which has been described by several saints amongst Christians and Hindus, more especially the Tamil Saints of Southern India both Vaishnavites and Sivites, as Spiritual espousal, Spiritual nuptials, Eternal marriage feast, Union with the Beloved and so on; and the Presence itself is called the Bridegroom, the human soul representing the Bride.

The following stanzas, taken at random from the spiritual Canticle written by

St. John of the Cross, one of the greatest and sweetest of the Christian saints, of the sixteenth century, fairly well illustrates the feelings of the Bride (human soul) in search of Christ—the Bridegroom, *i.e.*, the craving of the human soul for the attainment of cosmic consciousness:—

“Where hast thou hidden Thyself?

Why hast thou forsaken me in my groan-
ings, O my Beloved?

Thou didst fly like the hart, away,
When thou hadst wounded me,
I ran after thee, crying; but Thou wert
gone.

O shepherds, you who go
Through the Sheepcotes up the hill,
If you shall see Him
Whom I love,
Tell Him, I languish, agonise, and die.

In search of my Love
I will travel mountains and strands;
I will gather no flowers,
I will fear no wild beasts;
And I will overpass the mighty and the
frontiers.

O who can heal me?
Give me perfectly thyself,
Send me no more
A messenger
Who cannot tell me what I seek.

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All they who serve
Relate a thousand graces of thee ;
And all wound me more and more,
And they leave me, dying,
While they babble I know not what.

Why, after wounding
This heart, hast Thou not healed it ?
And why, after stealing it,
Hast Thou thus abandoned it,
And not carried away what Thou hast
stolen ?

Quench Thou my troubles,
For none else can do so ;
And let mine eyes behold Thee
Who art their light,
And it is for Thee alone I would use them.

Reveal thy presence,
And let the vision of Thy beauty kill me.
Behold, the disease
Of love is incurable
Except in Thy presence and in the light of
Thy countenance."

The attainment of this blissful state
in Samadhi is described in the following
stanza :—

" The Bride has entered
The pleasant and desirable garden,
And there reposes to her heart's content ;
Her neck reclining
On the sweet arms of her Beloved."

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And after waking from the condition
of bliss in Samadhi, the Bride exclaims !

"In the inmost cellar
Of my Beloved have I drunk ; and when I
went forth

Over all the plain
I knew nothing,
And lost the flock I followed before.

There He gave me His breasts,
There He taught me the science full of
sweetness.

And there I gave to Him
Myself without reserve ;
There I promised to be His Bride.

My soul is occupied,
And all my substance in His service ;
Now I guard no flock,
Nor have I any other employment ;
My sole occupation is love.

If, then, on the common
I am no longer seen or found,
Say that I am lost ;
That, being enamoured,
I lost myself ; and yet I gained."

And of the elation and freedom felt
after Realisation the following stanzas
are a few examples :—

REALIZATION OR MUKTI

"Let us rejoice O my Beloved !
Let us go forth to see ourselves in Thy
Beauty,
To the mountain and the hill,
Where the pure water flows ;
Let us enter into the heart of the thicket
We shall go at once
To the lofty caverns of the rocks,
Which are all secret,
There we shall enter in
And taste of the new wine of the Pome-
granate.
There Thou wilt show me
What my soul desired ;
And there Thou wilt give at once,
O Thou, my life !
What Thou gavest me the other day."

This reads very much like an amplified paraphrase of *The Song of Solomon*, said by some Christians to typify "the Church's love unto Christ", which remains a mystery to most teachers of the Christian religion until to-day. People who are not Christians find it difficult to understand how *The Canticle of Canticles* can be interpreted in this fashion, because it was written at least one thousand years before the birth of Jesus of

Nazareth. But in the light of the attainment of Supra-consciousness, the whole Song may be taken as a crude description of the state of bliss experienced by Solomon when he had passing glimpses of Cosmic Consciousness. It must be remembered that during the early period of human evolution the subjective sensation of bliss on the wake of Supra-consciousness was frequently objectified and said to be the Vision of God, and the feeling of bliss was generally expressed in words denoting the pleasures of human love and describing the physical beauty of the object. Although the glimpses gained of the state of Supra-consciousness were but fitful, the person who experienced them carried with him the memory of a state of bliss in comparison with which the pleasures of ordinary consciousness seemed to him insignificant. The experience

gave rise to a great hankering for the repetition of the experience, and that hankering was generally described as the search of the Beloved by the Lover and the despair felt and the agony experienced when the Beloved could not be found or appeared to hide Himself.

Solomon is said to have had glimpses of Supra-consciousness, or what is called God Vision, on two occasions only, the first being when he was constituted King of the Israelites at an age when he was very young, and when, feeling his Kingly duties to be too much for him, he prayed to God in his heart, saying:—

“And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant King instead of David, my father, and I am but a little child. I know not how to go out or to come in.

“And Thy servant is in the midst of Thy people which Thou hast chosen; a great people that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude.

"Give therefore Thy servant an understanding heart to guide Thy people, that I may discern between good and bad, for who is able to judge this Thy so great a people?" I Kings
iii 7. 8. 9.

Then God is said to have given him not only wisdom but riches and honours, and Solomon's mind by even a glimpse of that Supra-consciousness became illumined and he possessed wisdom beyond his years. Solomon had the so-called Vision of God, which is nothing more than glimpses of this state of higher consciousness a second time when he built and consecrated a temple for the Lord. It was this act of piety, *i.e.*, the consecration of the temple to the Lord, that induced this state and the lasting impressions left by it on his memory made him sing the Song of Songs, of which the following are a few examples.

He sings :—

"Let him kiss me with the kisses of his mouth
for his love is better than wine.

Because of the savour of thy good ointment
to thy name is ointment poured forth ; there-
fore do the virgins love thee.

Draw me, we will run after thee. The King
has brought me into his chambers, we will
be glad and rejoice in thee, we will remem-
ber thy love more than wine ; the upright
love thee.

Tell me, O thou whom my soul loveth, where
thou feedest, where thou makest thy
flock to rest at noon : for why should I be as
one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy
companions ?

A bundle of myrrh is my well-beloved unto
me ; he shall lie all night between my breasts.

My beloved is unto me as a clustre of camp-
hor in the vineyard of En-gedi.

Behold thou art fair, my love, behold thou
art fair, thou hast dove's eyes Behold thou
art fair, my beloved, yea pleasant."

In the following lines he describes in
his own crude way the bliss he experien-
ced at the time :—

" As the apple tree among trees of the wood,
so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down
under his shadows, with great delight, and
his fruit was sweet to my taste.

He brought me to the banqueting house and
his banner over me was love.

His left hand is under my head, and his right
hand doth embrace me.

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I charge you, O ye daughters of Jerusalem,
by the roes, and by the hinds of the field that
ye stir not up nor awake my love till he
pleases."

The last verse expresses the exquisite feeling of a heart so filled with bliss that the least thought of anything is likely to disturb it, and so all thoughts are controlled and kept in subjection, *i.e.*, charged to be still, so as not to disturb the inexpressible ecstasy.

Here Solomon indicates the places where a serene mood can be induced and thus glimpses of cosmic consciousness may more easily be attained.

"The voice of my beloved ! behold, he cometh
leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon
the hills.

O my dove that are in the clefts of the rock,
in the secret places of the stairs, let me see
thy countenance.

Let me hear thy voice for sweet is thy voice
and thy countenance is comely.

My beloved is mine and I am his, he feedeth
among the lilies."

How true the above statements of

Solomon's are can easily be understood when we recall that wild mountain and river sceneries are, as observed by an historian of India, "scenes of repose and meditation amidst sequestered woods and flowery banks, fanned by fragrant gales and cooled by limpid waters." It is on account of these things that many great ones who long to have Supra-consciousness, leave behind the turmoil of the world and betake themselves to the woods and mountains, seeking some solitary place where undisturbed they may give themselves up to meditative practices.

The spring season, which generally throws a mantle of joy over all nature, is also conducive to the serene peace that accompanies Supra-consciousness, and this is noticed by Solomon when he describes the human soul attracted by the love of God :—

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" My beloved spoke and said unto me, ' Rise up my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo the winter is passed, the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear upon the earth ; the time of singing of birds has come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land.

The fig tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vine with the tender grape give a good smell. Arise, my love, my fair one, and come away'."

Lastly a few lines to show the despair felt at not finding the beloved, the renewed efforts made to find him at any cost and success in the attempt.

" By night on my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth I sought him, but I found him not.

I will rise now and go about the city in the streets, and in the broad ways I will seek him whom my soul loveth : I sought him but I found him not.

My beloved put in his hand by the hole of the door and my bowels were moved for him.

I opened to my beloved ; but my beloved had withdrawn himself and was gone. My soul failed when he spake.

I sought him but I could not find him, I called him, but he gave me no answer.

The watchmen that go about the city found

me : to whom I said : Saw ye him whom my soul loveth ?

The watchmen that go about the city found me, they smote me, they wounded me, the keepers of the wall took away my veil from me.

I charge you, daughters of Jerusalem, if ye find my beloved, that ye tell him that I am sick of love."

When questioned as to the peculiarities of the Beloved, the following description of the state of consciousness is given in terms of physical beauty, the only terms that Solomon, and many like him in those early days, were accustomed to use while describing any sensation of joy.

"My beloved is white and ruddy, the chiefest among ten thousand.

His head is as the most fine gold, his locks are bushy and black as a raven.

His eyes are the eyes of doves by the rivers of waters, washed with milk and fitly set.

His cheeks are a bed of spices, as sweet flowers: his lips like lilies, dropping sweet-smelling myrrh.

His hands are as gold rings set with beryl,

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His belly is as bright ivory, overlaid with sapphires.

His legs are as pillars of marble, set upon sockets of fine gold: his countenance is as Lebanon, excellent as the cedars.

His mouth is so sweet: yea, he is altogether lovely.

This is my beloved and this is my friend, daughters of Jerusalem.

It was but a little that I passed from them, but I found him whom my soul loveth. I held him and would not let him go until I had brought him into my Mother's house, and into the chamber of her that conceived me.

I charge you ye daughters of Jerusalem, by the roes and by the hinds of the field that ye stir not up nor wake my love till he pleases."

Thus we see that the Song of Solomon could be easily understood in the light of the attainment of supra-consciousness, for that experience has given rise to all that is lovely, noble and grand in all religions.

But as I have already said Solomon had only glimpses of this state of consciousness, and his case was not

one of full attainment, as in the cases of Christ, Buddha, and other founders of religions. In spite of the intellectual illumination and wisdom possessed by him, there was much backsliding on his part, and he lapsed into worldly enjoyments. Because he had only glimpses it did not change his attitude towards self-conscious life of ordinary men as full attainment does. He married many women and in the dissipation that followed, he forgot his God ! and in consequence he was made to suffer in all ways, and more especially in the shape of severe mental torture which once again opened his eyes to the Reality, and made him preach that great sermon on the vanity of the world :—

“Vanity of Vanities, all is vanity and vexation of spirit”.

This is the grand theme so graphically and fully dealt with in the Book of

Ecclesiastes, in the Bible, a book that all should read because it is the testimony of one who has had personal experience of the truth, namely, that so long as the state of higher consciousness is not reached, all our activities, physical, intellectual and even spiritual, are vain.

In the Bhagavatham, one of the three great epics held sacred by Hindus, the mystery of Sri Krishna's making love to 16,000 damsels (the Gopis of Brindavan) at one and the same time, and the heart-rending and pathetic agony of Radha (one of the most loving of them) in the absence of the Lord, so vividly described in the Gita Govinda, translated into verse by Sir Edwin Arnold in his "Indian Poetry or Song of Songs," can only be rationally understood in the light of the ecstatic bliss experienced on the attainment of Supra-consciousness. Sri Krishna is the Lord, or Bridegroom,

personifying this highest state of consciousness and the many Gopis, or the maids of Brindavan, are so many human souls who had attained it.

There is an anecdote in the Bhagavatham that illustrates this idea very graphically.

One day Narada, the great sage and devotee of Sri Krishna, who passed all his time in praising and chanting the name of the Lord, and who was held in reverence by the inhabitants of the three worlds, went to Brindavan and paid visits to the many damsels of the place who were all lovers of the Lord. On former occasions these damsels had received him with reverence, asking him about the glory of the Lord, complaining to him of the Lord's neglect towards them and describing to him the agony that they felt in their hearts in not having found the Lord ; and

he had consoled them and advised them to persevere in their attempts to find Him. During those days the advent of the great sage had been gladly welcomed by the Gopis, because it gave them consolation, encouragement and hope. This time, however, when the sage visited the Gopis, he found each one in her own house, self-absorbed, with a beaming face on which peace was fully depicted, and apparently unmindful of the visit of the sage. This behaviour the sage understood to be caused by pride in possessing the grace of the Lord, and he thought to curb this pride by preventing the Lord from going to the Gopis and thus to teach them a lesson for their neglect of himself. So he went to the abode of the Lord, and there he was received by Sri Krishna with all love and reverence. He remained with the Lord all that day and all that night, and

he did not allow the Lord to go away and leave him for a single minute. Thereby he thought that he could prevent the Lord from going to the Gopis, and humble their pride by causing them to suffer the pangs of separation from the Lord in His absence. Very early the next morning, he took leave of Sri Krishna and went to the home of one of the Gopis. What was his surprise when the door was opened by the Lord himself ! Sri Krishna had just got up from bed and was rubbing His eyes. The sage was dumb-founded and could not understand the mystery, and making an excuse he hurried away. He went to the home of another Gopi, and there he found Sri Krishna washing His teeth and face. In a third place, he discovered Sri Krishna just going for a bath; and in yet another he found the Lord sitting down to His lunch. Thus he found the Lord in the

house of each one of the Gopis, and in wonder at the great Lila, or sport of the Lord, he returned to his own place, his eyes being opened to the mystery of the Lord. This presence of the Lord with each one of the Gopis—the great devotees of the Lord—at one and the same time is an allegory explaining the truth that whoever, like these Gopis, earnestly and whole-heartedly gives himself up to the Lord for the love of Him and Him alone, forsaking wife and children, father and mother, renouncing all possessions and wealth, and giving up all ideas of self or *abhimanam*, and seeking Him alone, wherever He may be, and never resting satisfied until he has found Him, such an one is sure to find the Lord and to enjoy His presence and to lose himself in the ecstasy of the bliss that results from such an union. And Christ says much the same :—“ And every one that hath

forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name's sake, shall receive an hundred fold and shall inherit everlasting life." (Matthew xix 29.) So this allegory that describes each one of the 16,000 Gopis as having enjoyed the love of the Lord at one and the same time represents that cosmic consciousness can be attained by all, and all can enjoy the blissful state at one and the same time. This is the explanation of the great Rasa-Lila of the Lord as given in the Bhagavatham.

Tukaram, the greatest saint and poet of the whole of the Maharashtra people, one whose words are constantly on the lips of both rich and poor, prince and peasant, Brahmin and Sudra, the learned and the ignorant, is described by V. M. Mahajani in the *Theosophist* as a great moral and religious teacher, a poet whose

burning words give apt expression to the most intense personal loving religion, whose pithy sayings go straight to the hearts of all, whose pure saintly life was in perfect accord with what he preached and as such he has secured the greatest respect and reverence. His life briefly told is just like the life of one who after great struggles attains liberation or cosmic consciousness and remains in the world after that as a beacon-light to show the path of liberation to all others and to uplift them to the attainment of this higher consciousness. His life and influence extend over the earlier portion of the 17th century A.D. He is said to have been born somewhere about the year 1608 A.D. and to have disappeared from this world about 1650 A.D. He was a Sudra or low-caste trader by birth, but was descended from a long line of devout worshippers of God. He did not succeed

in the trade he was compelled to take up, and so he gave it up and became a religious devotee ; but he never left his home nor went about as a wanderer. He worshipped his God *Vithoba*, the deity worshipped in Pandrapur, in his heart of hearts and intensely prayed for the attainment of peace in his own hut, never going out of his village, showing thereby that wherever one may be attainment is possible if only one is sincere and earnest in his heart of hearts. I give his short life in the concise words of Mahajani:—" Selfless, he sought to gather no crowds of idle admiring disciples round him, but followed what his conscience dictated. He listened not to the counsel of his relatives and friends, who thought he had gone mad, and bore in patience the well-meant but harsh rebukes of his second wife. This lady, except for her bitter tongue, was a good

type of a Hindu wife, and did all she could to look after the comforts of her husband and children, and must be credited with a fair amount of success in her efforts. After a long mental struggle, the agonies of which he has recorded in heart-rending words, now entreating God in the tenderest of terms, now resigning himself to despair, now appealing with the petulance of a pet child for what he deemed his birth-right, now apologising in all humility for thus taking liberties with his Mother-God, he succeeded at last in gaining a restful place of beatitude—a state in which he merged his soul in the Universal soul, *i.e.*, in attaining supra-consciousness. After this he lived for several years, spreading the light vouchsafed to him. Towards the closing days of his career, he composed his celebrated stanzas called ‘Love’s Lament’, in which he likened

the human soul to a bride, while the Bridegroom was, of course, God. While singing these verses, he is said to have proceeded to the bank of the Indrayani, a river close by his village, and was then seen no more."

Thus we see that most of these attained beings cannot overcome the temptation of expressing the ecstasy of bliss in terms of pure human love which is in essence a spark of that higher bliss.

Let me in contrast to the above give a few quotations from the works of one who enjoyed this state in its impersonal aspect :—

Sadasiva Brahman, a great sage who lived in Southern India a little over 150 years ago, and who is considered to be one of the great Siddhas, namely, a person who has attained all powers and perfection, composed a Sanskrit poem called 'Atmavidyavilasa' consisting of 62 Arya

verses. This poem gives his experiences and ideas about Liberation and its effects upon the liberated soul. A few verses will serve as examples.

"The sage whose mind by the grace of his blessed Guru is merged in his own true nature, Satchidananda (Existence, Intelligence and Bliss Absolute), that great, illumined person, wise, with all *egoism suppressed*, and extremely delighted within himself, sports in joy.

The evil of egoism *i. e.*, self-consciousness having been extirpated, and his mind steadily concentrated, he, the indescribable one, whose nature is cool like the full moon, and who knows the essence of Bliss, Existence and Intelligence, shines brilliantly.

The pure moon of the prince of recluses, who is fit to be worshipped by gods and whose moonlight of intelligence that dispels the darkness of ignorance causes the lily of the earth to blossom, shines forth in the abode of the all-pervading Essence or Light.

He who is himself alone, who has known the secret of bliss, who has firmly embraced peace, who is magnanimous and whose feelings other than those of the Atman have been allayed, that person sports on his pleasant couch of self-bliss."

When Sadasiva Brahman was asked to denote by one idea what constitutes

the main difference between one who has attained Liberation or Supra-consciousness and one who has not, however learned and clever he may be, he bursts forth singing:—

"Chintha nasti khila, tesham chintha nasti khila," which may be freely rendered as follows: 'They will have no worry, indeed they will never worry themselves over anything.

Professor James also says:—"The central character of this change is the loss of all the worry, the sense that all is ultimately well with one, the peace, the harmony, the *willingness* to be, even though the outer condition should remain the same."

Here are a few addresses to God made by some of the Vaishnava Saints of Upper India as given by S. K. Ghose in his paper sent to the Religious Convention lately held in Calcutta.

Billamangal, the author of Krishnakarnamrita says:—

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Oh the object of my reverence, O my beloved,
Oh the only friend of the universe,
Oh my Lord, O the delightful object of
the communion of my soul,
Grant me this, that I can have a glimpse
of the lotus feet of thine.

Here is the prayer of Puree Goswami,
who was the forerunner of Lord
Gowranga :—

Oh my Lord whose heart melts at the sight of misery
My restless mind is searching for Thee.
When shall my eyes have the ecstasy of
seeing Thee.

Lord Gowranga himself says in one
place:—

My beloved, whether you clasp me unto
your heart or you crush me by that
embrace, it is all the same to me.
For you are no other than my own, the
sole partner of my soul.

Many stanzas of similar description
can be quoted from the works of the
Tamil Saints of Southern India, more
especially those of the Vaishnavite
Saints,—the Alvars—and the Saivite

Saints, Appar, Sundarar, Sambandar, Manikyavasagar and even Thayumanavar. Their works are more or less familiar to you all. The Ananda Kalippu, a poem by Thayumanavar, is nothing but an excellent exposition, in mystical language, of the exquisite experience of ecstasy and bliss that results on the attainment of Supra-consciousness or Liberation.

The Vaishnavite saints, like Lord Gowranga who flourished about 400 years ago in Nadia, in Bengal, recognise only this aspect of the effects of supra-consciousness as the end and the aim of life. In fact, in the words of S. K. Ghose: —“Vaishnavism teaches that the highest object of man is to make God the superior partner of his soul, and to participate in the joys of God, who is called *Anandamaya*”—“All Joy.”

In dwelling solely on this aspect of

experience, the Vaishnavites consider this as their unique creed, and the stronghold of their religion, and they ignore all other aspects as secondary, more especially the impersonal aspect enjoyed by the great philosophers and yogis, forgetful that all men are not made out of one mould of thought. There are many sincere seekers after truth to whom the impersonal aspect appeals more intimately and appears more rational than the personal aspect. Such do not consider the presence of a loving power swallowing up their little self in the bliss of Samadhi as anything outside themselves, for they experience that the loving presence is within their heart as much as outside it, filling all space, which, as noticed before, they describe as *Akahanḍa Satcchidananda*. Such persons feel that they no longer exist as a separate entity, that what used to be

called by them " I " and " Mine " was but an illusory limitation, and that the real Self is one in essence with the infinite and Eternal Loving Presence. These are all facts of experience that cannot be disputed. It is here that the idea of "*Soham* " i.e., " I am he " comes in, an idea looked upon as sacrilegious by the votaries of all personal religions, more especially by Christians and Hindu Vaishnavites. Says again S. K. Ghose, the staunch Vaishnavite follower of Lord Gowranga :—"Vaishnavism alone can be called a religion. Even Vedantism puts God aside and makes God of man himself. Vedantism teaches the creed of *Soham*, which means ' I am He.' It teaches him to develop the soul and train it ; its idea of God is that he is an inert mass who can do neither good nor evil ; in short he is *nirgun*. Possibly he has intellect,

but he has no feeling." Such statements as these expose the one-sidedness of the writer and show what a narrow view he takes of those to whom the impersonal aspect of the supreme state of bliss appeals as forcibly as the personal aspect appeals to himself.

Almost all religions make similar mistakes. They take but one or two aspects of the fruits of attainment and formulate a creed out of it, ignoring the other equally true and equally indisputable effects. When one therefore takes into account all the various experiences of those that have attained this consciousness, and looks at them in a tolerant spirit, one sees that the basic experiences of all religions more or less depend upon this fact of evolution only, viz., the attainment of supra-consciousness, and that this alone can explain scientifically and satisfactorily the apparent differences

in religions, so as to harmonise and unify them all.

Says Swami Vivekananda:—" This blissful state is the real search in all hearts. It has been the search of all nations, it is the one goal of religion, and this ideal is expressed in various languages, and all the petty differences between religions and religions are mere word struggles. It is only difference of language that makes all these differences. One expresses a thought in one way, another a little differently; yet one is saying exactly what the other is saying in different language."

Again, on another occasion he said:--
 " All religions are more or less attempts to get beyond this limitation of self, the crudest, or the most developed, expressed through mythology, or symbology, or through the abstractions of philosophy, through stories of gods or

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angels, or demons ; through stories of saints, or seers, or great men, or prophets, all have one object—they are all trying to get beyond these limitations, to find something which is beyond these. In one word, they are all struggling towards liberation. Man has known, consciously or unconsciously, that he is bound; he is not what he wants to be. It was taught to him at the very time, the very moment he began to look round, that very moment he found he was bound and he also found there was something in him which wanted to fly beyond, something which was as yet chained down by this limitation. Even in the lowest of religious ideas, where departed ancestors and other spirits, mostly violent and cruel, lurk about the houses of their friends fond of bloodshed and strong drink—even in these we find one common factor, that of freedom. The man who

wants to worship the gods, sees in them above all things greater freedom than in himself ; if a door is closed, the gods can get through walls, and so on ; the walls have no limitations to them. The one idea of liberty is increasing until it comes to the ideal of a Personal God and that is the centre of the ideal that God is some one beyond the limitation of this *maya* or the self-conscious existence. This idea of Personal God being beyond the limitation of *maya* is the common property of all religions, what you call Theism. But with the Vedanta it is just the beginning of religion and not the end. This idea grows and grows until the Vedantist (on the wake of the supra-consciousness) finds that he who was experienced as standing outside, was he himself who was in reality inside. It was the very one who was free, who thought he was bound."

It is on this account that I have gathered together from the works of eminent western psychologists and from our own holy books the most important or undisputed and authenticated signs of liberation, so that, having these before our eyes, the mysteries of many religions we can more easily understand. The eternal verities of heart being the same in all men, inhabiting whatever region on this earth, and belonging to whatever religion it may be, the fundamental experiences of realisation attained by a sincere and faithful following of the teachings given in any religion must be the same, however differently they may be interpreted and expressed. It is believed that this analysis of this supreme state of attainment will show to all not only the brotherhood of all religions but will also emphasize the Brotherhood of all men and the Fatherhood of God.

In no other religion is this toleration for other religions so conspicuously seen as in the higher aspects of Hinduism, the Vedanta. It has taught the world not only tolerance but also acceptance of the truth of all religions. One of the daily prayers repeated by millions of Indians says "As the different streams having their sources in different places and with their courses, crooked or straight, all reach the sea, so O Lord, the different paths which men take through different tendencies, various though they appear, all lead to thee." Again, this wonderful doctrine of toleration is preached in the Bhagavad Gita as follows :—"Whosoever comes to me, through whatsoever form, I reach him", says the Lord, "all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me." Again the Lord says "I am in all religions as the string in a chaplet or garland of pearls." Even

earlier than the Gita the Rigveda gave out the sublime idea "*Ekam Sat Viprabahuda Vadanti.*"—That which exists is one, the sages call it variously. And that one and that unity is cognised only when man attains liberation or supra-consciousness. What humanity is to man, what existence is to living beings, that this ideal of Vedantism, this attainment of cosmic consciousness is to religions : it is their common essence, their inner unity and, as such, it harmonises the existing differences and even welcomes their multiplication, so that no man might be left godless for want of a religion suited to his nature.

INDESCRIBABILITY OF THE EXPERIENCE

In spite of all that has been said about the experiences of liberated souls, the conception of liberation must remain vague until we ourselves experience it, because it transcends all power of

description in self-conscious language.

Says Jacob Boehme, a liberated one: — “ Earthly language is quite insufficient to describe what there is of joy, happiness and loveliness contained in the inner wonders of God. Even if the eternal Virgin pictures them to our minds, man’s constitution is too cold and dark to be able to express even a spark of it in his language.”

Walt Whitman, one of the greatest of the recent transcendentalists of America, says :—

“ When I undertake to tell the best, I find I cannot,
My tongue is inefficient on its pivots,
My breath will not be obedient to its organs,
I become a dumb man.”

In the Brahmandavalli of the Taitharya Upanishad this aspect of realization is described as follows:—

“*Yatovachoninvariante aprapya
manasa saha
Anandam Brahmano vidvan na
bibheti Kutaschana*”

which means :—" The wise one who realizes the indivisible bliss of Brahma, the state from which words and mind both recoil unable to approach it, is freed of all fear." That is to say, it is a state of bliss which can neither be described nor even grasped by the mind, and which takes away all fear.

Says Sri Ramakrishna:—" How shall I make it clear to thee ? Suppose some asketh thee what is the taste of clarified butter ? Is it possible to make the matter perfectly clear to him ? The utmost one may say in answer to such a question is :—The taste of the butter is precisely like the taste of butter. There hath been as yet in this world no created being who hath been able to express by word of mouth the nature of the absolute. There is joy unspeakable in the company of the Lord. Word proceeding out of the mouth cannot

tell it. He alone knoweth who hath felt it."

The reason for this is plain—speech is only a tally of self-conscious intellect, it can express that and nothing but that ; it does not tally with and therefore cannot express the cosmic sense, or if at all, then only in so far as this may be translated into terms of self-consciousness.

(iii) IMMORTALITY AND LOSS OF FEAR OF DEATH.

With this change comes a sense of immortality, not the intellectual conviction that follows the solution of a problem, but as a simple and elementary instinct, which can be compared with the certainty of individuality that arises from self-consciousness. The fear of death, which haunts many all their lives, and impels some towards spiritual progress, falls off like an old cloak—not, however, as a result of reasoning—it simply vanishes. This

realization of the sense of immortality is nothing more than the realization of the nature of the true self of man at the time of attainment of cosmic consciousness or liberation. Man can never bring himself to believe, except in a superficial way that he will die. He may see many people actually dying before his eyes, and yet he will go on with all his plans in this world as if he were going to live here for eternity.

In the great Sanskrit epic, the Mahabharata, the story is told that when the hero Yudhisthira was asked by Dharma to tell what was the most wonderful thing in the world, he replied :—" The persistent belief of men in their own deathlessness, in spite of witnessing death everywhere around them at almost every moment of their lives."

"And in fact," says Vivekananda, " this is the most stupendous wonder in human

life. In spite of all arguments to the contrary, urged at different times by different schools, in spite of the inability of reason to penetrate the veil which will ever hang between the sensuous and the supersensuous worlds, man is thoroughly persuaded that he cannot die."

Yet through ignorance, forgetful of his own real nature, which remains hidden from his mental view, man usually identifies himself with his body and fear of death seizes hold of him whenever he sees anyone dying—but for a short time only—and it is here that all philosophy begins. When therefore man attains cosmic consciousness, then the imperishable, immortal nature of his real self is seen face to face and all fear of death drops off and it is here that the "Victory over the Grave" comes in.

Swami Vivekananda mentions an anecdote concerning the Emperor

Alexander the Great, when he invaded India. The Emperor met a sage, who was sitting on a block of stone and talked with him a little and became very much pleased with the conversation of the man. He asked the sage to go with him to his own country. "No, I am quite satisfied with my forest here," replied the sage. 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, becoming impatient, said :—"If you don't go, I will kill you." The man burst into a laugh and replied "That is the silliest thing you have ever said, emperor, you cannot kill me. Me the sun cannot dry, neither fire can burn, neither instrument can kill, for I am the birthless, the deathless, immortal, omnipotent, and omnipresent spirit, ever-living."

Such indeed is the fearlessness that results on the realization of one's immortal nature on the wake of cosmic consciousness. Before this fearlessness all courage, physical or mental, must pale.

Sri Ramakrishna once said:—

“Fear not, dive deep into the sea, it is the sea of immortality.”

And another time Ramakrishna said to Swami Vivekananda, then known as Narendra :—“God is like a sea of liquid sweet. Wouldst thou not dive into this sea. Just think of a vessel with a wide mouth containing syrup of sugar and suppose thou art a fly anxious to drink of the sweet liquid. Where shouldst thou sit and drink?” Narendra said that he should like to drink from the edge of the vessel, for if he came to a point beyond his depth he was sure to be drowned. Thereupon the master said to him: “Thou forgettest, my son, that diving

deep into the divine sea thou needst not be afraid of death. Remember *Satchidananda* sea is the sea of immortality. The water of this sea never causeth death but is water of everlasting life. From this sea of immortality drink the *Chidananda rasa*—the nectar of absolute existence, knowledge and joy. It is immaterial how thou gettest into this sea. Infinite is the number of ways leading to the sea of immortality. First taste the nectar of life and thou becomest immortal."

Says Vivekananda, quoting from an Upanishad in one of his Gnanayaga lectures:—"When all vain desires of the heart have been thrown out, then this very mortal becomes immortal, then here he becomes one with God. When all the knots of the heart are cut asunder, then the mortal becomes immortal and he enjoys Brahman. Here, nowhere else."

Christ says :—" Every one that hath forsaken houses or brethren or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or land for the Kingdom of God's sake shall receive an hundred-fold and shall inherit eternal life."

The everlasting life referred to is none other than the sense of immortality gained at the moment of liberation, though the idea of Christian teachers seems to be different, because they speak as if immortal life is only to be gained after the body is cast off. But St. Paul, speaking of the sudden appearance of this change, says :—

" Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump. For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. Then shall come to pass the saying that is written :—" Death is swallowed up in victory. Oh Death, where is thy sting? O Grave, where is thy victory "?

So we see that the everlasting life spoken of by Christ and the immortality referred to by St. Paul, mean one and the same experience of the loss of the fear of death and the gaining of the sense of immortality on the sudden awakening of this new consciousness.

(iv) LOSS OF THE SENSE OF SIN

The same may be said of the sense of sin as of the fear of death. It is not that the person escapes sin, but that he sees no longer in the world any sin from which to escape. Sin is only a creation of self-conscious life. Of itself there is neither sin nor virtue. The ideas of right and

wrong, good and evil are not only relative but are true only in so far as self-conscious life is concerned. All the inhibitions and proprieties that guide men on the plane of self-conscious life, no longer affect the doings of those who have attained cosmic consciousness or liberation ; and hence the actions of some of the liberated ones are considered whimsical and foolish. The conduct of liberated souls is said in some Vedantic works to resemble that of children and mad persons and persons possessed by devils. (*Balonmatlha pisachavath.*) The ideas conveyed by these phrases can only be clearly understood in the light of the fact that when a person completely gains supra-consciousness, his life becomes quite changed along with his attitude towards the conventionalities of self-conscious life, and what are considered usually pro-

prieties and inhibitions in society no longer influence him, and he, being free from all *abhimanam*, i.e., self-seeking and selfish desires, and not caring for the good or the bad opinion of the world, is guided only by his intuitions, which, judged by the standard of self-conscious people, may seem at times foolish or even wanting in propriety. Says St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Romans :—
 “And we know that to them that love God all things work together for good. I know and I am persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean of itself, save that to him who accounteth anything unclean, to him it is unclean.”

Walt Whitman says :—“ Omnes ! omnes ! Let others ignore what they may, I make the poem of evil also, I commemorate that part also, I am myself just as much evil as good, and my nation is, and I say there is in fact no evil.”

I do not mean to say that liberated souls will do anything which is impure, or sinful, for they are generally the essence of purity in their thoughts, words and deeds; but that they do not recognise any sin in others. Jesus Christ, himself a pure soul, never recognised sin in others. He mixed freely with publicans and sinners, and at times even ate with them. When a woman who was considered to be a great sinner was brought to him, and he was asked to judge her by the Pharisees and the Saducees, he simply told them :—

“ Let him that is without sin cast the first stone at her,” and thereupon every one of them went slowly away, leaving the woman alone. Then Christ said to her, “ I too shall not judge thee. Go and sin no more ” This strikingly illustrates the magnanimity of the conception involved in the extinction of the sense of

sin. Liberated souls are said in Vedantic works to be beyond "*vidhi*" and "*nishe-dha*", namely, beyond ordinary rules of conduct, or beyond all restrictions.

Sayanacharya sings in his *Jivan Mukti Viveka* :—

“Realizing the highest wisdom, lying beyond the reach of words, and beyond the action of the three *gunas*, the holy one at once gets rid of all ideas of equality and inequality, good and evil, ignorance and illusion, he is no longer troubled by any doubt in his mind, for one who walks where the three *gunas* (*i.e.*, the limitations of self-consciousness) do not exist, what is the rule for him, and what the restriction? That means he is walking beyond rule and restriction.”

Regarding the destruction of the sense of sin, Sri Ramakrishna once told Protap Mazumdar :—“The signs of one who hath seen God are these. His conduct

is like that of a child. He does not care for his body. He seemeth to make no distinction between purity and impurity ; for he seeth God in and through everything." On another occasion he said :—"The blessed one that hath beheld the vision divine, becometh like a child, simple, open, turning his eye upon the fresh world as it is stripped of its artificial names and forms. Often he is intoxicated with the wine of divine love at the sight of the revelation before him. He is one with the Living Fountain of Holiness. With him therefore as a rule there hath ceased all distinction between purity and impurity, between sin and virtue."

Sings Sri Sankara in his Nirvana Shatkam :—

"I am neither sin nor virtue ; nor temple nor worship ; nor pilgrimage nor

books ; I am existence absolute ; knowledge absolute ; bliss absolute. I am He. I am He. *Sivohum, Sivohum.*"

A note of warning here must, however, be sounded in this connection. Many pretenders taking hold of this aspect of the fruit of liberation, have been found to justify their immoral acts and vicious propensities, but they can always be recognised by the absence of other signs of liberation, by the premeditation of their acts, by their scrupulous avoidance of public exposure and by the great grief that takes hold of them when such exposure happens. The loss of the sense of sin is a grand noble trait in the character of the great ones who see everything good and bad, sunshine and rain, with the same eye and with an equanimity of temper which is only compared to the sea which neither swells because so many rivers flow into

it, nor dries because it is exposed to so much heat of the sun.

V. INTELLECTUAL ILLUMINATION.

Immediately following these emotional experiences, there comes to the person an intellectual illumination quite impossible to describe. Like a flash, there is presented to his consciousness a clear conception and vision in outline of the meaning and drift of the universe. He does not come to believe merely, he sees and knows that the cosmos, which to the self-conscious man seems to be made up of dead matter, is in very truth a living presence. He sees that, instead of men being, as it were, patches of life scattered through an infinite sea of non-living substance, they are, in reality, specks of death in an infinite ocean of life. He sees that the life which is in man is eternal, as all life is eternal, that the soul of man is as immortal as God

and nothing exists but that one soul of which he is a part. The illumined one will learn in a few seconds much that no study ever taught or can teach. Especially does he obtain such a conception of the whole as dwarfs all imaginations and speculations sprung up from and belonging to ordinary self-consciousness ; and the old attempts made to grasp the universe and its meaning seem petty and ridiculous.

In this connection Sri Ramakrishna said on one occasion : “ Dost thou fear because the attained one seemeth not to be well up in the truths taught by the sacred and other books ? Dost thou fear because he is not a Pundit (book-learned) ? No ! No ! He never falleth short of the wisdom of Life. He has a never-failing supply of Divine Wisdom—truths directly revealed—which rise superior to the wisdom taught by the

books. We often find people measuring grains lying in a heap. One man goeth on measuring with a standard measure. Another man pusheth the grains on to him as soon as he finisheth measuring the portion of the heap that is within his reach. Much the same way the Divine Teacher receiveth his supply of Truths from the Fountain of all wisdom. That supply is never used up. Should it be the rare good fortune of a person to be favoured with one side glance of love from the Lord, such a person becometh blessed at once with Divine Wisdom enough and to spare."

Mundaka Upanishad, II 2, 8, says:—

*" Bhidyate hridayagranthi-schhidante
Sarva Samsayah-Kshiyante chasya kar-
mani-lasmin drishite Paravore "* which means that when a man gets that vision of God (*i.e.*, attains cosmic consciousness) all the knots or the grasping desires of

his heart are rent asunder, all his doubts are cleared and all his karmas come to an end.

Here doubts refer to the mystery that always hangs about the meaning and drift of the Universe, in spite of all philosophy and intellectual learning. These are never cleared until a man attains cosmic consciousness.

St. Paul, contrasting the knowledge gained after illumination with all worldly knowledge gained before the attainment of cosmic consciousness, says :—
 “Whether there be prophecies they shall fail, whether there be tongues they shall cease, whether there be knowledge it shall vanish away. For we know in part and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part shall be done away. When I was a child (*i.e.*, before attainment) I spake as a child, I understood

as a child, I thought as a child ; but when I became a man (after attainment) I put away childish things. For now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face ; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as I am known."

And Jacob Boehme referring to his illumination says :—" The gate was opened to me that in one quarter of an hour I saw and knew more than if I had been many years together at an university."

Thus when the supreme moment comes in the course of a man's evolution, and that man attains cosmic consciousness, all the veils that hid the mystery of the universe from his inward gaze are rent asunder and his vision being rendered keen, as already noted, he knows in a flash much that no study ever did or could teach him.

Lives of many great saints and sages in India abound with descriptions of the seemingly ignorant and unlettered state they were in previous to liberation and how, afterwards, they dazzled the world with their intellectual and spiritual attainments. One of the most remarkable of such cases was the author of the great Sanskrit epic Ramayana, namely, the sage Valmiki. He was known as a much-feared highway robber, Ratnakara, one who made highway robbery a means of earning a living and supported thereby his parents, and his wife and children. Several murders are said to have been committed by him in order to obtain the property of his victims. Nevertheless, he was sincere, honest and straightforward, and he is said never to have uttered a single lie in his life. He honestly believed that there was nothing wrong in the

profession that fell to his lot, and but for that profession, he is said to have possessed all the higher virtues that adorn the lives of great souls. One day, while he was waiting for his prey, the sage Narada passed by with his musical instrument the Vina, singing the praises of the Lord. Ratnakara pounced on him, and wanted to kill him in order to take away the Vina and sell it and with the proceeds of the sale of the musical instrument to supply the needs of his family. But Narada's unruffled equanimity of temper, and the kind words that he addressed to the robber, deterred the latter from carrying out his intentions at once and the sage had thus time to say, "You may kill me, and take whatever I have, but I wish to know whether you have realized the great sins you have committed all these years and whether anyone for whose benefit

you have committed them will take part in the punishment that will surely come to you sooner or later." To which the robber replied :—" I never knew that there is any sin in the vocation that has fallen to my lot. This is all I am capable of doing in order to earn a livelihood and therewith support my parents and my wife and children, and surely, as it is for the sake of my family that I do these things, whatever may be the punishment that follows my deeds, they will partake in it."

" Go and ask your parents, and your wife and children," said the sage, "I shall remain here until you come back, or if you suspect me, then you can tie me up to a tree." This roused the curiosity of the robber and made him think a little—a thing he had never done in his life before. He tied the sage to a tree and then went quickly to his place of residence

and there he asked his parents and his wife and children whether they would share with him the punishment that might follow his sinful acts, acts done in order to feed and protect them all. They one and all replied :—" No, by virtue of the ties you have formed with us, you are bound to protect us, but none of us asked you to commit a sinful act for our sake and all the result of the sin will be on your own head." This direct answer of his nearest relatives disillusioned him and he began to repent most sincerely for all the sins he had committed. He was seized with a feeling of intense agony when he thought of the heinous nature of his deeds, and he ran back to the sage, who, with a peaceful countenance, was singing the praises of Sri Krishna, the Lord of the Universe, although he was tied to a tree. The robber released the sage and fell prostrate

at his holy feet and began to sob and cry, and say :—

“ Not knowing the nature of my acts, and foolishly believing that my parents and my wife and children would partake of my sorrows and the fruits of my deeds as they have done of my spoils, I wasted this life of mine and committed most cruel sins. Have mercy on me and teach me how to make amends for my past conduct, and get my sins absolved.” Then the sage took pity on him and taught him how to utter the name of Rama, and blessed him and went away.

This robber Ratnakara had the germ of intense faith in him and believed that by the constant repetition of the name Rama his sins would be washed away, and sitting down under a tree at the very spot he continued to utter most devoutly the holy mantra, or name. The consequence was that he lost all consciousness

of the outside world, and became self-absorbed and remained in that state for several months, or years, so much so that whiteants built an an-thill over him enveloping him on all sides.

When, after some months, or years, the sage Narada had to pass that way again, he was curious to know what had become of his robber-disciple, and on coming to the spot where he had taken leave of him, he called the robber by name, saying loudly—"Ratnakara, Ratnakara, where are you?" Thereupon the ant-hill was rent asunder, and a man, lean and haggard in outward appearance, but with a beaming, happy countenance, came out and threw himself at the feet of the sage. The sage received him kindly and they exchanged words regarding their inner experiences.

The sage was delighted with the change that had come over his robber-disciple

and christened him with the new name of Valmiki, to denote not only the great change that had come upon him, (i.e., the attainment of cosmic consciousness) but also the fact of his intense faith and concentration which had led to the building of an ant-hill over him (the Sanskrit name for ant-hill is *Valmikam*). Narada then took leave of his disciple and went away, and Valmiki built a small hut close by the bank of the river Tamasa, a tributary of the Ganges, and resided there. And a number of disciples joined him, to serve him and receive instruction from him, the most notable among them being the sage Bharadwaja.

Some months later, the sage Narada paid Valmiki a visit, and was received by him with due respect, obedience and love. In the course of conversation, Valmiki asked Narada if he knew of any

man who was perfect in all respects while remaining a householder and attending to all the duties incumbent on a householder in his relationships with the members of his family, his neighbours, his servants, his Guru and his God, in fact, with the whole world and yet was a liberated being possessing all the highest spiritual virtues. Narada, after much deliberation, mentioned the name of Sri Rama, which name itself helped Valmiki to attain Liberation, and gave a brief outline of the story of his life and doings and afterwards took leave of his disciple and departed. Immediately, it being nearly midday, Valmiki asked his disciple Bharadwaja for his flax cloth and went to the bank of the river Tamasa to bathe and finish his midday ceremonies. There a strange sight upset him entirely, for he saw a pair of herons—male and female—playing together happily on the

bank of the river and a hunter let fly an arrow that killed the male heron, leaving its mate forlorn and helpless. The female bird began to walk round the dying blood-covered bird, making sad noises, and this so touched the heart of the sage that he cursed the hunter in a language not known to him before, namely, in Sanskrit. That was the first verse that he had ever composed, and, feeling sad at heart, he returned home, reciting the verse. He related the whole affair to his favourite disciple Bharadwaja, who, when he heard the verse recited by Valmiki, being himself a Sanskrit scholar, he saw how perfect it was in metre, in sound sense, rhythm and harmony and admired the composition. The sadness of heart that had seized hold of the sage Valmiki kept him moody for some days, and then, it is said, he had a vision in which he saw Brahma,

one of the Hindu Trinity, who told him not to be sad and that it was he, Brahma, who had made him compose the verse in a language of which he had no knowledge previously. Brahma then bade him compose the story of Sri Rama that had been briefly related to him by the sage Narada in the same language and in the same metre and in all its details, and told him further that when he attempted to compose the narrative, he would come to know every detail of it and that whatever he wrote would not contain a single lie. So saying, the vision vanished and the sage Valmiki, being encouraged by it, is said to have composed the grand epic.

A case of similar nature, but more recent, is that of the great Vaishnavite Saint, Billamangal, also called Lila Sukar, the author of Krishnakarnamritha, a Sanskrit work containing a collection of most

melodious poems on Sri Krishna. He was a young Brahman who gave his heart to a woman and became so fond of her that he would not leave her house even for business of importance. When the anniversary of his father approached, his mother became anxious about the annual ceremony, which has to be performed by the son and the neglect of which is looked upon as a very sinful act by Hindus. She determined, therefore, to win the favour of the woman and to persuade her to send the young man home, if only for half a day, so that the ceremony might be properly performed. So she went to the house of the woman and swept the place in front of the door before dawn, washed it, and then drew certain ornamental figures with coloured chalk,—a very common habit in Hindu houses. As she did this day after day, the curiosity of the woman was

aroused, and one morning she came out suddenly and asked the mother of the young man the meaning of her kind actions. The mother explained about the ceremony and the woman promised to send the young man home to perform the necessary ceremony. When the time came, the man refused to go at first, but finally he was persuaded to leave the object of his devotion for a few hours. The ceremony seemed to him long and irksome, and it was evening by the time it was over; and although a thunderstorm had come, he hurried back in the heavy rain and in spite of the dark stormy night. He came to a river swollen by the rain, and he could not cross until a dark object came floating down the stream. With the help of this floating thing he reached the opposite bank and he hurried on to the house of the woman who had absorbed him heart

and soul. He found that the occupants had retired to bed and the door was locked and the noise of the storm prevented him from making himself heard. Suddenly a flash of lightning showed him something hanging over the wall, and thinking it was a rope, he caught hold of it, gave a spring, and scaled the wall. He fell with a thud on the ground inside, and remained stunned, holding in his hand the thing that he had imagined to be a rope. The noise of his fall roused the people of the house, and the woman came into the yard with a lamp in her hand to see what was the matter.

To her horror she saw her lover lying on the ground, holding half of a snake in his hand, and with his body covered with nauseous, crawling vermin. He came to himself, and wanted to embrace her, but she drew back; for it was borne in upon her that he had crossed the

stream by holding on to a corpse and had jumped over the wall with the help of a cobra's tail, the end of which still remained in his hand. In a flash she understood the heart of the man who loved her, and realized that if that heart were turned to God the man would have eternal life. Something impelled her to say to the man:—"Oh, my beloved, see what you have done! For the sake of my perishable body you have undergone great risks. What might not have been your gain if you had placed your love and devotion at the lotus feet of Lord Sri Krishna? He might not only have given you heavenly bliss, but also have granted you freedom from embodied existence, which is the cause of all the misery in the world."

These wise words made the young man reflect on the great risks he had undergone for the sake of a woman,

whose life might pass away the next minute, and realize how much of his time had been wasted in a vain search for the fleeting happiness of the senses. He prostrated himself before the woman and went out of the house, singing the praises of Sri Krishna, and he never returned to the woman again. He sought a forest and there he remained alone for several years, meditating deeply on Sri Krishna, and at last he had a vision of the wonderfully beautiful form of the Lord which at once, unlettered as he was, made him give vent to the sweet, melodious description of the Lord called the Krishnakarnamritha.

Many similar examples of intellectual illumination on the attainment of cosmic consciousness can be quoted. The case of the great Maratha Saint Tukaram, already mentioned, was one of these. He, an unlettered Sudra trader, on attaining

the grace of God, composed the largest work in the Marathi language, namely, the Abhanga, covering all departments of knowledge, more especially spiritual knowledge. More than two crores of verses are said to have been given out by him, only a few of which have been recorded by his disciples, for he was always praising the Lord. Even these have made the largest work in the Marathi language. The works of the Telugu Saint Vemana and of the Kanarese sage Sarvajnya were also composed after illumination by men who had before that time possessed neither knowledge nor training.

(vi) THE ADDED CHARM TO THE
PERSONALITY

Lastly, one more characteristic of the fruits of Liberation is an added charm to the personality of the person illumined, for a change almost always takes place

in the appearance of the person who attains cosmic consciousness. This change is somewhat similar to that caused in a person's appearance by great joy and lightness of heart ; but at times, in pronounced cases, it seems to be much more marked than that. In those great men in whom illumination is intense, the change may amount to "transfiguration," as in the cases of Christ and Buddha. In the case of Mahomed, a charm was added to his personality that enabled him to gain the love of many wild tribes in Arabia and hold them as devoted followers. Dante, writing on this subject, says that he was "trans-humanised into a god." And it is said of St. John of the Cross that "a certain brightness darted from his countenance on many occasions, especially when he came from the altar or from prayer; and a heavenly light at times shone from his countenance" (*Butler's*

Lives of Fathers, Martyrs and Saints,
p. 554).

Says Swami Vivekananda :—

“Satyakama, son of Jabala, was sent by his Guru to the forests with 400 lean, weak cows, and told not to return until 4,000 were in the herd. So Satyakama lived in the forests for several years, and had to depend upon himself for his illumination. It is said that he derived knowledge from all animals, and inanimate objects, and when he returned in due course, the teacher observed him from a distance, and this is what he said.

“Boy, thy face shines like a knower of Brahman!” And when the boy asked him to teach more, he answered :—

“You have known the Truth already”.

“M.” says while describing the appearance of Sri Ramakrishna in his Gospel :—
“The bewitching smile on his face! That benignant smile ! The face shines and the

smile on his lips shows the ecstatic delight that he feeleth at the sight of the Blessed Vision—"The beaming radiant face."

To sum up :—

The apparent signs of Liberation, or cosmic consciousness, are :—

1. Subjective light.
2. Ecstatic bliss.
3. The sense of immortality and the loss of the idea of death.
4. Moral elevation and the loss of the sense of sin and shame.
5. Intellectual illumination whereby the person knows many things that he did not know before.
6. General charm added to the personality of the illumined, amounting to transfiguration in the cases of Christ and Buddha.

Such in short are the characteristic signs of Liberation or Mukti arrived at, after careful analyses of various cases of

attainment, by the great psychologists of America, Prof. James, and by Richard Maurice Buck, and considered by these authorities to be essential in genuine cases of cosmic consciousness. We have also seen by quotations from the account of our own great sages and saints how true these characteristics are, and that they alone ought to guide us in distinguishing the really great ones from the mass of teachers whose outward show of occult knowledge, austerity, celibacy, miracle-mongering, etc., has led astray even men of sense and learning among ourselves.

I have already pointed out both by the doings and sayings of Sri Ramakrishna that these characteristic signs were found in him to a great extent, and therefore that he is entitled to be ranked amongst those who have transcended self-consciousness and attained supra-

consciousness or cosmic consciousness, *i.e.*, Liberation or Realization. It is this which marks him off as different from all the rest of the great teachers that went before him. Raja Ram Mohun Roy, Keshub Chandra Sen and even our Swami Vivekananda proved themselves to be very great teachers of religion and toiled hard to spread their views of religion all over the world and influenced many nations; yet to-day Sri Ramakrishna is felt to be different from all these. And why? Because of this one supreme attainment. The same cannot be said of those other great teachers. Judging from their life-histories, we do not find that they possessed all the above signs; and however great they were, they still fell short of this realization which alone confers immortality on man and makes him divine.

In this connection we must guard

against a fallacy that is somewhat common among us regarding the powers of those who have attained cosmic consciousness. It does not follow that when a man has attained to this state of consciousness he knows all about the universe, and he can do anything he likes. On the contrary, as there are vast differences between one man of self-consciousness and another, between a savage and a Gladstone or a Herbert Spencer, so there will be differences between those who have attained cosmic consciousness. They all possess the potentiality of higher powers, but the powers manifested are as varied as can be imagined. But just as man, however savage, is far removed from the most highly developed animal, so a person who has had this cosmic sense is similarly very far removed from an ordinary man of self-consciousness. Says Richard Maurice Buck :—" Given a

world peopled with men having cosmic consciousness they would vary in the way of greater and less intellectual ability and greater and less moral and spiritual elevation, and also in the way of variety of character more than would the inhabitants of a planet on a plane of self-consciousness. Within the plane of cosmic consciousness one man shall be a god while another shall not be, to casual observation, lifted so very much above ordinary humanity, however much his inward life may be exalted, strengthened and purified by the new sense. But as the self-conscious man (however degraded) is in fact almost infinitely above the animal with merely simple consciousness, so any man permanently endowed with the cosmic sense would be almost infinitely higher and nobler than a man who is self-conscious merely. And not only so,

but the man who has had the cosmic sense for even a few moments only will probably never again descend to the spiritual level of the merely self-conscious man ; but twenty, thirty or forty years afterwards he will still feel within him the purifying, strengthening and exalting effect of that divine illumination, and many of those about him will recognise that his spiritual stature is above that of the average man."

Therefore in briefly describing the signs of liberation, one aspect of the powers of the liberated soul had to be ignored, namely, the powers of the spirit, while special stress was laid on the unchanging signs of the graces of the spirit described by St. Paul as Love, Light and Bliss. While the powers of the spirit may be varied, the signs of the graces of the spirit as described above are more or less a constant feature, and

METHODS OF ATTAINMENT

It only remains now to consider the means by which we can attain Realization. But this is a big subject in itself and one on which no two religionists will agree, although the essential conditions preceding this attainment will be the same more or less in all true votaries of any religion whatever, provided they are earnest seekers after truth. I shall, therefore, give briefly the teachings of Sri Ramakrishna on this subject from his Gospel written by M. and show also how Professor James from his analyses comes much to the same conclusions.

Speaking to Protap Chunder Mozumdar, Sri Ramakrishna once said :---

“Infinite is the number of ways leading to the Sea of Immortality. The ways being numberless, Gnana, Karma, Bhakti, all lead to God, other things remaining the same.

Yoga (communion with the Lord) is of three kinds :—

1. Gnana Yoga. 2. Karma Yoga.
3. Bhakti Yoga.

1. *Gnana Yoga.*

This is communion with God by means of *Gnana*. (Knowledge in its highest sense.) The *Gnani's* object is to realise *Brahman*, the absolute. He sayeth ‘Not this’, ‘Not this,’ and thus leaveth out of account one unreal thing after another until he gets to a point where all discrimination (*Vichara*) between the real (*i.e.*, God) and the unreal ceaseth, and the absolute (*Brahman*) is realised in *Samadhi*.

2. *Karma Yoga.*

This is communion with God by means of work. It is what thou art teaching.

Ashtanga Yoga or *Raja Yoga*, is *Karma Yoga*, if practised without attachment. It leadeth to communion through meditation and concentration.

The doing of duties by householders—the doing them without attachment, to the end that God may be glorified—is *Karma Yoga*.

Again, worship (*Puja*) according to the Sastras, (*Japa*), silent repetition of the name of God, and other *Karma* of the kind is *Karma Yoga*, if done without attachment, for the glorification of God.

The end of *Karma Yoga* is the same, viz., the Realisation of God, impersonal or personal (*Nirguna* or *Saguna Brahman*) or both.

3. *Bhakti Yoga*.

This is communion by means of love,

devotion, and self-surrender. It is especially adapted to *Kaliyuga*, this age.

This is the law for the present age.

Pure work without attachment, as I have already said, is exceedingly difficult in this age (*Kaliyuga*).

In the first place, there is, as I have already pointed out, hardly time in this age for doing the various works laid upon us by the holy books.

In the second place, thou mayest form a resolution to work unattached, without any expectation of any reward or fear of any punishment in this world or the next. But the chances are that, knowingly or unknowingly, thou gettest attached to the fruit of thy works, unless indeed thou art already a perfect man.

The path of Absolute Knowledge or Communion by Philosophy is also exceedingly difficult in this age. In the

first place, our life in this age resides, so to speak, in food.

Secondly, the term of human life in this age is much too short for this purpose.

Thirdly, it is almost impossible in this age to get rid of the conviction that the *self is the same as the body*—which clingeth to us. Now what is the conclusion which the *Gnani* must come to? It is this :—‘I am not the body, gross or subtle. I am one with the Universal Soul, the being Absolute and Unconditioned. Not being the body, I am not subject to the necessities of the body, e.g., hunger, thirst, birth, death, grief, pleasure, pain, etc.

One subject to these necessities of the body, and calling oneself a philosopher, is like a person suffering from intense pain caused by a thorny plant. It scratcheth and teareth the hand and causeth it to bleed. But he neverthe-

less saith, 'Why, my hand is not at all scratched or torn. It is all right.'

Hence *the path of communion by love, devotion and self-surrender to God is the easiest of all paths.* It bringeth Karma (work) to a minimum. It teacheth the necessity of prayer without ceasing. It is, in this age, the shortest cut leading to God."

On another occasion when M. questioned Sri Ramakrishna, Sir, is it possible to see God? The Master replied "Certainly. These are some of the means by which one can see God ; —(1) Going from time to time into solitude, (2) Chanting His names and His attributes, (3) Discrimination, (4) Earnest prayer—with a yearning for the Lord."

Then M. asked, Sir, what state of the mind leadeth up to God-vision? and the Master said:—"Cry unto the Lord with a yearning heart, and then thou shalt see.

Him. People would shed a jugful of tears for the sake of their wife and children! They would suffer themselves to be carried away by a stream of their own tears for the sake of money! But who cryeth for the Lord? Cry unto Him, not for making a show, but with a longing and yearning heart.

“The rosy light of the dawn cometh before the rising sun. Likewise is a longing and yearning heart the *sign of the God-vision that cometh after*.

“Thou mayest see God if thy love for Him is as strong as the three attachments put together, viz., the attachment of a worldly man to things of the world, the attachment of the mother to her child, and the attachment of a chaste and devoted wife to her husband.

The thing is, in order to see God one must love Him, heart and soul. One

must make one's prayers so that they may reach the Divine Mother.

The kitten knoweth only how to cry unto its mother, saying 'mew,' 'mew,' 'mew.' As for the rest, the mother-cat knoweth it all. She putteth her young ones wherever she pleaseth; now in the kitchen, now in the soft downy bed of the householder. Yes, the kitten knoweth only how to cry unto its mother."

Much in the same strain says Swami Vivekananda :—"Theorising about God will not do. We must love and work. Love is higher than work, than Yoga, than Knowledge. Day and night think of God in the midst of all your activities. The daily necessary thoughts can all be thought through God. Eat to Him, drink to Him, sleep to Him, see Him in all. Let us open ourselves to the one Divine Actor and let Him act and do

nothing ourselves. Complete self-surrender is the only way. Put out self, lose it, forget it ; just let God work, it is His business. We have nothing to do but stand aside and let God work. The more we go away, the more God comes in."—(*Inspired Talks*).

This is the real gist of all that we have to do in trying to attain to this state. This is the most secret teaching of the Gita.

In the 18th chapter of Bhagavadgita, stanzas 64, 65 and 66, Sri Krishna distinctly says :—

Listen thou again to my supreme word
most secret of all; beloved art thou of me,
and steadfast of heart and therefore will
I speak for thy benefit and comfort.

Give me thy heart; adore me; serve me;
cling

In faith and love and reverence to me !

So shalt thou come to me ! I promise true,
For thou art sweet and dear to me. And
let go all

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Rites and writ duties ! Fly to me alone !
Make me thy sole refuge ! I will free
Thy soul from all its sins. Be of good cheer.

That this is really the way by which many have attained and all can attain realization is attested by that great psychologist Professor James of America, in his great work the "Varieties of religious experiences." In effect, he says regarding the—

CONDITIONS PRECEDING ATTAINMENT

What are the conditions which precede this state? There must be in the seeker a complete loss of consolation from things worldly and an intense and incessant longing to get peace and attain grace. It is only when such a longing amounts to madness, and the person has no other desire but to see his God and attain grace and when the intensity of his longing has reached white heat that the threshold is gained. And

then when he feels his utter incapacity to reach the state himself, and gives up the attempt, the veil is rent asunder and he sees face to face the object of his search and attains heaven.

“To attain this state, a man must give up everything at heart”, and think of nothing but the object of his search—the peace that passeth all understanding.

And Professor James goes on to emphasize the necessity of utter self-surrender in the following words : —

“This transition from tenseness, self-responsibility and worry to equanimity, receptivity and peace is the most wonderful of all these shiftings of inner equilibrium, and the chief wonder of it is that it so often comes about, not by doing but by simply relaxing and throwing the burden down and this abandonment of self-responsibility seems to be the

fundamental act in the specifically religious as distinguished from moral practices".

These conclusions of Professor James regarding the conditions preceding the attainment of cosmic consciousness are nowhere better illustrated than in the description given by Swami Vivekananda in his lecture on "My Master" of the state of mind of Sri Ramakrishna just before his final liberation.

When Sri Ramakrishna's yearning to realise his Mother became so intense as to render him unfit for conducting the usual worship in the temple, he left the temple and entered into a little wood that was near and stayed there. He was so engrossed in his one thought, his one quest in life, that he could not tell when the sun rose or set or how he lived. He lost all thoughts of himself and forgot to eat even ; but he was watched over by

a relative who put into his mouth food which Sri Ramakrishna mechanically swallowed. (This he told Swami Vivekananda in after-life.) Days and nights passed with him in this way. When a whole day would pass towards the evening, when the peals of bells in the temples, and the singing voices would reach the wood, it would make him very sad and he would cry, "Another day is gone in vain Mother, and Thou hast not come. Another day of this short life has gone and I have not known the truth." And sometimes in looking at his face now reduced to a haggard condition, he used to cry out in despair, "Mother, Oh ! my Mother, is this the result of calling upon Thee and believing in Thee, and anon a sweet voice would come, "My son ! how could you hope to realise the highest truth, if you do not give up the love of your body and

of your little self?" In the agony of his soul, sometimes he would rub his face against the ground and weep. At times his weepings moved to tears many passers by that wood. This is the tremendous thirst that seizes the human heart that is intently bent upon attaining supra-consciousness.

This divine madness seized Ramakrishna ; so days, weeks and months passed in continuous struggle of the soul to arrive at truth, when Mother herself is said to have become the teacher and opened his eyes to see the truths he sought. The secrets of his nature suddenly became open to him, and he saw face to face the reality he so intently sought and felt himself at peace with all. "A torrent of spiritual light," said Sri Ramakrishna, "came then deluging my mind and giving me peace."

Sri Ramakrishna once said to Swami

Vivekananda on this subject of earnestness as the only path to the goal:—"My child, suppose there is a bag of gold in one room, and a robber in the next room, do you think that robber can sleep? He cannot. His mind will be always thinking how to get into that room and obtain possession of that gold. Do you think then that a man firmly persuaded that there is a reality behind all these appearances, that there is a God, that there is One who never dies, One who is infinite bliss, a bliss compared with which these pleasures of the senses are simply playthings, can rest contented without struggling to attain it? No, he will become mad with longing."

"Hence," asserts Sri Ramakrishna most emphatically, as already noted, "*the path of communion by love, devotion and self-surrender to God is the easiest of all paths, and intense earnestness*

is the only power that takes you to the goal."

But, unfortunately, this is the one thing that has been shunned by most of our educated countrymen as superstition. To many of us who have turned back from the agnosticism of our early days, the so-called yogic practices, occultism, mysticism and theosophy coupled with certain amount of book learning and ceremonialism, have some superficial fascination which has allured us into the belief that we are very religious, although many of us cannot honestly say that we have ever felt the real softening and elevating effect of true love and heart-felt devotion to God.

It is no uncommon thing to see educated Hindus turn in their old age to meditation and practise *pranayama* or deep breathing exercises and other yogic methods learnt from persons as igno-

rant as themselves, or from books translated from the original Sanskrit works by persons with a theoretical knowledge of the subject but without a practical conception of the truths that the books contain. It would be amusing, if it were not sad, to hear such persons speak of their being able to feel the nerve currents passing through their head downwards on both sides and of the restful sleep that comes to them when they sit down to meditate, and to listen while they discuss with others as if they were near the goal and had spent their lives in seeking it.

Others in their old age and after retiring from active work, and also even younger men take to Theosophy as a source of inspiration, study "The Secret Doctrine", seek for a knowledge of Invisible Helpers and the unseen world and its inhabitants, and spend their time in

discussing the three bodies, five koshas and seven sheaths of man, the astral, devachanic and other planes, the sixth sense, and how to develop it, etc., etc. But what Theosophy or Wisdom Religion really is has eluded the grasp of less devoted although sincere seekers of truth in their own way. Theosophy is said to be "neither a religion with a creed or code of doctrines nor even a philosophy," but "Wisdom Religion that is said to have existed on this planet thousands of years before any of the creeds of Christendom were heard of, before the still more ancient religions of the East were recorded." Thus it is not a religion but Wisdom Religion and what it really is remains still a vague conception.

Students of the theosophy propounded by Madame Blavatsky find it full of magic and magicians, mysteries and

hierophants, adepts and initiates, oracles and miracles, alchemists and Kabbalists, Hermetic and Pythagorean philosophies, Teshu Lama and Delai Lama of Thibet and their relations to the occult hierarchy, etc. In the theosophy of Col. Olcott, the student sees American spiritualism mixed with Buddhistic lore and ethics, and the organisation of a large and wealthy society with many branches all over the world with the help of the Hindu theories of Karma and Reincarnation, the great truths that have lifted a burden from the minds of Western thinkers who could not understand how one life on earth could be enough to cast a man into an eternal hell or send him to an everlasting heaven. These doctrines, coupled with the opportunities afforded for occult studies and the possible development of psychic powers, and great organising

talents placed the Theosophical Society on a sound financial basis. To-day, Theosophy centres in Mrs. Annie Besant, with her grand and eloquent lectures on the various topics of her Sanskrit studies, her efforts to explain Hindu religious truths in the light of Western science and Western thought, her astral and occult studies, and her intense desire to do good all round, her incessant and self-sacrificing efforts in the cause of education, of which the Central Hindu College is the climax, and her various associations, such as the Sons and Daughters of India. Judging from the varied teachings and activities of the Founders and Presidents of the Theosophical Society, it is somewhat difficult to decide what is meant by Theosophy.

No one will be blind to the good work done by the Theosophical Society, and more particularly by Mrs. Annie Besant,

whose zeal and perseverance in the cause of the young men of India cannot be denied. The Theosophical Society has no doubt stopped the tide of agnosticism, has prevented many conversions to Christianity among the rising generation and has opened the eyes of people in the West to the great truths contained in Eastern religions—truths welcomed by materialistic Western people whom a crude Christianity as propounded by the various churches failed to satisfy. All these and many more good things the Theosophical Society has done and is doing, and all praise be to it for its activities.

But, what one does not find in the Theosophical Society is real *Bhakti*, that spirit of prayer or serene communion with God, that is to say, the establishment of an active, loving, tender relationship between oneself and one's ideal conception

of God. There is not much scope for the cultivation of deep piety that can be seen expressing itself through all the varied practical relations of life. There are no ceremonies and festivals, holy days and worship, fasts and prayers, devotional songs and hymns connected with the Theosophical movement, such as appeal to the imagination and nourish the emotions and hence considered of great importance in all countries and amongst all great religions. Even the celebration of their White Lotus day is a tame affair lacking much in fervour and enthusiasm ; and their Annual Conventions no more help the growth of piety in the members than the many similar Social Conferences generally held about the same time do. There is thus a lack of that imagination which generally clings to certain details of any puja or festival and its underlying ideas and

this lack of imagination has in its turn led to a carelessness in the heart about those emotions of piety without which the idea of *Bhakti* or intense faith itself remains inoperative.

There may be many who may be inclined to speak with contempt of such ceremonies, festivals and outward shows and to laud silent *Sadhana* or work ; but a deeper knowledge of human psychology shows that man is not by nature a silent animal, emotion is necessary to him, imagination is necessary to him. Ceremonies help the imagination and encourage it to see in the concrete that which cannot be immediately realised. It is the various ceremonies, processions, sankirtans, religious festivals and *Brahmothsavams*, connected with the various temples and holy shrines, that have kept alive even to this day the spark of spirituality in the Indian Nation

in spite of the overgrowth of many superstitions and ignorance in other directions. Therefore, let not the ceremonies and festivals be despised. They are really mighty instruments of God for fostering imaginations which give rise to those pious thoughts and aspirations which elevate our hearts to a higher sphere of perfection and lead us towards the goal, or the attainment of supra-consciousness. These ceremonies, etc., may not be necessary in the case of particular individuals but a movement which aims at the spiritual advancement of a collective body cannot do without them. This is one of the drawbacks of the Theosophical movement, if it claims to advance the spiritual progress of its members and lead them to the goal of attainment of liberation, the highest end and aim of life.

Again, " Out of the fullness of the heart

the mouth speaketh," said Christ, and if whatever a man says or writes must be considered to be the expression of his inner experiences and the thoughts lying nearest to his heart, then the Theosophical teachers do not show by their lectures and writings the attainment of cosmic consciousness or liberation as described in the foregoing pages, and illustrated by the lives and the words of saints and sages of all religions. We have seen how the experience and teachings of Christ, Buddha, St. Paul, St. John of the Cross, Tukaram, and almost all the great saints of Maharashtra and Southern India, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, and the teachings of the Gita and the Upanishads refer to this one supreme fact, namely, the attainment of cosmic consciousness, as the goal of human evolution; but Theosophical teachers dwell more on subjects connected with

the development of psychic and mental powers, on the helpers in unseen worlds and so on, subjects which are no doubt interesting and useful in solving many intellectual problems and also afford curious reading, but which are not directly helpful in the attainment of liberation and which, on the other hand, may prove a source of distraction and hindrance. Says, Tukaram:—"What say we to those that have no faith? Their fancies will lead them astray. They lack the faith of saints. Like the words of learned fools, their words lack the ring of the true metal. While saints have strengthened faith, the wicked have unwittingly driven away God."

So a word of warning may be given here to those of our Indian brethren who earnestly desire to attain the highest of the four *Purusharthams*, and whose purpose in life is Moksha or Liberation.

It is said nowhere in our sacred books that a knowledge of the Invisible Helpers, the unseen world, the astral plane, occult chemistry, etc., will lead to Moksha any more than a knowledge of wireless telegraphy, X-rays, radiant matter and electric ions, etc., can do. None of the great ones who attained liberation can be said to have possessed such knowledge. They spent no time in vain discussions concerning this or that, but went straight to the Source of all knowledge, truth and bliss, and knocked there with earnestness and perseverance until they obtained their hearts' desire, namely, Liberation or Cosmic Consciousness. Therefore it is that I dwell on this subject at some length, and warn young men, and some old ones too, lest they should be distracted from the goal by occult studies and practices and the glamour of psychical attainments

regarding which Saint Thayumanavar of Southern India has sung as follows :—

“ O Lord ! that art all knowledge, all light and all bliss and that dwellest in my heart, it is easier to tame the wild elephant and make it obey our bidding, to bind the mouths of the great tiger and the bear, to ride on the back of the lord of the beasts—the lion, to play with the poisonous cobra, to convert the different metals into gold and live thereby, to roam in the world unseen, to make the gods our slaves, to enjoy eternal youth, to pass into another body, to walk on water, to stand on fire and develop powers incomparable—all these easier far than to subdue the mind and remain in blissful equanimity resulting from the attainment of supra-consciousness.”

In this connection there are three sayings of Sri Ramakrishna which are worth being pondered over deeply by all. He says: “Visit not miracle workers. They are wanderers from the path of truth. Their minds have become entangled in the meshes of psychic powers, which lie in the way of the pilgrim towards attainment as temptations. Beware of these powers and desire them not.”

“A man after fourteen years of hard asceticism in a lonely forest obtained at last the power of walking over the waters. Overjoyed at this acquisition, he went to his Guru and told him of his grand feat. At this the Master replied, ‘my poor boy, what thou hast accomplished after fourteen years of arduous labour, ordinary men do the same by paying a penny to the boatman.’”

A youthful disciple of Sri Ramakrishna once acquired the power of reading the heart of another. When he related this experience to the Master, he rebuked him and said, ‘shame on thee, child, do not waste thy energies on these petty things.

Sankaracharya says in his Vivekachudamani, 58 and 63 :—

The attainment of liberation is possible neither by Sankhya, nor by Yoga, nor by Karma, nor even by learning, but

only by the attainment of that consciousness that results from the union of the Atma with Brahma, *i.e.*, cosmic consciousness.

To a man that is bitten by the cobra of Ajnána (*i.e.*, self-consciousness), no vedas, no sastras, no mantras and no medicines are of any use, except the one medicine of Brahmajnána (*i.e.*, the attainment of cosmic consciousness).

In the Annapurnopanishad, Chapter IV, we find the following:—

“It is only either the ignorant or the man of low development that desires the attainment of psychical powers and practises regularly such yogic methods as will help him in achieving his object. But one who has unwaveringly fixed his attention on the realisation of his Atma or attainment of Atmajnana alone, can never be deluded by any desire of such psychical powers.”

Again St. Paul while admitting that some occult power will be developed in those who have attained liberation, yet makes light of those powers and enjoins the Corinthians to cultivate love and *Bhakti* in preference to the spiritual powers. He says:—"And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith so that I could remove mountains and have not Love (one of the graces of the spirit), I am nothing" Again :—" Love never faileth, but whether there be prophecies, they shall cease; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge (*i.e.*, occult knowledge) it shall vanish away." *I Corinthians XIII 2 and 8.*

Therefore, instead of wasting our time in such studies and in such practices, let us rather turn to the life-giving teachings of the great founders of religi-

ons such as Sri Krishna, Jesus, Buddha, Mahomed, Sri Sankaracharya and all the Saints and Alwars. And here is what Jesus Christ has said regarding this :—"Seek ye first the kingdom of Heaven (*i. e.* the attainment of Cosmic Consciousness or Liberation) and all these shall be added unto you."

Theosophical teachings may be an intellectual treat and solve many problems of the head but they do not go sufficiently near the heart; and that our Hindu brethren should go to Western teachers for an explanation of their own grand religious works is a source of disappointment, and shows how much Hindus have degenerated even as regards spiritual matters.

There are others still who have given themselves up to a mere academic study of Vedantic and other philosophical works and spend their time in discussing

the various questions in the light of modern science, or modern psychology, who compare this teacher with that and waste their lives in idle talk. And there are yet more who have gone back from agnosticism to their old superstitions, and to the literal performance of their daily religious practices such as *Sandyavandanam*, performance of *Sharadda* and other ceremonies with great pomp and making such things the *summum bonum* of their lives and passing off as great religious men.

All these things may be helpful, but they will not carry us very far towards our goal. Intellectual study is good, no doubt, but that is not enough, what we should cultivate is feeling. Our heads are developed out of all proportion to our hearts, Feeling is at a low ebb. Yet it is feeling alone that can take us near our goal. Intellectuality can only

clear our doubts and smoothen our paths, but without feeling to utilise and carry out the decisions of the intellect, nothing can be gained. Let me quote in this connection the teachings of Swami Vivekananda given in his own inimitable style:—

“It is through the heart the Lord is seen and not through the intellect. The intellect is only the street cleaner, cleansing the path for us, a secondary worker, the policeman ; but the policeman is not a positive necessity for the workings of the Society. He is only to stop disturbances, to check wrong-doing and that is all the work required of the intellect. When you read intellectual books, you had better say, when you have mastered them, “Bless the Lord that I am out of them.” Because, intellect is blind and cannot move of itself. It is feeling that works, that moves with speed

infinitely superior to that of electricity or anything else. Do you feel ?—That is the question. If you do, you will see the Lord. It is the feeling that you have to-day that will be intensified, deified, raised to the highest platform, until it feels everything, the oneness in everything, till it feels God in itself and in others. The intellect can never do that. “Different methods of speaking words, different methods of explaining the text of books, these are for the enjoyment of the learned, not for the salvation of the soul.”

“Those of you who have read Thomas á Kempis know how in every page he insists on this : and almost every holy man in the world has insisted on it. Intellect is necessary, for without it we fall into crude errors and make all sorts of mistakes. Intellect checks these, but beyond that do not try to build anything

upon it. Do you feel for others? If you do, you are growing in oneness. If you do not feel for others, you may be the most intellectual giant ever born, but you will be nothing. And if you feel, even if you cannot read any book and do not know any language, you are in the right way. The Lord is yours. 'It is the feeling that is the life, the strength, the vitality without which no amount of intellectual activity can reach God.'

Let me add a short story to the above: Once upon a time there was a meeting of Rishis or Sages on Mount Kailas. They had met for obtaining a vision of God Paramesvara. While they were waiting a Rishi came in, loaded with a cart-load of books. He had books in his hands, on his shoulders, on his back and on his head. The books were all very valuable, and he had a passionate love for them. At his entrance in this

strange manner, the other Rishis burst out into a laugh, and when he asked them why, one of them said, "God will never appear unto you, so long as you are addicted to book-learning. Here is a learning which is not in books, and which indeed is the unlearning of all that you have learnt, and until you get that, you can not see God." The Rishi felt the truth of the advice and threw all the books into the sea; at once the story adds they had the vision of God.

This story reminds us of a saying of Walt Whitman, viz., "You shall no longer feed on the spectres in books"; and of a poem of saint Tukaram, in which he says:—"Arm yourself with Faith; Faith alone will save you. Of what avail are the tricks of learning." And Tukaram in one of his abhangas, further says:—"Thank God, He made me a kunbi (an unlettered ryot), hypocrisy else had

crushed me to death ; thanks, well done, I seize God's feet. A little learning if I had, it would have marred me quite ; saint's service I should have missed, an out and out robbery of life for nothing. Pride would have swelled me and paved the way to yama (the God of death). Greatness and Pride, says Tuká, are but Hell's Procuresses."

The great Mahomedan Poet Sadi says much the same thing :—

Philosophy goes many a winding road,
Now here she turns, now there, on ways retrod;
For Lovers of the Friend straight leads the
pathway,
They see and know and seek nothing save God!

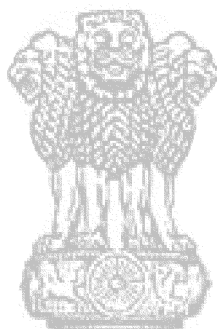
"The World," says Herbert Spencer, "is not governed by ideas, but by feelings, to which ideas serve only as guides."

Let us therefore while carrying out our daily religious practices, and conducting our intellectual studies as well on any plane of thought, cultivate *Bhakti*,

this living faith in the reality of our ideal and establish the most tender feeling between us and our ideal. Let us live in constant memory of our ideal in the midst of all our activities, and bear in mind that real progress lies in the direction of transcending this self-conscious existence and attaining supra-consciousness, which is the aim of our life and the goal of human evolution. Let us cultivate, I say, once more this Bhakti in spirit and truth, and if we are not blessed with such an emotion or such an impulse from within already, then let us at least pray for it day and night and seek the company of those who have attained it²; for, as Dr. Bucke says, "the intelligent contact with cosmic conscious minds assists self-conscious individuals in the ascent to the higher plane." That seems to me the one thing that we all need, and that is the only thing

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that can lead us towards the goal. And in this we have the assurance from Sri Ramakrishna who says emphatically :—
“Take my word for it, that if your prayer come from the bottom of your heart, my Mother shall respond to it, if you will only wait.”



सत्यमेव जयते

COSMIC CONSCIOUSNESS AS IT AFFECTS OUR PRESENT CONDITION.

It is impossible for me at a time like this to close this Essay without a few words on our present condition. Thousands of years of foreign domination, coupled with false notions of *Vairagyam* or giving up of the world in order to lead a religious life, have taken away from us ideas of self-reliance and left us to the tender mercies of any passing nation that wishes to assert its sway over us. There is little stamina left in us for purposes of active co-operation, little feeling of righteous indignation when gross wrongs are done to our fellow countrymen unless they happen to be our near relatives,

and little enthusiasm for our country if it does not bring in return fame, or a title. The old faith in ourselves that was worn by our forefathers as a bright ornament, and which guided their actions even sometimes at the cost of their lives, has left us ; and with it, in spite of our in-born tendencies towards religious things, real spirituality in India has come to a low ebb. Our present condition cannot be described better than in the words put into the mouth of Mother India in a recent drama. She laments the condition of her children in the following words :—

“ There was a time when my children in this country lived and taught the highest of ideals. They saw the truth so clearly, that behind all the varying names and forms, they realised the same Infinite Atman. Brotherhood of man and Fatherhood of God, was to them an insufficient and incorrect expression.

Their love, their *Bhakti* was so perfect that they could not bear even any differences implied in the terms Brotherhood and Fatherhood. Universal selfhood was what they realised and taught. Oneness with everybody and everything and oneness with the Infinite. In all my diverse manifestations, they saw the same Divinity and nothing but the Divinity. But now what do I see really ? Three hundred million people more or less permanently split up into four hundred million castes and sects with varying interests and trying to cut each other's throats. Instead of universal harmony and love, it is universal discord and hatred. Dharma was everything before and self nothing ; but Dharma is nowhere now, selfishness, aggressiveness and hatred have filled the world instead. Purity of mind and body, purity of life, character, Oh! where

have these fled? Where is the idea of Salvation through work? Honest labour has come to be looked upon with contempt. Health the means wherewith to attain the Pursharthams, who cares for it now, in the scramble for wealth? My children used to live hundreds of years and perform their Dharma and attain their highest end, the moksha or liberation; but now the average life-time has dwindled to less than 30 years. Ignorance and neglect of the simplest rules of health have become common, and premature decay, disease and death are consequently the rule rather than the exception. Added to these, malaria, plague, small-pox, cholera and other preventible diseases are allowed to spread and carry away millions in a week. As if all these are not enough, it has come to rioting, bombs and bloodshed, deportations and hangings!! "Oh

Lord ! how did my children become so degenerate ? Wherefrom is this ignorance, ill-health, this impatience and ill-will ? Patience, Love, Duty, and conversion of evil into good, disease into health—these have been my mottos from eternity. But my children have learnt lessons of an altogether different kind from contact with the dark side of the foreign ideals. When I have been century after century keeping my children to maintain themselves in health and teaching them to do their Dharma quietly and patiently and attain Mukti or Liberation ; when I have been all along binding my children together, whether dark or fair, tall or short, strong or weak, in one common bond of brotherhood and love ; when I have been teaching that sympathy and patience are the conquering virtues, that love is the lasting strength and not hat-

red; that self-help, self-reliance and self-sacrifice can only make up real character and not cringing dependence, self-gain or selfishness, and that "righteousness alone exalts a nation " and not repression or oppression, how can I bear my children neglecting every good lesson, degenerating themselves physically, morally and spiritually, hating and ill-treating one another and dying or killing themselves prematurely in hundreds and thousands every minute?"

This description of our present state may seem exaggerated, but those of us who have studied Hindu Society as it is to-day, and contrasted it with Hindu Society of even forty or fifty years ago, will sympathise with Mother India in her lamentations. And Swami Vivekananda describes the present state of the people in a letter written to a friend in the following words :—

"There is no mental activity, no unfoldment of the heart, no vibration of life, no flux of hope ; there is no strong stimulation of the will, no experience of keen pleasure, nor the contact of intense sorrow ; there is no stir of inventive genius, no desire for novelty, no appreciation of new things. Clouds never pass away from this mind, the radiant picture of the morning sun never charms this heart. It never even occurs to this mind if there is any better state than this ; where it does, it cannot convince ; in the event of conviction, effort is lacking ; and even where there is effort, lack of enthusiasm kills it."

In this paper I am chiefly concerned with the spiritual aspect of affairs in India ; but the temporal side cannot be ignored, because it is only by his conduct in this world as a citizen and a unit of a nation that a man's spirituality

can be judged. Individuals make up the society, and, roughly speaking, it is their heart portion that reveals itself in religion and the head portion that concerns itself in its civic duties and makes up its civilisation. As in the individual the heart and the head mutually correct and develop each other, so in society also religion and material advancement, faith and science, ought to go hand in hand and guide each other. It will be a mistake to cry down worldly activities and hold up blind irrational religion, as the be-all and end-all of existence ; and it will be equally absurd to extol the former and cry down the latter. What is required is to "work the realism of the spirit of modern culture into the mould of the idealism of ancient theosophy."

If the above standard be accepted, then we must sorrowfully confess that our

spirituality has dwindled to a mere form and show, for we have lost our living faith in the great truths that influenced the actions of our forefathers, viz., their *Dharma*.

In fact, as Swami Vivekananda says in his "The East and the West," in ancient days of India, there was *Dharma*, side by side with *Mukti*. There were worshippers of *Dharma* such as Yudhishthira, Arjuna, Duryodana, Bhishma and Karna, side by side with the aspirants of *Mukti* such as Vyasa, Suka, and Janaka. On the advent of Buddhism *Dharma* was entirely neglected, and the path to *Mukti* alone became prominent. The fall of our country is due to this utter neglect of this *Dharma*. If the whole nation follows the path of *Mukti*, that is well and good; but is that possible? The Hindu scriptures say, "No doubt *Mukti* is far superior to *Dharma* but *Dharma*

should be finished first of all." It is just here that Buddha made the mistake of preaching *Mukti* alone and its attendant doctrines of non-injury and non-resistance. It is this diversion of the end and aim of life from paths of *Dharma* to those of non-resistance and *Mukti* alone and the conversion of many householders to Buddhistic Sannyasins and the establishment of the order and sangha, that first paved the way for the successful foreign invasion and occupation of India. No doubt *Mukti* is the real goal and the Buddhistic teaching is well suited for individuals ; but the means of attaining it as adopted by the Buddhistic doctrines to a whole nation unfortunately have been the cause of the present political degradation of India.

Buddhism politically ruined India just as Christianity ruined the Romans and would have ruined Europe, had it not

been for Protestantism which came to its rescue by ignoring Christ's teachings of non-resistance in practice and holding to *Dharma* which makes man seek for happiness in this or after life, as the end and aim of life. *Dharma* is based on work. The nature of *Dharma* is constant work. The path of Mukti as taught by the Buddhists and subsequently accepted and followed by the later Hindu Religious Teachers, led to the giving up literally of this *Dharma* or work, and contributed to the fatalistic lethargy and inertia so characteristic of the Indian people at present. What the sages teach, *viz.*, "All sins are washed away by the power of uttering the name of the Lord ;" and "He gets all, who resigns himself to the will of God," etc., is true ; but who can really resign himself to the will of God ? Who can utter with power irresistible the name of the Lord ? It is he whose

mind has been purified by work, *i. e.*, he who has performed his Dharma, irrespective of consequences.

When Arjuna wanted to give up his *Dharma* and would not fight, we find in the Bhagavadgita that Sri Krishna rebukes him and shows him how each one carrying his duty or *Dharma* in whatever position he may be, becomes fit for Mukti and teaches that he is not the body, nor the life, nor the mind, nor the intellect, but that he is the Atman, the witness of all these, the spirit one in essence with the Universal spirit by whatever name it may be called, and that the end and aim of life is to realise this unity with the Universal Spirit, *i. e.*, attain Mukti by means of doing one's *Dharma*, irrespective of consequences. *This is the lesson that we have now forgotten.*

Our forefathers had a clearer grasp of

the above-mentioned teachings of Sri Krishna, than we have to-day. They believed that they were the Atman, and all their temporal efforts and duties were carried out without attachment to results, their eyes being fixed on the end, namely, the attainment of Liberation through the performance of their *Dharma*. But we have forgotten almost entirely that we are the Atman and that there is a spiritual universe of which this visible world is a part, and that to establish a harmonious relationship with that higher universe is our end. We identify ourselves with the body and our actions are directed in accordance with the conditions of the body and for its maintenance and comfort; and thus we become selfish, insincere, time-serving, compromising and cowardly; and, in our anxiety to look mainly to the comforts of the body, we have

lost character, courage, manliness, the sense of duty for duty's sake, and that love for the ideal of one's *Dharma* that formed such a bright characteristic of our forefathers.

We make *parayanam* (or the daily recitation) of the Gita every day, but its central teachings we ignore. In unequivocal language Sri Krishna has preached the lesson of doing one's duty without fear of consequences. He says:—

“ Let right deeds be
Thy motive, not the fruits which come from them
And live in action; labour; make thy acts
Thy piety, casting all self-aside,
Contemning gain and merit, equable
In good or evil.”

Noble words indeed! How many of us carry out the idea in practice? Let each one answer for himself in his heart of hearts. No. We have forgotten that we are made in the image of God; we have lost faith

in this central truth, and therefore we are what we are to-day. Surely the time has come for us to wake up ! Surely to-day we must find a means of establishing national unity once more ; and forgetting our petty differences we must unite together and become once again worthy children of our great Mother India ! But no national unity is possible without the strengthening of our spirituality by Love and Faith and the re-establishing of this ideal of Dharma as the true means of Liberation.

In having depicted the dark side of our present condition as compared with that of our forefathers, let it not be understood that it was done with a view to ignore our inherent vitality or “ our unexampled national vigour which has preserved the people of this country through centuries of calamity and defeat,” while younger countries like

Chaldea, Babylonia, Egypt, Greek and Rome have all been swept away; or with a view to give a handle to the enemies of our progress to be used against us in showing to the world our unfitness for National Union and National Government on account of our incapacity and want of energy as testified to, they may say by one of the Indians themselves. While admitting the defects in our character—defects which have been induced upon our native capacity and energy by centuries of foreign subjection and for want of proper field and opportunity for their display, we are not unconscious of that capacity and energy reviving in us. In fact, as observed by Swami Vivekananda the reason why we, Indians, are still living, in spite of so much misery, distress, poverty and oppression from without and within, is that we have

a national idea that is yet necessary for the preservation of the world. It is only with a firm belief in the possibility of such a revival and with a view to stimulate the same, that the defects have been exposed in somewhat more glaring colours than they are actually. Yet they are defects and stains on our character and all efforts must be made to remove them.

The unification of the religions prevailing in India, by finding the common basis of them all, namely, unity of spirit amidst diversity of outward expression, ritual and creed, in order to help the establishment of The Indian National Unity, was one of the objects I had in view in studying the psychological explanation of the Vedantic idea of Liberation and in showing how it is the goal of human evolution and the fundamental basic truth of all religions. Prof.

James has ably summed up these fundamental truths of all religions in his "Varieties of Religions expences" and I make no apology in reproducing the summary. He says that whatever a man's religion may be, and no matter how much that religion may differ from other religions as regards practices, rites and ceremonies, the fundamental truths underlying all religions consists in having a *living* faith in the following:—

"(1) That the visible world is part of a more spiritual universe from which is draws its chief significance.

(2) That union, or a harmonious relationship with that higher universe is our true end. सत्यमेव जयते

(3) That prayer or serene communion with the spirit therof—be that spirit-called God, or Law, is a process whereby work is really done and spiritual energy flows in and produces effects,

psychological or material in this phenomenal world."

What we need in India to-day is to strengthen and deepen the spirituality of the country by rousing this faith and this can only be done by making each individual realize that he is not this perishable body, but the Eternal Immortal Spirit, the Spirit that has been seen face to face, that is to say realized by the great ones who have attained supra-consciousness. Each Indian must believe that this attainment of cosmic consciousness is the goal of evolution and that he can become one with the Immortal Spirit if he makes conscious efforts towards its realization and that realization alone will enable us to regain our character, our self-reliance and our independence, and make us once more the great nation that we proudly remember our fore-

fathers to have been before us. It is this ideal of realization or attainment of cosmic consciousness,—“the little man losing himself in universal love and wisdom and becoming one with Brahman,” or in other words it is this “aim to actualise the highest and deepest God-Consciousness of the human soul, in the outer life and dealings of human society”—which is the highest ideal of Nationality, the noblest and the truest civilisation. It is this alone that can “secure for India her lost position as teacher of humanity and would, perhaps, even save modern civilisation from total collapse and destruction under the pressure of a gross and greedy industrialism.” The education of the heart, the cultivation of love, and the total annihilation of selfishness are the necessary means to the attainment of this national union or the regeneration of this nationality.

There is the misconception again in the minds of many, the result of the Buddhistic teachings as already noted above, that this attainment of cosmic consciousness is inconsistent with the life of a house-holder and that one can do so only by becoming a Sanyasin *i. e.*, by entering what is called *Vanaprastha Asrama*. This misconception must be cleared. Whatever might have been the purpose served by the three great divisions of man's life into *Brahmacharya*, *Grihastha* and *Vanaprastha* in those olden times, it is evident that, in this age in order to achieve this realization we need not run away from the world and pursue abnormal practices and forsake our duties towards society, family and friends. The great ones have attained Realization in all grades of society, and without becoming vagrants and a burden to the

community. Some have been unmarried; others have attained Liberation while carrying on the duties of family life; in fact it was by fulfilling all the duties that fell to their lot, and that without attachment, that many examples already quoted attained supra-consciousness. It is not by giving up duties that a man becomes a liberated soul, but by fulfilling duties without attachment. Says Swami Vivekananda :—

“ The only way to rise is by doing the duty next to us and thus gathering strength go on until we reach the highest state. When you are doing any work, do not think of anything beyond. Do it as worship, as the highest worship, and devote your whole life to it for the time being and do it with cheerfulness and whole heartedness. The right performance of the duties of any station in life, without attachment to results, leads

us to the highest realization of the perfection of the soul."

In another lecture in Karma Yoga, he has said :—"The householder who struggles to become rich by good means and for good purposes is doing practically the same thing for the attainment of salvation as the anchorite does in his cell when he is meditating; for in them we see only the different aspect of the same virtue of self-surrender and self-sacrifice prompted by the feeling of devotion to God and to all that is His. Again, if the householder dies in battle, fighting for his country or his religion he comes to the same goal as the greatest Yogi by meditation."

Further, Swami Vivekananda has condemned the false notions of renunciation or *Vairagyam* and the non-resistance or *Salva* quality that have reduced India to this pitiable condition,

in his own charecteristic style as follows :—

“ Do you not see—taking up this clue of the *Satva* or the quality of non-resistance, the country has been slowly and slowly drowned in the ocean of *Tamas*, or dark ignorance? When the most dull want to hide their stupidity by covering it with a false desire for the highest knowledge, which is beyond all activities, either physical or mental; where one born and bred in life-long laziness, wants to throw the veil of renunciation over his own unfitness for work; where the most diabolical try to make their cruelty appear under the cloak of austerity as a part of religion; where no one has an eye upon his own incapacity, but every one is ready to lay the whole blame on others; where knowledge consists only in getting some books by heart, genius consists in chewing

the cud of others' thoughts and the highest glory consists in taking the name of ancestors—do we require any other proof to show that this country is being day by day drowned in utter *Tamas* or intense ignorance"? Therefore, says he, "What we want, what we should have, is, what we have not—that which the Yavanas or the Greeks had—that, impelled by the life-vibration of which, is issuing forth in rapid succession from the great dynamo of Europe, the electric flow of that tremendous power, vivifying the whole world. We want that. We want that energy, the love of independence, that spirit of self-reliance, that immoveable fortitude, that dexterity in action, that bond of unity of purpose, that thirst for improvement. Checking a little the constant looking back to the past, we want that expansive vision infinitely pro

jected forward ; and we want that intense spirit of activity which will flow through our every vein, from head to foot."

Therefore, we have to protest against and give up these false notions of *Satva* or *Vairagyam* and to shake off this lethargy and slavery of ages, and, in order to do so, each one of us should try to lead a life of intense activity and unselfishness. As that wise and sagacious model ruler of Baroda, the Maharajah Gaekwar, recently advised the students of his college, "India has need of active citizens to day. We could profitably exchange much of our meditation, for western activity. Metaphysical contemplation may be admirable *per se*. But what we require is more of the study of the actual conditions of this life than of the future existence, if we are to hold a place in the van of civilisation." Each

one who thinks he is a unit of the society must do some work for the society, for the nation and the country. At present each seems to depend upon some one else to do it. But under the present altered conditions of life, every man, whatever his calling, however humble or obscure his condition, will have to ask himself how he can serve his country as part of the essential labour of his every-day life. So each one must try to develop his individuality, to willingly undergo discipline and to become individually more efficient for public work. We must cultivate public spirit, a faculty which we as a nation are so sadly in need of. Very few of us take part in the public affairs and work of our own town or village. There are so many graduates and undergraduates and other men of learning and intelligence, but how many are there who set

aside a part of their time even for the study of all public and Municipal questions, and take a lively interest in the workings of the Municipal Board. Even the members composing the Municipal Board, the city fathers who are generally so busy only during the voting season, with a few honorable exceptions, lack greatly in public spirit, take little or no practical interest in the welfare of the city or town entrusted to their care but always display a readiness to side with the executive and follow the dictates of the Chairman or the President and to oppose rightly or wrongly any one, who may take pains to study the various questions and criticise the actions of the executive, exposing its weak points. Otherwise, many of our towns would not be in the disgracefully dirty condition in which they are owing to their shamefully

neglected roads, scandalous drainage system, filthy water supply and the general insanitary condition all round, in the midst, however, of costly market places, grand Municipal offices and other high sounding but useless Municipal works which have swallowed the ratepayer's money, leaving all urgent sanitary needs unattended to. All this is owing to the want of public spirit amongst us and it is time that we should pay particular attention to its cultivation.

Again, we must learn to work first, to 'labour and to wait', must cultivate a pure heart and show that we feel for our fellow beings. We should try to carry the light of these truths to the masses and to the depressed classes and make every effort to improve their condition by spreading education amongst them all and by creating facilities for their learning

some industry or other whereby they may maintain themselves honestly and independently.

But in the introduction of western industries into India, a certain amount of discrimination should be exercised. For, as already noted, Western industrialism is not without its drawback which is driving modern civilisation to total collapse and destruction under the pressure of its gross and greedy commercialism. Apart from the introduction of labour-saving machines which can assist individual workers, *i.e.*, the handicraftsman, either in cottages or in their homes, to turn out more work than they could do, without them, we ought not to imitate indiscriminately the methods of western industrialism, its deadly competition and its factory system. On the other hand, we ought to revive our dying industries,

by encouraging the great hereditary caste organisation of Indian industry which once made India the greatest industrial country of the world, by assisting the cottage worker, *i.e.*, the handicraftsman, who for want of sufficient encouragement is fast deteriorating into a common cooly and by introducing several suitable home industries for Indian women into all homes, so that the refined intuitive sense and spirituality of Indian women may prevent the unmaking of India and stop the destruction of all Indian ideals, which is fast growing on account of our slavish and indiscriminate imitation of Western habits and industrial methods. What is required is that we should learn these Western methods, introduce their labour-saving devices wherever possible, but instead of blindly following their principles, we should assimilate

and adapt them to the genius and the ideals of the Indian nation.

There is profound truth in what Mr. E. B. Havell, the late Principal of the Government School of Arts, Calcutta, writes :—
 “Hitherto the psychological aspect of the industrial problem seems to have been totally disregarded by most Swadesi reformers. Indian industry has declined less from the competition of European science and machinery than from the psychological degeneracy of the Indian home. This psychological degeneracy began in times long anterior to British rule : had it not been so there would have been no British rule. British rule gives you the opportunity to make a new India stronger and greater than it has ever been, if you will begin the regeneration of India’s industrialism where the main springs of all industry necessary for a good and healthy life

are centred—in the home. I would regard the psychological aspect of the question of industrial regeneration as of much greater importance than the mere providing of an additional means of livelihood for indigent middle-class families. When the psychological atmosphere of the Indian household from the highest to the lowest is recharged with creative energy, then the immense powers of the traditional Indian industrial system will no longer be wasted in such a blind and foolish fashion as they are now. The Indian caste family will be replaced on its old co-operative footing and with the revived power of artistic discrimination India will choose wisely her own ways of industrial reformation, which will be better than any which foreign experts can prescribe for her.” In other words, as Mrs. J. C. Bose once said:—“In mak-

ing our demand for greater and deeper education and material well-being, may we never forget to say,—‘But will this wealth bring me realisation’ ” (*i.e.*, help me in the attainment of liberation, the end and aim of human evolution). Dr. A. K. Coomarasawmy, while warning us against the whole sale imitation of western industrial methods, expresses similar sentiments in the following words which will not fail to appeal to our innate spiritual instincts:—

“Let us learn,” says he, “rather to live than to accumulate the means of living. Let us rather learn to refine our wants, to heighten our sensibilities, than to multiply our wants and blunt our fine instincts.”

“What profit if this scientific age
Burst through our gates with all its retinue
Of modern miracles ! Can it assuage
One lover’s breaking heart? What can it do
To make one life more beautiful, one day
More god-like in its period ?”

Is it not rather for India to say :—

“Methinks that was not my inheritance ;
For I was nurtured otherwise, my soul
Passes from higher heights of life to a
more supreme goal.”

Hence, in our efforts at industrial regeneration and improvement of the masses, we must never lose sight of this spiritual aspect of our arts and industries and thus save India from falling into the quagmire of Western materialism.

As it is, a great gulf exists between the educated portion of the Indian community and the uneducated masses, and the treatment accorded to the depressed classes who form nearly one-sixth of the total population of India is a standing disgrace to the Hindu religion which enjoins one and all to see the same Atman not only in all men but in all animals even. How can we, who are blind to our immediate surroundings, attend to the needs of a wide and extensive country

and fit ourselves for self-government? If we have to achieve our former greatness and our independence it can only be done when the people fully qualify themselves by unity, self-reliance, self-sacrifice, and sympathy for one another and by efficiency in all its organisations and not till then. In a stirring peroration Swami Vivekananda concludes one of his lectures on Modern India, pointing to the ideal which every Indian should have before him, in the following words :—

“Oh, India! with this slander of others, with this dependence on others, with this imitation of others, this slavish weakness, this vile detestable cruelty—wouldst thou with these provisions only scale the highest pinnacle of civilisation and greatness? Wouldst thou attain, by means of thy disgraceful cowardice, and cringing behaviour, that liberation, that freedom deserved only

by the brave and the heroic ? Oh India ! Forget not—that the ideal of thy womanhood is Sita, Savithri, Damayanti ; forget not—that the God thou worshippesst is the great Ascetic of ascetics, the all-renouncing Sankara, the Lord of Uma ; forget not—that thy marriage, thy wealth, thy life, are not for sense-pleasure —are not for thy individual personal happiness ; forget not that thou art born as a sacrifice to the *Mother's* altar ; forget not—that thy social order is but the reflex of the Infinite Universal Motherhood ; forget not—that the lower classes, the ignorant, the poor, the illiterate, the cobbler, the sweeper, are thy flesh and blood, thy brothers. Thou brave one, be bold, take courage, be proud that thou art an Indian,—and proudly proclaim,—‘ I am an Indian,—every Indian is my brother.’ Say, “ The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute

Indian, the Brahman Indian, the Pariah Indian, is my brother. Thou too clad with but a rag round thy loins proudly proclaim at the top of thy voice,—“The Indian is my brother—the Indian is my life, India’s god and goddess are my God ; India’s society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of my youth, the sacred haven, the *Baranasi* of my old age.” Say, brother—“The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good”, and repeat day and night —“O Thou Lord of Gouri, O Thou Mother of the Universe, vouchsafe manliness unto me ! O Thou Mother of strength, take away my weakness, take away my unmanliness, and—MAKE ME A MAN !”

In order to achieve this ideal we require manly men to influence the people both by precept and example ; and “What is manliness ?” said Swam;

Vivekananda, once and answered, "It is to know instinctively what should be the glory of a man and not what should be his material comfort and ease." The greatest need of India to-day is men who will go about the country and preach this ideal and this faith to the people—faith in the existence of a spiritual world of which this visible world is but an insignificant part, faith in ourselves as being one in essence with the Universal Spirit and faith in the ideal of the attainment of liberation or cosmic consciousness as the end and aim of our life and as the goal of human evolution, such attainment being achieved, not by running away from one's duties and taking to metaphysical contemplation alone, but by the unattached doing of one's duty or Dharma, whatever its nature may be, and by the cultivation of such virtues as fearlessness, honesty, heroism,

unflagging energy and love of one's own country and people, and the total annihilation of selfishness, ever bearing in mind the injunction given in the Mahabharatha, "Not for the sake of love or fear or greed or for the sake of life itself should man stray from his duty. Dharma lasteth ever and all the other motives pass and die"—and thus build up their spirituality which has practically come to a vanishing point. We want men who will go about the country poor and heedless of self, declaring the truth of this national ideal in all places. The noblest patriot to-day is he who will go forth in this spirit having laid aside every selfish thought and desire. We want men who will not only, as hitherto, "give to their country their leisure moments and their idle pennies, but who will consecrate all their working hours and their hard

earnings to the services of Mother-land." We comfortable people will never save India. We may partially succeed in making it a little better educated, and perhaps a little more prosperous, but so long as we live mainly with the object of being comfortable, and look to our material needs alone, we cannot possibly be the builders of a beautiful nation. In the words of Dr. A. K. Coomaraswamy, "A purely material ideal will never give us the lacking strength to build up a great enduring nation. For that we need ideals and dreams, impossible and visionary, the food of martyrs and saints." And as the Karmayogin says, "There is plenty of selfishness, prudence, hesitating calculation in the country, plenty of fear and demoralisation in the older generation. Steadfastness, courage, and a calm and high spirit are what we now need ; wisdom

to plan and act, not prudence to abstain from action....It is by unhesitating, whole-hearted and princely sacrifices that nations affect their liberty. It has always been so in the past, and the laws of nature have not altered and will not alter to suit the calculating prudence of individuals....The spread of a general spirit of ungrudging self-sacrifice is the indispensable prelude to the regeneration of the Indian nation." Thus, by men and women with the spirit of martyrs alone can this nation be rebuilt. And unless this national faith permeates and enlivens the lives of a great proportion of men and women of to-day and of the future generation, and unless a certain proportion of them become drunk, as it were, with that faith, the Indian Nation will never be rebuilt on a sure foundation.

NOTE

In order to understand the four different stages of intellect, which mark the evolution of animal life and intelligence both in animals and in man, it should be borne in mind that there are no hard and fast lines of demarkation between the intelligence displayed by the animals belonging to one stage of intellect and those belonging to the next stage, except in the case of the higher animals and of man, where an unbridged gulf still remains, in spite of the efforts made by George John Romanes, in his grand works "Mental Evolution in Man" and "Mental Evolution in Animals" (two works which ought to be read and digested by all who wish to have a clear idea of the theory of evolution), to bridge that gulf in a way. The terms Percepts, Receipts, Concepts and Intuitions have been employed in this essay to denote roughly the broad distinctions in the grades of intelligence which apparently distinguish the higher animals from the lowest, and man from the higher animals, and the liberated man, the *Jivanmukta*, or one who has attained Cosmic Consciousness, from the ordinary man, however clever, intelligent, educated and highly advanced he may be otherwise. If, therefore, the import of these terms is clearly understood, there will not be much difficulty in understanding the stages of evolution in man and in animals described in this essay.

NOTE

Percepts.—This term indicates the change that takes place in the lowest forms of animals when any outside impulse affects them, such as a ray of light suddenly falling on a lowly-organised animalcule which has hitherto remained in a dark place. This light affects it so as to make it turn towards the light; and a number of animalculæ will flock towards the spot where light shines. That is all the animalcule is susceptible of: it has no further consciousness of the nature of the source of that outside impression or of anything existing outside and apart from itself. This intelligence, which is the most rudimentary, is called Perceptual Intelligence, and thereby the animal becomes susceptible to outside impressions.

Recepts.—In the case of higher animals, they are not only susceptible to impressions received from outside objects, but are further capable of uniting a number of these impressions, fusing them together into one form, and mentally projecting this as an object in space outside, and thus becoming conscious of the existence of an object outside themselves, *i. e.*, of the outside world. Thus, when a dog sees a cat, what happens is this:—he receives several hundred visual impressions from the body of the cat, such as the different colours of the body, the different sizes and parts of the body, and these are all combined into a single form of a cat and projected as an object in space. Similarly, if the cat makes a noise, many impressions of the sound are made on the delicate nerves of the ear of the dog, which are then combined and projected in space outside and cognised by the dog as coming from the cat and so the dog becomes

NOTE

conscious of a cat existing outside itself and making a certain peculiar noise. A recept, therefore, is nothing more than a compound percept, or a composite image of several hundred percepts which the mind of the animal is capable of uniting together and projecting in space and cognising as an object outside itself.

Concepts.—As evolution progresses, the receipts accumulate, multiply and become more and more complex; then another step in advance is taken and similar receipts are brought together and generalised into a class, and a name is given to that class. This named recept is a concept in its simplest form. Thus, when individual cats of different kinds and colours and sizes are seen, they only remain as receipts in the consciousness of the animal seeing them severally; but when the animal gets the faculty of mentally grouping similarities, ignoring differences, and finding a common abstract idea in all of them and giving a name to such an idea, then the animal forms a concept in its mind. Thus when from the cognition of several kinds of cats, the idea of an abstract cat is formed in the mind, and the name "cat" is given to it, then the animal attains the new faculty of forming concepts and creating articulate language. It is this new faculty which when fully developed gives rise to all introspective thought, reasoning, imagination, etc., and with the growth of this faculty, self-consciousness is said to be born and self-consciousness is said to be the faculty that distinguishes man from the higher animals.

Thus, a concept in its simplest form is nothing more than a recept, named and retained in memory, and which can be called up from memory into the plane of consciousness by the will of the animal. The

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formation of a concept differs from that of a receipt, in that it is an active function of the mind, whereby the mind can think of an object and all about it even when no such object is present, *i.e.*, *conceive* of it and its attributes, whereas a receipt in its simplest form is a composite image of a group of sensations received from an outside object the existence of which the animal cognises only so long as those impressions endure. The animal cannot of its own accord think of such an object unless it receives at least some associated impressions connected with the object. For example, a dog sees a hare and becomes aware of it but it cannot, while lying down quietly, think of the hare of its own accord, but on scenting a track crossed by a hare it may form an idea of the hare in its mind through association of ideas. This is the form of ideation which the higher animals are capable of, and this is called *receptual ideation*, as opposed to the faculty of *conceptual ideation* of man. Beyond this the animal is not capable of conceiving objects in thought of its own accord.

Further, as concepts develop in complexity, man's power of ideation, imagination and introspective thought correspondingly increases, and he becomes capable of not only analysing the outer world but also of analysing the actions of his own mind and thought standing as it were apart from his body, mind, and intellect. It is this which distinguishes man from the higher animals and has made a big gulf between man and the higher animals which has not yet been satisfactorily bridged over.

Intuitions.—As man progresses, getting experience

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after experience, *i. e.*, accumulating concepts after concepts, a time comes when these concepts, along with their master, the Logical Reason, give place to intuitions with their friend and companion, Faith; that is to say, a step is taken in advance whereby this self-consciousness of man is supplemented by a new faculty, or sense, namely, by Cosmic Consciousness. The attainment of this new sense, or faculty, is what is called Liberation, or Mukti, "being born anew," etc. Just as the self-conscious man is guided by his logical reason in all his actions, the Liberated man, the man of Cosmic Consciousness, is guided by his intuitive reason, or Faith. An intuition is nothing more than a fusion of several concepts or experiences 'purified, so to speak, by religion and morality and clarified by science, philosophy, art, and literature, and by experiences of social and political life'. Its great support is Faith, and Faith is that higher faculty which does not contradict the logical, analysing reason, but which includes it and the sum-total of all experiences and even transcends them. Faith transcends the logical reason inasmuch as it uses an unerring, higher *intuitive* reason. It transcends ordinary experiences as its standpoint of view is from a height not reached by ordinary reason. It is this conflict between Faith and Reason which has made many Christians fail to fully understand the grand truths contained in the Sermon on the Mount, which are all of the nature of intuitions but are considered impracticable. Christ's injunctions—"Take no thought for the morrow; " " Bless them that curse you ; " " Do good to them that hate you ; " " If a man gives a blow on one cheek show him the other ; " and so on, are

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constantly ignored as contrary to all worldly experiences but the truth of these injunctions can be grasped only by men who have had glimpses at least of the higher consciousness, and who can thus see clearly how Christ was right in giving these injunctions as helps to the attainment of the higher Consciousness, or Liberation, which is the highest of the four Purusharthams, the end and aim of Life and the goal of Evolution.

THE WAY

However certain of the way thou art,
Take not the self-appointed leader's part,
Follow no man, and by no man be led,
And no man lead. Awake, and go ahead.
Thy path, though leading straight unto the goal
Might prove confusing to another soul.
The goal is central ; but from east, and west,
And north, and south, we set out on the quest ;
From lofty mountains, and from valleys low ;
How could all find one common way to go ?

Lord Buddha to the wilderness was brought,
Lord Jesus to the Cross. And yet, think not
By solitude, or cross, thou canst achieve,
Lest in thine own true Self thou dost believe.
Know thou art One with life's Almighty Source,
Then are thy feet set on the certain Course.

Nor does it matter if thou feast, or fast,
Or what thy creed or where thy lot is cast ;
In halls of pleasure, or in crowded mart,
In city streets, or from all men apart-
Thy path leads to the Light ; and peace and power
Shall be thy portion, growing hour by hour.
Follow no man, and by no man be led.
And no man lead. But *know* and go ahead.

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