



ARTICLES -1

*A Collection of Articles by Sri Swami Omkar
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A LETTER OF THANKS

Sept. 1931, ~~1932~~

TO MY AMERICAN SISTERS AND BROTHERS

Dear beloved ones,

Greeting from this abode of Peace-Sri Shanti Ashram, Totapalli Hills, India. I take this opportunity to express my hearty gratitude for the great service rendered unto me, by allowing me a warm place in your devoted hearts. I offer my thanks to you also, for all the sympathetic esquires after my health and for loving words of encouragement. Since you have been so kind in giving me a place in your hearts, I too crave to fill all of you with happiness and peace.

My heart goes out towards you all for the faith you have in me and for all for the help you have rendered me, by receiving and assimilating the Message of Peace. Now from this far-off Abode of Peace also, I long to help and serve you. In truth, there is no distance. In Divine Love there is neither space nor separation. Where love is, there is God.

Dear loving ones, let me remind you once again that self-reliance alone is the beginning of religion. Rely no more on outer forms and names, however big and mighty they seem to be. Learn to stand on your own feet, knowing that you are the children of Immortality, the living images of God. Dependence is death. Independence or self-reliance is life. Hence, self-analyse your lives and see for yourselves whether you are relying on the outer objects and persons or on your own Godhead. Dependence leads us to bondage, weakness and death. Independence or Truth leads unto freedom, strength, and Self-realisation.

Let us not confine our religion or spirituality to a form or a name, to a temple or a church, to a teacher or guru; but feel and assert the Presence in each and every moment of our lives. Let not religion serve us as a garb at set hours or days but as a living flame of ideal life, manifesting God-consciousness or God's Presence, in all our thoughts, words and deeds.

I desire to see my friends. All of you who love me and who are standing by me—whether this physical sheath is far or near—live as emblems of love. You live as manifestations of Truth, as Light unto the world, sharing your realisation with all of your fellow sisters and brothers.

A life of selfishness is a denial of the living God in us and a life of selflessness is our homage to the loving God.

Dear friends, feel the Presence which is throbbing in your very hearts and flowing in your breath. Feel that Presence, not only as you read this letter but always, even in the trying moments of your life.

I am sending forth my silent prayers for the well being and peace of all of you. Pray, merge within and receive my loving thoughts in the still, moments of your silent meditations.

If I can serve you in any way it will afford me great joy. Hence, I wish to hear of your spiritual progress and welfare often.

May the Indweller of your hearts bless you with Infinite Peace, Eternal Joy and unceasing flow of His Presence, is the prayer of your own brother Omkar.

A LETTER TO THE ALMIGHTY

May 1931 # 702

To the one who is manifesting in the form of the many, in the mineral, vegetable, animal and human kingdoms. To the one who is above all kingdoms of finite life. To the one who is the all in all and the Divine source of power, blessedness and eternal peace.

BELOVED GOD: GREETINGS!

When I awakened this morning there came a great desire to write a letter to Thee, the Unmanifested, as always before I have written to Thee in the manifested.

This is a direct letter to Thee without the medium of forms and names.

O God! I yearn to embrace Thee in the breeze, in the sunshine and in the air. Now, as with tears in my eyes, I chant Thy Holy Name, the sacred syllable AUM, I long to draw the whole world into myself.

Precious Glory, what can I write to Thee? I am Thy child. Thou understands everything even without my expressing myself to Thee in a letter.

Thou art here, there and everywhere. Nay, Thou art myself! Oh! May I recognise Thy sweet face in the particles of dust, in the blades of grass, in the tiny creatures of the earth, in the birds of the air, in the beasts of the forest and in all the brothers and sisters of Thy creation.

O God, art Thou not manifesting Thyself in the huge mountains, the rushing rivers and torrents and in the undulating waves of the sea? Yea, Thou alone art shining in the stars, moon and sun!

Adoration's be unto Thee, O Divinity in the form of the manifested and unmanifested! May all homage be unto Thee in the form of the animate and inanimate!

Glory be unto Thee in the form of the seen and unseen, known and unknown. May all homage be unto Thee who dost express Thyself in both sound and silence.

My Beloved, forgive this childish letter. How foolish of me to write to Thee when Thou art throbbing in my heart, seeing through my eyes, listening in my ears, thinking in my mind, flowing in my breath and permeating my very being!

O GLORY! GLORY! GLORY!

As I am writing this letter to Thee I cannot help but recall that sweet letter written to Thee by my innocent little sister Rosalie, asking Thee to be her Valentine:

"Dear God, will you be my Valentine?

I am yours and you are mine

Be my sweet-heart always, God

And I will be your Rosalie."

Blessed God, I too cannot live away or separate from Thee, even for an instant. Pray, Beloved, take me into Thy sweet embrace. Yea, I am already in Thy embrace. Here are a few simple tears of Love shed for Thee. Please accept them and keep me ever centred in Thee, filled and saturated by Thy Holy Presence.

Take away eyes that cannot see Thee and ears that fail to listen to Thy Glory. I do not want life, even for a second, if it fails to live in tune with Thee.

I want Infinite Life for Thou art That. I want Universal Love for Thou art That. I want Supreme Silence for thou art That.

Dear God, it is wrong to tell Thee I want this and that for as Thy own child I am nothing but Infinite Life, Universal Love and Supreme Silence. Verily, all that the Father hath is mine.

My Adorable Lord, Thou art pervading and permeating everything from the tiniest atom to the largest planet; hence I send this letter to the Universal Whole.

O Sweet smelling flower, thou art wafting thy fragrance far and near. Thou art so beautiful. God must be abiding in beauty and fragrance. Wilt thou help me take my message to my Lord of Love?

O ye fowls of the air, ye are soaring in the freedom of the cool breeze and free life. Can ye not carry my message to my Beloved?

O ye fleeting clouds, ye are drifting towards heaven. Will ye not bear my message to my Adored One?

O ye stars and planets, the moon and sun, ye are shining in the heavens declaring God's Glory. Can ye not help unite me with my sweet Beloved?

O ye sacred tears that start from my tender eyes! Did ye come to convey my message to the Lord of my love?

Blessed be thy glistening forms. Ye are the medium to unite me with my God of Glory.

Yea, a single tear is of more value than a multitude of dry sermons and lectures.

Hence, O my God of sweet Love, I will drench and dissolve this message of mine to Thee in tears of Love. When I am calm as the waveless sea, pure as the self-shinning Sun and silent as the Unmanifested and Incomprehensible Supreme Silence, then shall my answer come from Thee.

O my Beloved! Let me merge deeper in to thy Infinite Heart of Lights, Life and Love! Let this ego, this tiny 'I' dissolve in the Glory and splendour of Universal Suns!

Now I am the all in All for thou art the All in All! May Glory be unto Thee, O God of my life and soul, within and without! May homage be unto Thee, above and below! May adoration be unto Thee, everywhere!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

With oceans of Love,

Eternally Thy own,

Omkar

GOD - CONSCIOUSNESS

July 1929

I am the fountain - head of Peace from where all the philosophers are expounding their profound philosophies.

I am the source of all inspiration from where all the great saints of the whole world are divining out their holy doctrines of peace.

I am the seat of happiness from where peace is flowing in torrents in all directions, irrespective of caste, creed, colour and nationality.

I am the summit of Glory from where Divine sunshine is spreading both on the happy and the miserable, whether they be in sleeping, dreaming or waking states of life. Verily, like that of the glorious sun, my love is the same and equal on one and all.

I am the perennial spring of Divinity bathing the world in my one Divine Glory of peace, bliss and blessedness. Whether near or far, Whether known or unknown, all are my own dear Beloved Ones.

I am the primal cause of the world of form and name, supporting it with a part of my own indivisible power and Divine Love.

Verily the whole world of phenomena is me alone, as a bubble in the ocean!

I am the reservoir of deep wisdom, from where all the discoveries are coming and the great scientists are making all the inventions.

I am the basis of all learning and knowledge from where facts and poetry are flowing in sweet turns by Divine Poets.

Verily, I am the origin of all that is dead and living and of all the things and beings of past, present and future. Verily, all these have risen only from my own womb.

Indeed, I am the goal of the high and the low, the rich and the poor, of the animate and the inanimate, of the man manifested and the unmanifested and in short of every thing that has a name and a form.

Verily, all these in their own turn are bound to dissolve again in my own formless state of Divinity. The manifested will surely merge sooner or late into the unmanifested. Therefore, may all merge in Me.

Indeed, I am All Glory. I am All Peace. I am All Bliss. I am All Happiness. I am all Sunshine. I am nothing but floods of Divine consciousness. Verily, I am the Divinity, the One without a second!

In Me are the suns and moons. In Me are stars and planets. In Me alone is this whole world and phenomena, as a tiny bubble is in the ocean of Infinity.

Birds are in Me. Animals are in Me. All Men are in Me. Babies are in Me All life is in Me. All are in Me!

OM OM OM

GOD IS A STATE BUT NOT A PERSON

Sept. 1931

We have studied philosophies and religions of all ages and mastered the teachings of the prophets of East and West. Yet, God remains a mystery to us.

We have listened to numerous lectures and sermons of learned teachers and masters. We have gone through numberless books that were ever written in the name of religion, yet the Peace that we seek for in all these, remains a myth to us.

We have to come to the direct facts of spiritual practices, taking into consideration one's Personal experience in one's search after God or Truth. In all sincerity and earnestness, how very few are there who can understand that what we call God is not a person, but consciousness within ourselves.

We beg and plead for the blessing of God, looking far high in the sky. Meanwhile, all the time He is patiently waiting for us in the sacred sanctuary of our hearts, pervading and permeating our very being.

We pray and struggle and search for His Light and illumination while all the time He is shining as the light of lights, expressing His Glory in every heart beat, in every breath of man, nay, in his very words and movements.

God is not far off. He is not separate or away from us. He is here. He is within. He is all this. Yet, we seek and search for Him, while hiding His light under dense clouds of ignorance.

Let the clouds of ignorance be melted away by the breeze of wisdom. Let the darkness of the little 'I' disappear in the Light of the Sun of suns. Let us give a deathblow to our self-centred, small personality in order to realise our impersonal self. The time is now and the place is here, to realise and manifest our Divine Heritage.

The consciousness of a beast makes one a beast. The consciousness of a saint makes one a saint and the consciousness of a sinner makes one a sinner. Similarly, the consciousness of God makes one a Living God.

Mind plays an important part in leading one to the sublime state of Godhead or in dragging down to the despicable condition of animal-life. It is the mind that makes one feel strong or weak, rich or poor, healthy or sick. Hence let us educate and spiritualise our minds. Let us remember: that which was in Christ is manifesting in us.

As this Christ-mind dissolves in the light of the Sun of suns, one tastes glimpses of God-Consciousness. Then religion remains no more a myth or legend and God no longer a mere name or form or person.

Here be in the blessedness of personal experience with God in Truth. It is too subtle for words, too subtle to express or write about. It is to be realised and recognised in all sacredness in the stillness of one being.

Hence, one need not grope any more running after teachers and masters, one need not seek and search even in the scriptural books. God is a living fact. He is an open mystery. He is the only reality.

He is all around manifesting the Glory in all, from a tiny dew drop to mighty sun.

Behold! He is blooming in the flowers, singing in the birds, shining in the stars, playing in the children writing in me and reading in you.

O Blessed Glory! Let us dissolve in this in-expressible state of incomprehensible beauty. He is the stillness of our heart beat. He is the silent flow of our very breath. He is the fragrance of our silent thoughts.

Dear beloved reader! Merge within and behold! He is the formless spirit of your very form and nameless Light of your very name. He is the Infinite Illumination in the finite "I".

Verily He is a state of highly evolved superconsciousness of inexpressible Peace. However, He is never a person, form or name.

Then is God merely a state of consciousness? He is more than that. He is beyond all states of consciousness. He is beyond the dimensions of every kind. He is above mind, intellect and "I". He shines in full Glory where the little ego is annihilated.

He is formless state, nameless and causeless state. Therefore, let us worship him by becoming formless and nameless. Let us worship and adore Him in silence, in every form and aspect by recognising His Presence in every moment of our lives.

Above all, let us pay our heart's homage to this Indweller of our hearts and to the creator of the universes, by realising now His formlessness and Glory of the Light of Lights!

GOD(PART 1)

June 1929

A LECTURE DELIVERED AT AMERICA

The subject of my discourse this evening is GOD. What a life giving word is GOD! It has been the hope of millions of people from the very beginning of creation. It has been the inspiration of millions of sages and saints in both the East and the West. It is the life and soul of every being and creature on the face of the earth. However, it is not as easy as it appears to speak of God. We can speak in words of any thing in the world, but not of God.

When we can understand what God really is, we will not fail to see the fallacy in the very statements such as speaking of God or listening to God in words. If God has a form and a name, we can describe Him and we can hear of Him. If He is abiding at a certain place, we can say He is at such a place in such a form. He is formless and nameless. He is never bound to any place or time. Then, how can we describe Him in words?

Have we not been taught that God is beyond words, and that He cannot be grasped by the tiny mind or little intellect? Yet, we find half the people in the world are trying to speak or give lectures on what God is and the other half of the world are busy in striving to listen about God. One who is trying to describe God with words is no wiser than fool. And one who is trying to understand God only through words is also a foolish man.

It is really strange that we have to learn of God only through words! Yet, blessed are they who are trying to make themselves perfect, for they are very precious and rare indeed. From one standard the whole world can be taken as a universal whole in which are represented the various grades of life. Here we find many are running after the Mammon God in search of the perishable riches.

They are innumerable others who are slaves to their dark passions and ignorant fashions. There are a few more learned ones who are hankering after the world. Every one is mad after something or the other. How very few and limited in number are they who are becoming mad in the name of the All-loving God! May Peace be unto them, for unto such alone belongs the Kingdom of Heaven.

Now let us try to understand or grasp, nay, to feel and realise God in so far as our mind and intellect can help us.

Whenever I am asked to talk about God or describe His Glory, I am always reminded of the story of the four blind people who were trying to describe an elephant. Being blind, they never had the chance of seeing an elephant. Now they wanted to know what the elephant was like. So, they approached an elephant. One man nearing the elephant held its trunk in his hand and said "Oh! The elephant is just like a long pipe." Another man taking hold of the third said, "It is like a piece of strong rope." The third man holding one of the legs with both of his hands said, "Friends! All of you are wrong, for the elephant is neither like a pipe a rope nor a pillar: it is just like a big barrel."

Thus, each had a separate conception of the elephant and no wonder they began to quarrel over the difference of their opinions saying, "I alone am right but not the others!"

One of the men who happened to pass nearby felt amused hearing their conversation and seeing their ignorant quarrel. He approached them with the intention of helping them and said, "My friends, I am sorry to see you quarrelling over such a little thing. You are both partly right and also partly wrong. You are partly right because the

elephant has a trunk which corresponds to a big pipe; it has a tail resembling a stout rope; it has a huge body that reminds one of a big barrel. Yet, the elephant is neither a pipe, a rope, a pillar nor a barrel. The elephant is an elephant. It is a huge beast-having all the parts just described. It is nothing other than ignorance to describe an elephant by touching only one part of its anatomy."

Thus, we can see, dear blessed ones, that all of us are trying to describe God in a similar manner, like the blind people in the story, judging Him from one particular aspect. Some say "My God is Krishna," some say, "My God is Buddha." Others say, 'My God is Mohammed,' and others, "My God is only Christ and no one else either on earth or in heaven."

If they are a little bit advanced and if they would only risen above outer forms of religions, they would realise that God is nothing but love.' Some others say, "Oh! God is all intelligence." Some say, "God is all mercy,' and others, "He is all power."

What are these statements? What do they signify? Do they represent God? Oh, they are only words! They are empty words. Lifeless words. These expressions and descriptions of God are no better then the conception of our blind brethren about the elephant.

Is it not high time that we should rise above these empty and lifeless words? We can make a parrot also repeat these simple words. Perhaps it can repeat no longer the name of God, but something most natural that comes from within, when it attempts to save its life.

Let us behave no more like mere parrots. Let us not be satisfied with empty the repetitions. Let us not be satisfied with empty repetitions. Let us understand in word and deed. Let us try to understand Him by rising above speech, mind and intellect.

What is the most natural way to understand or realise God? All books teach us that we are no other than the Spirit or Truth from which we have been born. In the moments of our own absorption, we may forget that we have arisen from God, but we actually Truth or God alone.

The sacred books are teaching the Glory of our Divinity. Men of realisation are striving to help us understand that we are the living Truth. In the moments of silence we are feeling the splendour of our Godhead. Then, what need is there of these long statements or lifeless words?

It has been said that one begins to walk towards God when he rises above words. Religion begins where all talk stops. Therefore, it is high time that we should try to realise God by merging in Him, forgetting all the statements.

The easiest way of understanding God is by walking in the holy foots of God-men who have realised truth, becoming like little children. If you are a follower of Krishna and He is your ideal then walk in His footsteps. If you are a follower of Buddha and he is your ideal, just walk in His loving footsteps. If you are a follower of Mohammed and He is your ideal, just live like him ever walking in His footsteps.

If you are a follower of the Blessed Christ and He is your ideal, lose no time in walking in His very footsteps. Do not bring blasphemy unto Him by taking his name in vain. Live His life in thought, word and deed.

It is not enough to say 'I believe in Christ' or to repeat 'I am a Christian'. If Christ is your ideal, live as He lived. Love as He loved, speak as He spoke and work as He worked. Think as he thought, help as He helped, serve as he served and pray as He prayed.

Do this ceaselessly. Verily, 'one who has seen the son has seen the father also'.

Through the

Christ state alone, we can realise God. Is not this the most natural and easiest way, to realise the unmanifested Lord?

Are we not repeating that the same mind which was in Christ, is in us also? Do you believe in this statement? If the mind of Christ is in you, why these outer searches, why this worry, hurry and mad haste of restlessness? Where is stillness, my dear friends in the minds where Christ is abiding? We must answer this statement before we again utter another word.

Like many of you, I too have a favourite statement of my own. It is near and dear to my heart. I will often be repeating it in certain moments of my life. It is not constructive but rather a negative statement. Though negative in itself, it makes me understand the destructiveness and worthlessness of the outer life. It leads me to the positive and constructive life.

That statement is "*Forgetfulness of God is death.*" Death is not the dissolution of the body. It is not burial in the ground nor its cremation in the fire.

Each time I am forgetting God I am dying. Each time I am clinging to a form and name, I am in a state of death. Each time I am asserting my ego, I am walking in the shadow of death.

If forgetfulness of God is death then what is life? It is very easy to answer. Christ consciousness is life. Cosmic consciousness is life. Super consciousness is life. Yet, how few are they who can understand practically in their own lives the Glory of this Super Consciousness of God!

Every one judges God from his own standard. What one has within he beholds without. This is Divine law both for the sinner and the saint. So we were to see everything from our limited conception.

If dogs were to hold their parliament of religions, they would describe God as a big dog ruling over them. If elephants were to hold a parliament of religions, they would describe God as huge elephant or a moving mountain ruling over them. In the same way men judge God by their own standard. However, if gods were to hold a parliament of religions, they will surely express God as a Living God of universal life.

If Christ, Krishna and Buddha were to sit in a parliament religions they would not describe God in words or in statements. Krishna might represent God by his very Shanti or peace. Buddha might represent God by his very Nirvana.

GLORY! GLORY! GLORY!

Glory be unto the Past, Present and future! Glory be unto the saints and sinners, poor and rich, nay, the dead and living also. Glory be unto Christ, Krishna and Buddha. Glory be unto the manifested and unmanifested. What else is there to be said in word?

OM OM OM!

The God of the twice born, the one who is versed in the outer learning, is fire. He considers the fire or light as his God. The Yogi who is trying to control the mind considers his heart as God. One who is devoid of intelligence worships God in the idol, stone or metal. He is also a worshiper of human idols, the idols of flesh and blood.

However, the enlightened one, the one who has realised stillness, sees God everywhere and worships him both within and without. May we be privileged also to worship the Almighty Lord, whether our eyes are resting or the minds are wondering?

Since "God is all there is" and there is nothing besides Him, the enlightened ones behold His Glory everywhere. Of course, His Glory cannot be seen with eyes.

Hence, we are told in the sacred scriptures, *"The seer of thy sight, thou shalt not see; the thinker of thy thoughts, thou shalt not think; the knower of knowledge, thou shalt not know.-this is thy Reality. Everything besides is but mortal."*

GOD(PART 2)

July 1929

What is the true Absolute, not this that people worship? It is that which is not spoken in speech but that where by all speech is spoken. It is that which does not think but that whereby the mind proceeds to think. It is that which does not perceive with the eye, but that whereby the eye receives its sight. It is that which does not hear with the ear, but whereby the ear hears.

The knowers of the Absolute thus explain the immutable. It is neither within dimension nor atomic neither short nor long. It is not red, not sticky, not light, not dark; neither is it air nor ether. It has no relation, no taste and no smell. It has no eye, no ear, no speech, no mind, no light, no life, no mouth and no form. It enjoys nothing nor is enjoyed by any thing.

The eye has no access there nor has speech nor mind. We do not know it (the Absolute), Nor the method whereby we can impart it. It is other than the knower, and other than the unknown. Thus do we hear from the sages of old who explained it thus.

The sun does not shine there nor the moon, nor the stars, nor
even these lighting, least of all the fire; everything becomes
enlightened in the light, the whole of this shines through its is
lustre.

These are some of the noblest and most sublime thoughts of the sagas of India, in so far as words are taken into consideration in expressing the Highest or the Absolute Truth.

Now coming down from the giddy heights of our Absolute state or incomprehensible Glory, let us examine a few common statements to understand the truth from our every day practical life.

As we are now concerned more with the kingdom of the world, let us consider only a simple statement such as the king and his kingdom. In what way is the king related to his kingdom? What is his relationship with his kingdom? It is beautiful to be a king and to live always in the kingdom.

Whether we know it or not, we are all kings in the kingdom of God. It is great, nay even inspiring to feel that we are all kings in the Kingdom of God. However, this is only an elementary state. This is not the highest state. For the king may be banished or dethroned from his kingdom. He may or may not always stay in his kingdom, since his kingdom is separate from him. Most of us belong to this first state of the king and the kingdom. Yet, his highest Truth is never two. Truth is one and cannot be divided or separated; but the king can be separated from his kingdom.

Therefore, let us try to rise a little higher from this dual state and consider a better or higher state such as a bright star or self-shining star. What is the relationship of the brightness to the star? We cannot separate the star from its light as we separated the king from his kingdom. This seems to represent more of our true life for the star can never be separated from its brightness.

Even though this state is most appealing and uplifting it is not representing the Absolute truth in showing our inseparable relationship with God. Indeed, it is true that the light or brightness is a characteristic of the star and it cannot be separated even by the mighty intellects. Still, the brightness or light is an attribute of a star, whereas God or Truth is beyond attributes or qualities.

So to represent our highest and exact relationship with God, let us take this final case. A snake in a rope. Once when going along a road on a dark night, I saw something in the darkness which filled me with fear. It caused a quivering all through my body, in spite of knowing the holy statements of the Bible and the Vedas. When it is a matter of life and death and we are to bid adieu to all our near and dear ones, when we are in the pangs of suffering, we need more than statements. We need the stillness of a Christ, the peace of a Krishna or the nirvana of Buddha.

When I was in this state which seemed to be on the threshold of death, fortunately a friend with a lantern happened to pass nearby.

Lo! To my amazement it was not a snake that I saw in the darkness that had nearly sent me into the very jaws of death, it was only a mere piece of rope resembling a poisonous snake.

How unjust and meaningless were my fears over a piece of rope! Yes, it is the mind that makes one a slave or a master, a deity or a God.

In a similar way, we have been always the harmless rope but never the harmful snake. It is the snake idea that makes one restless and miserable. The snake never existed in the rope. It exists only in our imagination, hence we have to suffer. One has to reap what he has sown recklessly or diligently. God and Mammon can never exist in our minds at the same time. Two swords cannot be in one sheath.

All this conflict, agony and suffering was the cause of mistaking the rope for a snake. As long as you are sure that it is a rope, the snake idea will never come into your mind. However, when once you forget the Living truth of the rope, there immediately springs into your mind the hissing serpent, to make a havoc of your whole life. Hence, I love to repeat my statement, *forgetfulness of God is death*. Be it even for moment let us not die, let us not mistake the rope for the snake.

Now, dear sacred ones, if we understand this illustration of a snake in a rope, we will be able to understand our exact or real relationship with God, without the need of any more statements or words. A rope is always a rope whether in the past, present or future. Even when it was through ignorance that it was mistaken for a snake, it was only a rope. Your ignorance cannot turn a rope into a snake. In this statement the snake is no longer an attribute of a rope as in the case of the bright star or the kingdom of the king. The snake is a false entity. It never existed except in mind in the false imagination.

What a beautiful illustration is this! The snake in a rope is representing our individual relationship with the Almighty. This alone represents our Absolute consciousness. We have always been the loving rope but never the dreadful snake. In the past, we were the Truth. In the present we are the Truth and in the future we will be the truth.

When we are sure and certain of the existence of the rope, the snake idea can never dare come near us. Thus when we are standing on the firm rock of our stillness, but not on the sandy rocks of vain repetitions. We will not fail to shine in the full Glory of absolute consciousness. This consciousness is beyond the finite consciousness, yet it is not even unconsciousness. How can words explain this it is something that must be realised from within?

This reminds me of the highest conception of God or Truth given by sages and saints of the East. It is by their very silence and stillness in a great assemblage. In that great spiritual land of the hoary headed Himalayas, under the canopy of the star lit heaven, enjoying the cooling rays of the full moon sat a number of sages by the side of the crystal waters of Ganges. They were great souls who realised Truth in the depth of their inner consciousness.

While thus assembled they were trying to find out the solution of the creation of the world. They died and entered into the very source of all manifestations. Thus they came to the point where they had to understand the highest law or God. Knowing Him, everything will be known.

What is that state by realising which everything will be realised? They were trying to express the inexpressible. They were trying to manifest the unmanifested. They were making efforts to enter into the incomprehensible.

At first one said, that an incarnation such as Krishna or Vishnu is God. Then, the question was raised, "Who is the source of the incarnation, be it Krishna or Vishnu?" They said it is Atman, because that is the eternal principle of the intelligence in all living beings. It is called also by the great name Mahat or the greatest of the great.

What is beyond this Mahat, was the next question. One replied: "It is Avyaktam, the unmanifested. It is the combined state of potentialities of all causes and effects."

The next question was, "What is beyond this great state of Avyaktam, or the unmanifested?" Another great soul replied, "Beyond the Avyaktam is Purusha, the Lord of Lords, because he fills all and pervades and permeates all space."

Beyond Purusha there is nothing. That is the end and that is the goal. Some other asked, "What is this Purusha and how can one understand It?" All of them in one voice said, "It is nothing but Shanti, the stillness, the Glory of Perfection."

One then there hesitatingly asked, "What is this Shanti?" As if to answer this great question of questions, all of them entered into Samadhi, the Holy state of stillness. There, there is nothing but Shanti, the inaudible and unutterable Peace both within and without.

Dear sister and brothers! Shall we also enter into the Blessed state of Shanti or peace for just a moment, that we may make our evening fruitful? A glimpse of that is on the surface and peace is more than mountains of talk. Talk is on the suffice and peace is in the depths of one's being.

Let us now forget for a moment the words which I am speaking and rise even above listening. Let us merge within. Kindly close your eyes for a minute and make your minds waveless. It is stillness within and without. It is Shanti, the universal Peace. This is the state which is our birthright.

OM OM OM!

Shall we call this blessed state, where there is neither the one that talks nor the one that listens, by the sweet name of the *Almighty God*? Name cannot alter this holy state of the Universal peace. Sages have called it by various names. We are to realise this truth and learn by our very stillness to be calm, unruffled and waveless in the lake of our minds

If we could only remain forever in this state of Peace, what a blessed life will be ours! Our life would be the life of all in all. It is no longer an individual life but a Universal life. Yet, alas! The delusion of the snake idea creeps into our mind at a time when we are off our watch. The thief enters at a time when we are not watchful.

Therefore, we must be ever watchful in every moment of our lives, giving no space for any delusion. If not, our God-state will be reversed. Need I tell you how the God-state

will be renounced when it is replaced by the snake idea. What will happen when the snake idea is replaced instead of the rope idea? A perpetual state of misery and restlessness will be the result of the snake idea, or the reversing of the great word *God*.

God is reigning in full Glory in the state of Selflessness. In simple words, *selflessness alone is God Consciousness*. Selfishness will be the outcome of body consciousness. Two things can never exist in one state, be it living as a God or as a living mummy. Hence, we are told where the 'I' is, the Infinite is not and where the Infinity is, the 'I' is not. Once again, we are going back to our statement, *'Where the rope is the snake is not, and where the snake is the rope is not*.

May we now deepen our understanding about the non-existence of the conception of the snake in the simple rope? May the consciousness that we are nothing but truth whether in the past, present or future, help us to dispel the clouds of imagination? Thus, it will make us shine in the full Glory of our stillness, realising the nothingness of matter, mind and personality.

May the Blessed stillness alone reveal its own self-shining splendour to each and every one, in the precious moments of our peace! This is my constant prayer.

In conclusion, may I recite the beautiful words of stillness, perfection and fullness.

Om Poornamadha Pornamidam,
Poornat Poorna Mudachyate,
Poornasya Pooranmadaya,
Poorna Meva Vasishyate.

OM SHANTI SHANTI SHANTI!

This is full and so is that.
Full comes out of the full.
Taking away the full from the full,
The full remains forever.

What a great joy to feel that we are ever full, either in work or rest, all throughout our lives! May we be ever full and complete with the Glory of God with each and every heart beat of ours, in each and every second of our lives!

May we inhale and exhale nothing but the Fullness or the Perfection with each and every breath!

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL!

OM OM OM

I AM

July 1931

In one of the sacred and still moments, as I was chanting the holy syllable 'AUM,' deeply absorbed in its Glory, in a flash it was revealed--The Self-shining splendour of 'I am'.

I am no other than the same Truth, the Glory of which the Vedas and other sacred scriptures of the East have been striving to describe.

I am the same Truth, the beauty of which all the Eastern philosophers and other sages and saints have been trying to express.

What is that thing by knowing which everything will be known? If I could only know myself, all else will be known to me.

'Know Thyself' has been the watch-word of every religion and philosophy in the world.

Neglecting to know and realise the Self, what good will it do to memorise texts from the Vedas and other sacred books?

If once we know the Self or Truth, what use is there in wasting any more precious time in reading the same texts again and again or in listening to crafty words day after day? Self-reliance, is the soul and substance of all Vedas, Bibles and other scriptures.

What does the Bible teach? 'Know the Truth and the Truth shall make you free'. Without centring ourselves in Truth, what is the use of reading the Bible? If we are the Living Truth, what need is there of studying any more scriptures?

In the stillness of our hearts, we realise that we are the Truth or God. So, let us be still and silent to realise our full Divine Glory. Those that are pure in heart are face to face with God. Verily, the kingdom of God is within.

When the Kingdom of Heaven is within, why run after the outer kingdoms? When Peace is in stillness, why seek it in strife and duality? When Truth is no other than our Self, why continue to play hide and seek?

Bibles, Quorans and Pitikas are the Self-shining 'I am'. 'I am' is the Universal Energy-the one Divine Pioneer, the one big Breath of Soham, 'I am He'

The 'I am' sings and chants the sacred syllable AUM, pouring out floods of love, sending streams of peace and oceans of Bliss to one and all, for ever and ever.

It is needless to cling to the boat after reaching the other end of the shore. Let go of the boat. Arise! Awake and stop not till the highest goal is reached, realised and manifested.

The goal is here in 'I am'. The soul is here in 'I am'. The Glory is here in complete selflessness. The illumination is here in Supreme Silence.

Adoration be unto this all-embracing and infinite 'I am'! Adoration's be above and below and on every side to this all-pervading 'I am'! Silent adorations be in the stillness of the sacred heart unto this 'I am', the Glory of the sun of Suns!

OM! OM! OM!

I PROMISED MY GOD I WOULD DO IT

Nov. 1931,

In the October issue of our "Peace," on the back of the cover leaf, the beautiful and life-giving words of Abraham Lincoln, '*I promised my God I would do it,*' were printed.

Dear readers of 'Peace'! How many of you have given thought to these uplifting words? How many of you felt inspired with these soul-awakening words?

It has been said that one word is enough for the wise. Are you not wise, seeking Truth? Are you not striving to realise that Peace which passeth all understanding? Above all, do you not have any promise to make to God?

Dear friends! Before you read any further, remember or bear in mind this an article, not merely for surface study, but for assimilation and realisation of God's presence, within yourselves, through your at-one-ment with the Universal Spirit.

"*I promised my God that I would do it*" were the impressive words written by that great soul Lincoln, in his private diary. How many of us are keeping diaries, for self-improvement?

How many of us are making promises to God, to rise from weakness to strength? How many of us are struggling day and night to attain union with the Highest of the Highest?

Facing the God within himself, Lincoln promised Him to liberate slaves, to make his country free from slavery. He resolved to abolish slave trade knowing that it is the greatest sin to buy and sell human beings, God's own children.

In the face of ridicule, opposition, hardship and even death, Lincoln fulfilled his promise to God. Such is the iron will and determination of all great souls. By nature they are silent. They never undertake the common things, neither do they meddle in the affairs of others. When they fix their minds on doing a certain thing, they succeed in it, even if mountains stand in their way.

Christ promised His Father, to realise the kingdom of heaven within and to serve His children with the last drop of blood. The father's will has been Christ's will, *'Not my will, but thine be done.'*

Buddha promised his deity to attain the blessed state of Nirvana, so that he might share it with the suffering world. He neither slept nor ate, until he succeeded in seeing the Light.

Krishna, the Lord of love, promised the absolute to realise the high state of Nirvikalpa Samadhi-the state of super-consciousness, and thus to be an ideal for all seekers of Truth.

The world-famous poets, philosophers, artists, musicians and all those that have worked to serve man and God, in every country, have been souls that promised God to attain their noble ideals.

Thus we see, all great souls have trusted in God and promised Him to reach the goal, the one ambition of their lives.

Dear friends, what about our ideals? Have we made any promises to God? It is not enough to make promises. It is very easy to forget them. When once we make a promise, we must spend our days and nights only in doing such things that lead us nearer to the fulfilment of our promise.

We need not be discouraged, even if we break or fail in our promises, because of lukewarmness, or lack of fervour. Our ideal should be to rise each time we fail, until we reach such a state, where there will not be any failure.

All things are possible for those who are willing to pay the price. Promises cannot be fulfilled by empty words. Alertness or awareness of the ideal, strenuous work, unceasing flow of consciousness of Truth-these are the factors needed to attain one's life's ideal, in whatever line it might be.

Now let us try to get conception of God from Lincoln's words, *I promised my God*. What does the word "my" signify? Lincoln is not speaking here of the God of clouds of a particular creed or faith. He is not making a promise to a finite God of dimensions.

Lincoln is speaking to us about the God of truth, Justice and Love. He is promising to the indweller of his noble heart.

When we try understand and realise the true conception of God, namely His inseparable oneness with us, how can we ever break our promises? We will work and live only to fulfil our promises.

Now coming to the practical point of view, taking into consideration individual cases, I request my loving readers, in East and West to look within to find out their heart's craving, their mind's desire and their soul's longing.

What is it you want? What is your life's ambition and goal and what steps are you taking to realise the same?

Dear beloved readers! Is it not high time that we promise God to succeed in our noble endeavours? Is it not already late enough to repent with our Lincoln 'I promised my God, I would do it'? Yes, let us waste no more time in doing so called "big things." Realising thus the sacredness, and preciousness of every moment, let us attune ourselves with the Almighty, serve His children and thus doing His will.

Dear friends! If you are weak, promise Him today as you read this message, to do away with all weakness and to become strong. If you are sick, promise Him to attain health and strength. Away with weakness and sickness! All is health, strength and Glory. These are your birth-right!

If you are slaves to envy, sorrow, greed, hatred, anger or any other fault, lose no time in promising the Indweller of your hearts to overcome such fault. Manifest instead love, generosity, harmony, peace and perfection, as these qualities alone are your Divine attributes.

If you have the weakness of finding faults with your neighbour of picking holes in the character of others, promise your God now, to mind your own affairs first. Remove the beam from your own eye before seeing the mote in your neighbour's eye.

Above all, promise God to be free of racial hatred, communal strife, caste prejudice, religious intolerance and spiritual bigotry. Promise Him to respect all creeds and faiths, to see good in every man and the fatherhood of God.

Dear precious readers of Peace! I long to repeat here my own promise to God with the intention of sharing it with all of you. How many of you will join me in making this promise to God, the Indweller of our hearts, our common Father?

Pray! Do come and join me, wherever your physical (temples) forms may be, knowing that the Presence is filling and saturating us. Close your eyes and repeat with me now the promise.

Oh Loving Father of mercy and compassion, Thou who art
Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute! We promise to walk in
Thy foot-prints, ever working, breathing and living in Thee in
every second of our lives. We promise to see Thy Glory all around,
to recognise only Thy presence in our heart's sanctuary, as well
as in the soul of the mighty planets!

Bless us, O Lord of Love! To live in this ceaseless flow of Thy Light
of Light, recognising always our eternal oneness with Thee from
eternity to eternity!

OM OM OM.

Dear loving ones! We have promised our God to stand by Him; so let us now realise Him at any price. By His blessing, may we merge in Him!

IN THE HOURS OF PEACE

April 1931

Oh soul! Why do you always struggle in vain over the things of the world? Why so much of fretfulness and restlessness over mere nothings? Why waste thy precious life over the toys of the world? Why struggle for the lower things of life?

If you are to struggle, struggle for the highest. Struggle, struggle for the greatest of the great, holiest of the holy and the goal of life. It is all strife and struggle over the surface. However, it is all Peace and rest in the deep bottom. The sea of the world is full of waves. It is a game of rise and fall. It is a play of hide and seek. It is a life of ebb and flow. There is nothing but unceasing struggle wherever it might be.

However, in the hours of Peace, it is all Peace. In the debts of silence, it is all Bliss. In the glories of Truth, it is all Divinity. In the moments of thy aspiration, it is all Illumination. In the seconds of thy realisation it is all Ecstasy and Oneness. Thy soul is in Peace. Thy life is there. Thy strength is there. Thy energy is there. Thy everything is only there in Peace and nowhere else.

So, take a firm stand within thyself. Let thy hold be on the strength within. Let thy foundation be laid up on the Peace which is within. Hold on and hang on to the sacred hours of Peace. Then alone you will be able to manifest thy true nature of Peace from within. Verily, thy life is always within. Thy Peace is eternally within. Indeed, what thou seekest is within Thee alone.

Thy birth is in Peace. Thy existence is in Peace. Thy goal is in Peace. Peace is in thy Omnipresence. Peace is in thy Omniscience. Peace is in thy Omnipotence. Thou art nothing but floods of Peace. Verily, thou art all Peace. When thou art nothing but floods of Peace, how can you dare to confine thyself to a body and a name?

Try not to hide the light in darkness. Keep not the light under a bushel-basket. Let it shine in all Glory. Let it flow in all Peace. Let it radiate in all joy. However much you may try, dwelling in ignorance, you can never confine this great Peace to the momentary body.

When judged from the highest truth, this body is only of a few moments duration. It is a mere bubble that comes up and is bound to be dissolved and disappear sooner or later. Even this solid-seeming wide world is only of a few days duration. As such, why delude thyself, ever relying on the broken fragments of phenomena?

Pray, stand on Truth! Rely on the changeless Truth which is the only Reality. Come out of thy weakness and stand boldly on thy own legs, having a firm footing in the splendours of Peace. Self-reliance, the reliance on thy Supreme Self, is the goal of life. This is the sum-total of all religions. This alone is the outcome of thy hours of Peace.

So, at all costs, either in death or life, rely on thy own Self alone, realising it day by day in thy hours of Peace.

INTELLECTUALISM

APR. 1929

I have been coming in contact with many earnest souls who are striving to find God through reasoning, with the power of their so called mighty intellects.

It sends into my body a shivering sensation when I see them reasoning God, analysing and diagnosing Him. Their words are forceful and fiery, as if to tear God into pieces. I often wonder whether they are doing harm to themselves, trying to divide and bisect Him.

Can God be mutilated or wounded with words? Can we take a firm hold of the throat of God and thus strangle Him and make Him stand before us?

Then why this unnatural process of chewing dry bones? Is there any life, taste or enjoyment in chewing these dry words with restless minds? How long can we live on imaginary food? Are we not yet tired of these lifeless arguments and endless imaginations?

I am not saying anything against the intellect. On the other hand, intellect has a Glory of its own. We have the highest use for the intellect. It has a part to play in ascertaining the Truth as Truth, and thus far and no further. It cannot go any further.

How can the tiny intellect comprehend the great Glory of God? What can the poor intellect do before the Splendour of Truth? How can we expect a tiny speck of a cloud to understand the Glory of the great sun?

When once we realise that God alone exists and nothing else exists beside Him, what necessity is there of reasoning any longer or indulging in vain repetitions? When nothing else exists beside God or Truth, how can these words and thoughts exist any longer?

If we are convinced of God's presence or existence then let us try to feel and become one with Him. However, let us not waste our precious life and energy in wrestling with God. If so, we will be doing harm to our own selves.

What we grasp and understand by the help of our intellect is to be placed in practice. If not, our knowledge without practice may be compared to an ass carrying a heavy load of sandal wood on its back. It realises only the weight of the burden, but never the smell or utility of sandal wood.

Those who are satisfied with mere intellectualism are like vultures that soar very high in the air, but their concentration or outlook is always on the putrefied carcasses. As soon as they see a dead body, they descend from their high flights.

In the same manner, those who are feeling contented with their intellects cannot help but be slaves of the flesh and senses. When they stoop down into ignorance then all their theory of "God is" and "God alone exists" disappears and they will be grovelling in the mire of darkness.

A man entered into a beautiful garden full of juicy fruits. What would you think of him if, instead of eating them and thus satisfying his thirst and hunger, begun to waste his life in counting the leaves on the trees? Such is the utility of considering intellect as everything.

Those who are restlessly engaged in trying to realise God through reasoning or intellectual powers, are wasting their precious lives in counting the leaves of the trees, starving their living soul.

Those who have risen above intellects are ever engaging themselves in silent meditations. They are enjoying the blessed states of Peace and are actually eating the Divine fruits in the garden of God.

The intellect cannot jump out of itself, it can perform only its fixed duty to its limited extent. However, if we try to force it any further, we are making a wreck of our spiritual lives.

Intellectual struggles for realising God can be compared to the hopeless and helpless struggles of birds caught in the net. All their struggles are within the net. They cannot go out of the net of reasoning.

It is not by reasoning nor by expanding that God can be realised. It is by merging and dissolving in truth that we will be able to comprehend Him in all Glory.

Intellectual people always live on the surface, hence they are dry and hollow, both within and without. On the surface there is always hurry, worry and strife.

There is inexpressible Peace and endless Joy. Yet as our great Intellectualists are too busily engaged with surface things, they have no time to spare for entering into the deeper states of Peace. So, they are often satisfied feasting over dry bones.

Above all, how can the finite intellect grasp or comprehend the infinite God or Truth? The finite can comprehend only finite things. It can never understand the infinite perfectly.

A pair of tongs can hold anything with the help of our hand but mind and intellect is only the Universal Spirit. It is only with the help or support of the spirit that our minds and intellects are moving and working.

They can think of anything in the world, but they cannot dare to think or reason about the great God or Truth in whom they are mere nothings. So, their bounded duty must be to silently merge and dissolve in God, understanding the helplessness and hopelessness of all mere outer exertions, physically or mentally.

In short, God can be realised only by intuition and never by finite exertions. We need not be restless with unnecessary exertions. Let our exertions be in making our minds and intellects calm and collected.

Intellect is a mere bubble in the Ocean of Divine Glory. Do not make the bubble jump out of itself to fathom the ocean. Let it simply dissolve, losing itself in the formless state of the water.

In the same way, let our intellects merge and identify with the great God or Universal Spirit who is the only reality and in whom we are inseparably one, in the past, present or future.

MAY PEACE BE UNTO ALL

RELIGIONS OF INDIA (PART 1)

Jan. 1929

(A LECTURE DELIVERED BY SWAMI OMKAR IN AMERICA)

Dear friends, allow me to greet you not as an easterner coming from far away India, neither as a Hindu, nor as a Preacher, but as your own fellow brother. I love to greet you as a humble worshipper of our blessed Lord Jesus Christ.

It fills my heart with great joy to have the opportunity you are giving to me, to express my inner thoughts on the religions of India. For the same reason, I request you all to accept my thanks and hearty gratitude.

Before I begin my subject, "*The Religions of India*", I would like to speak to you on religion proper. When we can understand what religion really means, we will be able to understand practically all other religions.

Religion! What is religion? Can we be called religious by attaching ourselves to this sect or that creed? Can we be called religious by our outer beliefs in this saviour or that prophet? Can we ever be called religious by connecting ourselves to these forms and names? Is this religion?

One who respects his prayers thinks that he is the most religious man in the world. One who worships his chosen idol with flowers and fruits, he thinks that he is the most

spiritual man in the world. One who attends church once a week, he too thinks that he alone is the most religious man in the world. One who repeats the name of God once or twice before he goes to sleep, he too thinks that he is the most religious man.

Yet, is this religion? Is this the fulfilment of religion? Of course, we have no right to call them non-religious. However, they are only children, nay, mere babies, in the path of religious life.

Indeed, religion is not mere belief in a set of doctrines or metaphysics. Religion is being and becoming one with God. Religion is feeling Universal Love within and without, in every second of our lives. Religion is not clinging to forms and names, but merging and realising the formless and nameless God.

Religion has been defined by men of Realisation as *that which binds us back with the source*. Indeed, that which binds us with the source or fountainhead of Peace and Joy with the Infinity Itself, is Real Religion.

As you know, in every Religion on the face of the earth there are two things, namely, essentials and non-essentials. The essentials are the same in all religions. However, the non-essentials differ in every religion. One who has realised the essentials in his own religion, will not fail to feel the same Truth in all religions also. Yet, one who is satisfied with the non-essentials cannot help but be seeing differences in all religions, for he lives on the surface.

How can we call one religion great and another small? Is not God the basis of all religions? Is not God All-pervading? Are we not repeating that He is Omnipresent? If we believe that He is everywhere then why can we not feel Him in all Religions?

So long as we live surface lives, we cannot help but behold the differences. In spite of the differences all religions have a common basis, namely God. Suppose we take a garland. In a garland, every flower appears as different from the other. However, are not the flowers connected with the thread or wire?

Thus, all these different religions are connected with the same Universal Love. Every Religion has its own sublime beauties. No religion need boast of its superiority over another. Comparing of creeds or religions with the spirit of criticism, calling our religion alone the best in the world, is nothing but ignorance.

Dear friends, have you ever heard of the fight or quarrel between a sea frog and a frog that lived in the well? It was a time of floods. So a frog from the sea came and fell down in the well. There was a frog already in the well. It was born there, it was brought up there and it never had the chance of leaving the well. So as soon as it saw the other frog, it asked the following question:

Well Frog: Where are you from?

Sea Frog: I am from the sea.

W.F—How big is your sea? Can it be as big as my leg?

The Sea Frog began to laugh at the ignorance of the Well Frog, and said,

SF: How can you compare anything with the sea?

WF: Can your sea be as big as my two legs combined?

The Sea Frog simply laughed.

Then the Well Frog took a leap from one side of the well to the other and asked,

WF: Now can your sea be as large as the leap I have taken?

SF: It is nothing but foolishness to compare the well with the sea.

Then our frog in the well got enraged at the insolence of the sea frog and said,

WF: Here is a liar. Let us turn him out from here.

Thus Dear Friends, Swami Vivekananda also spoke of this story in the Parliament of Religions held at Chicago long ago and the same story is going on with the followers of each and every religion in the world.

A Mohammedan sits in his own well and thinks no other religion can be greater than his own well. A Buddhist sits in his own well and thinks no other religion in the world can be greater than his own well. A Hindu sits in his own well and thinks nothing else can be greater than his own religion. A Christian in the same manner clings to his own well and thinks that his well alone is the greatest thing and nothing even can be compared with his religion. Thus it is with all the other religions also.

If we are to understand the spirit of other religions, we have to come out of our wells of narrow beliefs. Then only we will be able to understand the same Truth which is underlying each and every religion in the world.

India has been called by the name of **Mother of Religions**, not by me but by many sages of the East and by many scholars of the West also. Why should it be called so? In what way is it deserving of such a great name? It is one of the most tolerant nations, containing almost all the religions of the world in its bosom. This alone is the reason why it is called the Mother of Religions.

Many oriental religions, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism had their origin or birth in India alone. We find also many followers of Islam are scattered all over India. We find there, in that ancient land of Religions, many Zoroastrians, Buddhists, Jains and Sikhs and the followers of all the oldest Religions.

I need not speak anything about the followers of the Blessed Lord Christ, with all their various denominations and creeds as being scattered all over India. In almost all the large cities, we find the churches of Protestants, Roman Catholics, Presbyterians, Methodists, Lutherans, and other sects and creeds. Indeed India is a land of religions filled with churches, temples, Mosques, Missions and other forms of worship in numberless ways.

We find all the latest cults and centres, such as Theosophy, Arya Samaj, Brahma Samaj, Bahaism and hundreds of other creeds and -isms. It is a wonder how day by day more religions, cults and creeds are springing, India has space enough for all religions, hence it is no wonder that has been called unanimously the Mother of Religions and by some others as a hot bed or seat of all Religions.

Although our subject is concerned with the Religions of India, namely, with the Oriental Religions, a few words about the other religions such as Islam, Zoroastrianism, etc., may not be out of place here.

Let us take first Islam. One of the noted followers of Islam has said that his whole religion can be summed up in one short sentence, "*God alone is.*" Islam has a following of 230 million people. All these people are not in Indian or at one place. They are scattered here and there, all over India also. However, the seat of Islam is in Arabia, Turkey, Kabul and other countries which are under the Mohammedan rule. Mohammed was the prophet and Founder of this Religion, The Koran is their Holy scripture. If we can understand the five pillars of this religion we will be able to understand it fully.

Every Mohammedan should repeat his creed, namely that Allah alone is the Almighty God and Mohammed is His Prophet.

Prayer. Everyone should say his prayers five times a day. We will find the pious Mohammedans in India travelling in crowded rail way carriages or on the platform. However, as soon as it is the time for their prayer they spreading their mats and offer the prayer in a kneeling and bending posture, in spite of the environment.

Alms giving. Every one should give a portion of his property or earnings toward the support of orphans, widows, poor people and other worthy and spiritual causes.

Fasting. Every follower of this religion should observe the fast of Ramzan in a certain month for a number of days, spending this time in prayer and meditation.

Mecca is the birthplace of Mohammed, hence it is considered as a sacred place by all Mohammedans. Everyone must visit this Holy place at least once in their lifetime.

Another special feature of this religion is that by embracing this religion one can share all the privileges of the Mohammedan society.

Mohammedanism is also called by the name of Islam. Islam means submission. Submission or self-surrender to God in thought, word and deed, is the important factor of this religion.

Now comes Zoroastrianism. This is also called by the name Parsee Religion. Zoroaster was the Founder of this Religion His birthplace was Persia. So we find the followers of this religion mostly in Persia although there are a few in India. They are called the fire worshipers, for they worship fire and other elements, the object being to co-operate with them in the Divine administration of creation.

Zoroaster was considered as the greatest spiritual Scientist. We are told that he received his great learning in all the sciences, not through human agency, but from God Himself, through direct perception

According to this religion, man is composed of nine parts: the Physical body, Organs, Life Liquid Body, Life, Ethereal Body, Desire body, the Soul, Intelligence, and the Essence of God.

The first five parts are supposed to be perishable. The sixth part namely Desire body is to be spiritualised. The seventh, eighth and ninth parts are imperishable. They are the same in the past, present and future. The name of their God is *Ahura Mazda*. Their sacred scriptures are called by the name "*Zend-Avesta*"

This religion has only a small following amounting to one-tenth of a million of followers. Purity in thought word and deed is the central theme of this religion.

Now comes Buddhism, the great religion of Buddha. This is considered more as a moral and ethical religion. Buddha was the Founder of this Religion. It has a following of (137) millions of people. Its followers are scattered all over India, Ceylon Japan, Siam and other Eastern lands *Tripitakas* are the sacred books containing the sacred Truths.

RELIGIONS OF INDIA (PART 2)

March 1929

Now, to make our subject complete, we will deal only with more important and vital doctrines. They are the fundamental principles or beliefs of all Oriental Religions.

One is the doctrine of *Karma* and the other is the theory of *re-incarnation* or transmigration of souls. There are many who say, "*Let us not bother our heads with the karma of Indian Religions.*" Those who say so are in complete ignorance.

They do not know the meaning of the word *karma*. Had they at least known the meaning of the simple word *karma*, they could not help but believe in the most simple and logical theory of *karma*.

Karma is nothing but Karma. No one can be free from some kind of Karma or action. If we are walking, there is Karma or activity. If we are thinking, there is Karma or activity. How can we be free from Karma, when such is the case? Is it not foolishness and childishness to say I will do the actions and I will not accept the results of the same in the form of reaction? Action and reaction are equal and opposite.

Whenever there is action, there is the reaction also. In short, we are reaping the fruits of what we alone are sowing. What we are now is the result of all our past thoughts, words and deeds. What we will be in the future in the same natural manner, will be determined by our present lives.

If one understands the law of Karma, he need not try to throw dust into the eyes of God. He need not place the burden of all his sins and sicknesses or weaknesses on God. He will be more careful in the future and will have faith in himself, instead of relying on other supports.

One should not expect a harvest of wheat sowing all the while tares. One who sows the seeds will be compelled to reap it in his own crop to the last grain. One who is busily engaged in sowing the crop of wheat, in doing sacred works of service and in serving the Lord in the forms of the cold and hungry, fails not to be rewarded in his own coin bounteously.

In short, the doctrine of karma is a law of cause and effect. God neither punishes nor rewards, but we ourselves are reaping what we are sowing. Punishment and reward are the reactions of our own actions. If one is poor, he is the cause of his own richness. If one is wicked, he alone is the cause of his own richness. If one is wicked, he alone is the cause of his wickedness. If one is pious and holy, he alone is the cause of his piety or holiness.

Hence, everyone is responsible for his present low or high state. He is impartial and His love is equal toward one and all. Therefore, we must work out our own salvation by non-attachment and discrimination, through right actions and silent Meditation, ever living in God.

There are many who pride themselves on not believing in the Doctrine of Re-incarnation. They are only mere children in the Spiritual life. They deny the past and the future also. They hold to the present life alone, considering it as everything. When they are denying the past and future, I wonder why they should not deny the present also?

However, this solid-seeming world appears to be the all and end-all unto these people. When there is a present state, there must be certainly, past and future states also. If there is no past, where were we before the existence of these bodies? These bodies came only the other day and they may be bound to dissolve at any moment. Are we going to be nothing after the dissolution of these finite bodies?

Indeed there is neither past nor present nor future in God. Yet, so long as we are living in this world with these physical bodies as individual beings, we have surely a past of our own and also a future of our own.

According to the theory of Re-incarnation, a soul will have to pass through many births. However, in God there is neither death nor birth. It is only when we reach God, when we realise Him consciously in our practical lives, that we will be free from the circle of births and rebirths. Therefore, everyone should realise the goal of this human birth, namely our inseparable oneness with the almighty Father.

Dear Beloved Ones, I shall not be taking much more of your time. I will just give to you a tiny illustration to make you understand how all the followers of the various religions

are searching for God except where He is. Then, I shall be coming to the end of my discourse.

There was a very old woman in India. She was searching for something in the street, under a street lantern. One man saw her thus searching in her old age wanted to help her in the search. The following conversation took place:

Man: Dear woman, what are you searching for here?

Woman: I am searching for a needle of mine.

Man: I, too, will help you, but where did you lose it? Are you sure you lost it only at this spot?

Woman: Oh no, I have lost the needle in my own house.

Man: How foolish of you to search for a needle in the street, that was lost in it in your own house!

The woman innocently replied,

Woman: Oh, I could not afford a light in my house, but I have to work to do with the needle so I am searching for it here, as there is light.

Dear Friends, if we examine closely our own lives and hearts, the same play is going on with the followers and votaries of all religions. We too are restlessly engaged in searching for God everywhere in the world, except where He is. As the woman could not afford a light within her own home, she was seeking in the streets. In the same way, as we cannot fix our minds in our own hearts, as we cannot make them listen to the still small voice, as we cannot realise the kingdom of heaven which is lying within us, we too are restlessly engaged in searching for the Kingdom of heaven everywhere except in the right place!

Even if that old woman searches for her needle in the streets for years and years, can she ever be expected to find her needle? In the same manner, we too can never be expected to find or realise God if we will not give up these blind and outer searches.

In vain is the search for God in temples and churches! In vain is the search for God in doctrines and dogmas. In vain is the search for God in books and writings. In vain is the search for God in sermons and lectures. In is vain the search for God in teachers and Masters.

Your experience alone will not fail to teach you in the long run how futile are all these vain searches. The God for Whom we have been searching in shrines and monasteries, in the outer world, in symbols and ceremonies or in other idols and the Almighty God for Whom we have been searching outside of us, He is verily within us! He is here alone, He is with us now. We are inseparably one with Him in this moment.

Dear loving Ones, can you not feel His Presence now, in this moment? If you cannot feel Him now, how can you feel or realise Him in the uncertain future? This moment alone is ours. If we can feel Him now, we can feel Him forever. If we cannot feel Him now, we can never feel Him. So let us try to feel Him in this living present moment alone, by merging in Him. Verily, He is nearer than our hands or feet. He is closer than our very breath. As He is anxiously awaiting to be remembered by us, let us merge in and embrace Him now!

Live in God and help others to live in Him has been the ideal of my life from my boyhood. Unless we live the life how are we expected to help or guide others? The teachings that we cannot practice in our own lives are mere waste, both for ourselves and for others

A blind man is never expected to lead the blind. Everyone is anxious to teach something or the other but no one is anxious to follow. Hence, we find everywhere many teachers and no pupils. All over the world, in all religions, people are very anxiously trying to convert souls. Can souls be converted? Can a soul be changed? Since it cannot be changed, they are busily engaged in changing forms and names from one religion to another religion. Thus, they are doing more harm by creating confusion.

Unless one lives an ideal and noble life, nothing can be done. The Lord Christ lived such a silent and Holy life nearly two thousand years ago. Where is Christ now? He is in the hearts of millions of people all over the world. Let one man alone live in God, the whole world can be united through him. Such is the silent glory and greatness of an ideal life. So, may we all live an ideal life, never confining God to a form or name, to a time or place but facing Him within and without and all around us.

Some of you may be happy to know that I had the privilege of organising a Mission of Peace in India, considering the whole world as my own home, for we are the children of the same God. It is a mission belonging not to India alone, but to the whole world. It belongs to you as much as it belongs to me, for it is the common property of all earnest souls. If any of you ever happen to visit that place, it will be a great joy for me to be helpful and serviceable there. Details of the Universal Work in our Abode of Peace will be made known to you by my friends.

In conclusion, dear friends, my heart craves even if it is only for a minute, to pray with all of you unto the Almighty, feeling His Presence now amongst us! So, let us pray.

Oh Almighty Father, bless us with a continuous vision of Thy Holy Presence. Make us to understand that Thou art never separate from us! Thou art within and without us. There is not a single atom of space where Thou dost not exist. There is not a single second when Thou art separate from us. Oh, what a great joy it is to feel that Thou art inseparably one with all of us, in the past, present and future! We are feeling Thy very Presence now. Verily, Thou art amongst us.

Oh Loving Father, help us to determine never to forsake Thee again, never to forget or neglect Thee again. Even now make us to realise that each time we are forgetting Thee, we are crucifying Thee. We are everything with Thee and nothing without Thee. So, help us to feel our inseparable oneness with Thee, not only when in prayer, but even in the outer activities of our lives. May we all have our being in Thee alone, ever working, moving and living in Thee.

We ask Thee to grant our simple desires in the name of Thy Beloved son, Jesus Christ, who is our Shepherd and Ideal and Way for leading us unto Thee. Amen!

PEACE PEACE PEACE

PRAYER

Jan. 1930,

O Almighty Father! I ask of Thee to grant me strength to consciously recognise my inseparable oneness with Thee now as Thou art the heart of my heart, the mind of my mind, the breath of my breath, life of my life, and the soul of my soul.

O Father! Help me to realise that thou art pervading and permeating my very being. Let me feel thy presence, as I am offering this prayer unto Thee, for thou art present in each and every cell of my body.

As Thou art within, without, above, below, on every side and all around, bless me to behold Thee every where and in every one, and to recognise Thee in each and every aspect of my life.

O Lord! I can feel Thy presence now and I plead only for strength to stand by Thee, not now and then but forever. Hence, grant me the firmness to be firm-rooted in Thee.

O God! Let me never approach Thee begging for perishable riches, things of the world or the outer beauty that changes. Let me strive and crave only for the beauty of the soul, which is changeless. I need neither fame nor name, neither praise or blame. All I want is only Thy light and life, the source of my existence.

It is ignorance to pray for decaying and changing things that pass away sooner or later. All forms are changing, from a tiny blade of grass to the biggest planet. Thou art the only Eternal Truth in this world of all changes; hence I want Thee alone.

O Indweller of my heart! This body is Thy temple. Help me to purify it so that it will be a proper place for thy dwelling. I need only self-purification for the manifestation of Thy full Glory.

Pray, purify my senses, mind, heart, intellect, and the ego, the little self. Let them recognise nothing but Thee in the world of activity. Let them dissolve in Thee, in the world of silence.

O Father! Give me the understanding that Thou art inseparable one with me whether I am in rest or activity. There is never a moment of time when I am separate from Thee. Let me realise now, that my strength and life are only in the recognition of my oneness with Thee.

As I am eternally one with Thee, let me manifest Thy Presence and Glory in all the activities of my life. If I am walking, it is Thou. If I am speaking, it is Thou. If I am expressing, it is Thou. If I am silent, it is Thou, for Thou art my all in all.

GLORY! GLORY! GLORY!

Ah! Words do not come. Speech is ended. Mind is calm and waveless. I am now in Thy loving presence and sweet embrace, filled with Thy love and surrounded by Thy splendour. O! I am floating in Thee now. I am formless and nameless in Thy light.

O Lord! I cannot praise Thee with my words, neither can I please Thee with my thoughts. Pray accept my mind, heart, intellect and soul. I belong to Thee. Verily, Thou and I are not two but One alone. All homage be unto Thee--Oh Universal Energy, Thou who art manifesting in all the various aspects.

O Divine Effulgence! Help me to live, breathe and work with every heart beat, recognising always within and without this sacred unity of Thy interpenetrating presence of Divine Splendour, wherein there is neither seeking nor searching.

O All-pervading Truth! Let me not confine Thee to form or name, to time or place, whether I am in temple, home alone or in a crowd. Let me feel thy presence and manifest Thy Glory in thought, word and deed, in the waking, dreaming, sleeping and other higher states of consciousness.

Above all, may I realise now the peace that passeth all understanding as I dissolve in my life, goal and Divine Heritage.

MY PEACE BE UNTO ALL! AMEN.

OM! OM! OM!

Dear Reader! This is not a prayer for mere repetition with the lips. It is intended to be consecrated with unity to the Indweller of your heart.

This is a connecting link that unites the individual with the universal, and it is a prayer of self-purification for your self-assertion, self-manifestation and self-realisation.

As you repeat the first paragraph just feel that God is in your heart, mind, breath, life and soul. Pause at the words *Thou art pervading and permeating*. Let them sink into the depths of your very being.

Thou art Present in each and every cell of my body. Can you feel His Presence in your very cells as you repeat the words? Feel, feel, feel!

As you repeat, *Thou art within, without, above, below*, stop for a moment. Lift your eyes and behold Him on every side and everywhere.

As you enter into His presence do not search or beg for glass beads. Seek the pearls of peace and diamonds of Glory. Always seek the imperishable and everlasting truth.

Do not discard this prayer thinking that it is not demonstrating prosperity and material success. Just know the truth and all these things will be added unto you.

When you come to the words, *this body is Thy temple*, try to enter into the depths of your heart forgetting the outer sheath. Lay aside this physical form for the time being. Realise your unity with the presence in the temple. Know that you are in His Presence, nay, you are the presence alone, if you can only still this restless mind!

Be still and know that I am God. You are now a perfect image of God, since you passed through the fiery process of self-purification.

There is never a moment of time when I am separate from Thee. You are never separate from Him, whether you are conscious of His presence or not. As the wave is never separate from the ocean, even for a single moment, so also you too are never separate from truth. You are inseparably one with God.

Feel this indivisible oneness, not with mind and intellect alone, but with heart and soul. Until you feel this great unity, lay aside this prayer. Take your own time, avoid worry and hurry. Merge within the depths of your soul.

If I am walking, it is Thou. When you walk, with every step try to feel His Presence. When you speak, try express His Glory in every word. When you think, try to manifest Him with every thought. It is not yet too late. Arise and awake to find that God is always with you and in you.

Thou art flowing in my very breath. Can you feel, nay, are you feeling His Presence in your breath? Pray! Feel, Feel, Feel!

I am floating in Thee. Are you really floating in God? O Beloved One! Whoever you may be, wherever you may be, feel that you are surrounded by His presence, saturated by His love. Hence, you are floating in Him.

O Glory! What else is there to be said?

PEACE! PEACE! PEACE!

Loving Reader! Keep floating in Him. Continue living in the same inseparable oneness. You are in the Finished kingdom, shining as a purified, perfect image of God.

For the wise, one word is enough. If you are a sincere seeker of Truth craving for God, knowing that super consciousness is your life, goal and divine heritage, this one

prayer is enough for your peace and freedom. This leads you directly to self realisation and recognition of your Birthright.

Kindly close your eyes now. Forget the outer, merge within. Make the mind one pointed, dissolve in the sun of suns, in the light of lights, and thus taste the peace that passeth all understanding.

May this prayer lift your vision to open your inner eye, strengthen your mind, broaden your heart, inspire your soul and thus lead you to self-reliance and self-mastery. He is making you whole and complete in the name of God or truth, He is no other than your own Higher Self. It is in Him that we work, breathe and live as one without a second. This is the prayer of your own brother Omkar!

REPLY

Aug. 1931

Beloved Sisters and Brothers,

It is needless for me to say how happy I feel to be among you once again, in this Abode of Peace. I cannot find language adequate to express my hearty gratitude for your welcome of such warmth and devotion!

These welcomes and other outer expressions of love are only passing events of the day and surely they will pass off like the passing clouds. But there is always something which neither passes off nor diminishes, and our lives are not worth living if we fail to recognise 'That'. 'That' is the Living Presence, the only Reality, the aim of human birth and the goal of our lives.

We are everything in unity with Truth and mere nothings if separated from Truth. Hence, to make the events of this day complete and these welcomes worth while, let us have conscious contact with that Indwelling Presence in our hearts. Whatever be the attitude of some of you who visit this Abode of Peace this evening, I request you all who have gathered here to feel the Presence of God as you sit here. If you can feel 'It' now, you can feel the same always. Before we proceed further, let us close our eyes for a minute and try to bathe in and saturate ourselves with that Presence. OM! OM! OM!

As for my activities in America, there is not much to be said in words. As you know, my ideal has been always to *live in God and help others to live in HIM*. In my own humble way, I tried to live in Him even there, sharing what I have with others.

If there is any good service, rendered by me to any of our American sisters and brothers, the Glory belongs to God, and if there are any short-comings, they are mine. After all, we are God's instruments or temples and it is He that works through us. So all praise and honour belong to Him.

You have made mention in your address, of my fall on ice, resulting in the fracture of a hip-bone. If I have ever received blessings in my life, this fall on ice and the consequent rest in bed, have proved the greatest blessing, maybe in disguise.

Dear friends, for me there is only one kind of pain, i.e. the pain of separation from God or Truth. What can be more pathetic and painful than to forget the Presence which is our life and soul! Verily, forgetfulness of God alone is pain, most death-like. We can bear silently all kinds of passing pains, that come and go like moving clouds, but not the pain of veiling the living Truth, the illumination of the Sun of suns.

Hence I have nothing to grumble or murmur for. On the other hand, I have every reason to show my gratitude for the incessant rain of blessings from the Almighty. It is the accident of my fall on ice and the devotion and love of my American brothers and Sisters.

As to my physical comforts, a maharajah or even an emperor could not have been more comfortable, restful, contented and well provided for, than myself during the whole of my stay in America.

My heartfelt gratitude flows ceaselessly to that saintly and noble soul Mrs. Jean D. Lilley (Sri Shanti Devi) who has been the life and strength of our New York Centre, for all the tender care she has taken of me. I hope you join with me and sing now the sacred syllable OM, in expression of our deep gratitude to Sri Shanti Devi and also to all the others who contributed towards the well-being of my person and our silent work, both in India and America.

OM OM OM !

Sister Sushila Devi (Miss St. Claire Nowald) is a beautiful and loving soul, full of devotion and earnestness and with a great craving to taste the highest state of Samadhi or Peace. Her universal ideals, her interest in oriental philosophy, her admiration for Hindu life, love of simplicity and asceticism, her compassion towards dumb creatures and her love of silence and solitude, all make us feel that she is more an oriental than an occidental. By the Blessings of the Almighty and through your co-operation and love, may she speedily realise her heart's ideal, is my prayer.

What have I taught America? I feel I have received more than I have given. Through my experience of years there, I realise now more firmly the worthlessness and vanity of words and the strength and Glory of silence. I wish to speak as little as possible and to be silent as much as I can. I am a believer and worshipper of Silence. Hence I desire now to serve you all the remaining years, no more with words but much more by silence. Thoughts are absent and there reigns the splendour of Peace, power and poise.

My adorations be unto that supreme silence! I desire you to be worshippers of that supreme silence and rely on your inner self, knowing that self-reliance alone is the beginning of religion. That God, whom you are seeking and searching for, is ever waiting in your own hearts. The time and place are here and now for the realisation of God's Presence or Light, through self-reliance.

Often and often, I repeated in my classes in America the beautiful saying *If you use what you have, what you have will grow*. What is the use of reading countless books and listening to numberless lectures, receiving varied initiations and roaming restlessly from place to place, without using what we have? All these bring nothing but prove a burden to the intellect and cause weariness to the body.

The Presence of Light is always with us, nay, within us. In the moments of stillness, that Presence alone shines and we realise that we are none other than that Presence. So, let us try to be conscious of that Presence in our outward activities as well.

Let us try to feel our inseparable and indivisible oneness with the living Truth, on this day of your loving welcome! May we never forget or neglect this unity and Truth, in all the duties of our lives, is the unceasing prayer of your brother OMKAR.

OM TAT SAT OM

SAVIOUR

Oct. 1931, 1932

One who saves himself is also a saviour Yet there are many who find fault, saying, that one who saves himself cannot be a saviour for it is selfishness and only one who Saves humanity is a true saviour.

However, the question comes naturally, how one could save others without saving himself. A blind man can never lead the blind. One who cannot swim himself, cannot save others from drowning.

One who saves himself or realises God, is doing the greatest good to himself, others and to the world at large, through his very silent life of Universal Love.

What is the use of gaining the whole world and losing one's own precious soul? Like fish foundering on dry land, there are many who are trying to save lost souls, restlessly suffering themselves from lack of the waters of life.

One of my friends was remarking this evening that there are too many saviours now in the world. I replied smilingly that the world needs more saviours.

So, for the universal peace and for the common welfare of humanity, the world need multitudes of saviours. What a happy world it would be if every one became a saviour not for others but for himself.

It is very easy to teach others. Hence, we find teachers and gurus everywhere. However, it is very difficult to teach to one's self hence we find very few who are self disciplined, engaging themselves in Self-realisation.

Every one wants to be a saviour without paying the crucifixion of ego or the destruction of selfishness. Yet, it must be paid, willingly and cheerfully, to be a saviour of himself and others.

A true saviour is free from the fever of saving the world. He is busily engaged in purifying himself. He has no time to reform others. One who reforms himself is a great reformer. One who lives a silent and ideal life is a blessing to the world.

If we believe in the living truth that God is Omnipresent, it is high time for all of us to wake up from our sweet slumbers, to assert our Saviour-ship or God-head.

None of us desire to remain as bond slaves. Yet, if we analyse our lives we must admit the truth that we are slaves, to some saviour or the other. We are burying the living God or saviour in ourselves.

How long shall we bury the living truth of our loving Divinity? How long shall we live like sheep, being lions? How long are we to act like inert mummies, being living images of God?

Oh sleeping saviours! Wake up from your lethargy and shake off your weakness. Assert and manifest your Divine Heritage. Come out of the night of your ignorance into the broad daylight of knowledge. Know Thyself. Thou art that. Thou art Divinity. Thou art no other than the saviour, the light of the world.

In a world of equality where God is Omnipresent, one man alone cannot be the saviour and the rest of them ignorant slaves. We are all heirs of immortality. No one should hide his light in darkness.

When the Almighty God is pervading and permeating everything from the tiniest atom to the highest planet, when He is the Indweller of every heart, is it not strange how a few can be called saviours and others sinners?

I do not mean to say there are no saviours, and that the conception of an avatar is a myth or story. Christ, Krishna and Buddha have been the greatest saviours of humanity, setting examples for the wide world to follow in their foot-steps.

But if we study, analyse and assimilate their teachings, the essence of them in one sentence is, 'Be Thy own saviour' save thyself or know thyself. When you know yourself, you are realising the goal of life.

Christ or Krishna never asked us to remain as slaves or mummies. On the other hand, they asked us to be the living divinities, asserting and manifesting our God-consciousness.

Physician, heal thyself. Oh teacher! First teach thyself. Oh saviour! Save thyself and thus be a saviour.

O Living Divinities on earth! Children of one loving father, I call out with all the strength of my voice, from the Abode of Peace, to assert your God-head. Do not sell Christ. Do not bury the shining Truth. Shake off your bonds and fetters. Dispel your clouds of ignorance. Expel darkness and weakness. Give up your delusions and illusions. Rise above forms and names. Give a death blow to vain personality.

However nothing is lost. All is well. You are the living truth. Not only are you the saviour of yourself but of suffering humanity. Recognise no more your weakness but assert your strength. No more darkness but light, no more selfishness, above all no more perishable mortality but imperishable state of immortality.

What can I say or write, to make you feel and realise your Divine Birthright? I long to awaken you from your deep slumbers and long dreams of *mine and thine*, into the full Glory of unity and blessedness.

Here is my heart. Here are my hands out stretched to take you into the fold of love that expects no reward. Here is your Abode of Peace to help you to realise your Godhead or saviourship, in solitude, wherein you can be alone with God.

The potentiality of the saviour is within you. Look at the gigantic oak tree in the acorn. Look at the Banyan tree hidden in its tiny seed. Look at the mighty Christ in baby Jesus. Look at the Divine Krishna in the mischievous cow-herd boy of Brindavan. Look at the mighty and compassionate Buddha in the frail body of Siddhartha.

All power is within yourself, only waiting to be manifested. Have the strength to say, "I am my own saviour." Remember that thought is another word for fate. If you think that you are a sinner, you are a sinner. If you think of yourself as a saviour, you are a saviour. There are no other alternatives. Do you want to choose now either to be a saviour or a sinner? Pray! Choose. This is the place and now is the time.

Oh Living saviour in the form of my eyes! As you read these lines, feel His light and presence, from top to toe, in each and every cell of your being.

Verily, you are the salt of the earth, and light of the world, for there is but one truth and that truth or Reality is yourself.

O Saviour of saviours ! I bow down my head in deep adoration before thy Glory in mute silence and ecstasy, to be filled and saturated by thy Presence and Light.

May all homage be unto Thee, Oh Blessed Saviour in the form of my beloved reader!

OM TAT SAT

SILENCE

Aug. 1931

In the beginning was the 'word' and before the 'word' was silence. Silence is the beginning, middle and end. It is our life and soul. It is our goal and source of existence.

There was silence in the beginning and there will be silence in the end.

However, where is silence in the middle? Where is it now? Are we experiencing Silence in our thoughts, words and deeds?

Are we striving for that silence? Are we at least aware that Silence is our God? Yes, in the highest aspect, God is Supreme Silence.

Coming to our practical lives from dawn to dark, we talk and talk. We are satisfied with words. If there is nothing to talk of, we begin torturing ourselves with endless thoughts. Words lead us into strife; silence leads us unto understanding and Peace. Hence, there is no wonder there is so much worry and hurry, agony and misery everywhere. For, there is lack of Silence. Truth is neglected and Silence is ignored. Words are encouraged and thoughts are increased and multiplied.

The present state of our lives can be compared to huge logs of timber that are slowly eaten away by white ants or worms. Outwardly they look strong and sturdy but inwardly, they are rotten, quite unfit for any kind of use.

In a similar way, those that are not masters of their minds and who ignore silence, engaging themselves always in empty talk, and indulge in vain imagination shall know their lives are hollow. Their very vitality is sapped by continuous brooding and vain talks, even if such talks or discussions are in the name of religion and God.

The only real talk about God is Silence, waveless Peace. Silence does not mean to close our lips and eyes, while we allow the mind to think of all vicious things as we do harm and hurt the feelings of others, even through thought.

Silence cannot see any evil or duality within or without, in oneself or in others. It recognises only Peace, Beauty, Harmony, Unity and Glory everywhere, but never jealousy, bitterness, hatred or separation.

Any fool can talk, but only a sage can be silent rising above senses, mind, intellect and personal self. All Peace, Power and Poise belong only to those great souls that are silent.

This is a common question raised by many: How are we to be silent when we are in company, when we entertain our talkative friends and our relations?

The answer is simple. Let them do the talking and you can do the listening, keeping your centre within. Remain always the Witness. Be the Subject but never the object that ever changes.

When they have nothing more to talk about, they get exhausted and then they try to follow your example and slowly become silent. Thus you are surely helping others by your silence.

There is another advantage also, not only you can remain strong and poised by your silence but you will be able to know the worth of the talkers, by the stuff they give out in their words.

Be the Witness like the self-shining sun. It shines on one and all, on every object, yet it is untouched by the blemishes of the objects it shines upon.

Another illustration: Be the Witness, only as a Spectator in a show or play, without entangling yourself with the false feelings or outward conditions of the players. Above all, as Truth or Spirit you are always the Subject, the one witness of the manifested world.

It pays to be silent. Those who are silent reap the richest reward, not in the uncertain future alone but in the living present, for they are filled with Light, Life and Love.

Very often we hear mournful cries from people who are slaves to the talking habit, "I wish that I were silent! I wish that I did not speak those awful words, but held my tongue in control."

Repentance often comes when it is too late. Even if it comes at a late hour, it can be very helpful and useful provided we make use of it in our further conduct.

After all, we are not talking machines to talk and talk and thus waste our own as well as other's time. Neither are we merely thinking machines, to kill ourselves only with gloomy and negative thoughts. Strength and Glory belong only to those who have risen above words and thoughts. Peace that passeth all understanding can be tasted only by the lovers of Silence and by no one else.

Silence is deep, intense and all embracing. If there is a power or unity anywhere in the world, it is only in Silence. It is to be understood not by words and writings, but by entering into the waveless, fathomless Supreme Silence.

Dear Reader, I do not want to waste any more of your time or my time, in writing any further on Silence. I long to give you or to share with you a glimpse of that Silence. However, you must taste it for yourself, entering into deeper depths of your consciousness, and allowing the little "I" to dissolve in the Glory of that inexpressible silence. It is your birthright, strive for It, live and breathe for It. You will surely realise and manifest that Eternal Peace or Sacred Silence, for It is inseparably one with you.

Coming to the practical side, have you ever watched the space between one thought and another? It is rather subtle. It needs a master mind to be aware of that interval or space or silence, between one thought and another.

Now merge within and watch your mind and thoughts. See where one thought ends. Take up that end and follow the space or silence, without allowing any more thoughts to come near you. This is not so easy as it appears to be, but try again and again until you succeed. Carry that continuous thread of consciousness into Infinity!

Beware of the broken thoughts and wandering imaginations. Cement them with the connecting link of continuity. A continuous and unceasing flow of consciousness is the secret of all success. Hence, hold on firmly to this never ending thread of unceasing flow.

All things are possible for those who are willing to pay the price. If the price of selflessness is ready completely rising above all brooding and empty words, here is the treasure of your search, the Blessed Silence which is the source of the manifested world.

May we allow now these finite words and thoughts to dissolve in that Infinite Silence to realise its full Glory in all stillness and sacredness.

May we consciously recognise now, that the very cells in our beings are permeated by the blessedness of Silence.

May nothing but this Effulgent Light of silence flow from us, in floods and streams towards the whole of humanity, is the constant prayer of one who loves you in Silence!

OM! OM! OM!

THE INNER VOICE

Nov. 1929

Hush, hush! Hear the soul's inner voice! Dear beloved, so long as you are busy with the outer things, you can never hear the inner voice.

Dear one, are you not tired of these outer things? Will you not try to hear the inner voice? Do you want to hear the inner voice with all the heart and strength? If so, pray do come and stay with me for a while. Make the body comfortable and steady. Think no more of plans and duties.

Pray do sit for awhile calmly, to hear the inner voice. By hearing this inner voice alone, the heart's thirst will be quenched. However, it will never be quenched by running hither and thither with feverish haste after shadows and hob-goblins.

The inner voice is ever ready to commune with Thee. Yet, it is a pity that thou art not responding to the voice that is within, instead ever busying yourselves with the various voices of the world.

O dear tiny senses, pray draw your activities within, even for the time being! Oh dear mind of mine, pray stop the worthless wanderings even for a while and hear the soul's inner voice. Oh dear mighty intellect, merge within even for a second, to hear the soul's inner voice. Oh little ego, pray dissolve thyself in the own inner consciousness, to hear the inner voice.

When every sound is hushed and everything is dissolved, there speaks the soul's inner voice, in all its Divine Glory, in the depths of the innermost recesses of the omnipresent self. Oh dear one, merge more and more within Thee, to hear the soul's inner voice, for this alone is thy own dear Divine birthright.

Hush, hush! Hear the soul's inner voice, hearing which one rises above birth and death. May all be blessed with the inaudible and inexpressible voice of Divine self!

THE MESSAGE OF THE HILLS

Feb. 1931, ~~1931~~

I am in the hills enjoying the companionship of my brothers, the huge mountains. In the early hours on a certain day, I climbed a hill just to write the message of the hills.

Sitting on a solitary rock of gigantic dimensions, I began to look all around into the soul of mountains and waited in stillness to receive their message.

Some may say:- "How can the hills speak, do they have a message?" Yes, they speak to those who have ears to hear; their message may be more strong and sublime than yours and mine.

Look at these solitary rocks, the lovely hills and the beautiful mountain ranges! Who can be so heartless as not to be touched or moved by their majesty and grandeur?

Behold! They breathe peace and poise. They uplift and inspire the lovers of nature. They are the source of inspiration to all great souls.

The hills have been the friends of seekers of Truth and of all the sages of East and West and saviours of humanity. John the Baptist lived in the wilderness. Christ sought the mountains for his silent communion and many times retired into the hills to spend nights and days in prayer.

Krishna, the Divine cowherd was allowing his cows to graze on the hills of Govardhan and Brindavan.

Buddha was in the wilderness meditating under the cool shade of the Bodhi tree. It was there the Blessed One received his inspiration and illumination. Thus, the hills have been the source of inspiration and strength to many a saint and saviour in both the East and West, from the beginning of creation.

Dear friends! Will you come with me for a little while? Kindly follow me towards the sacred Himalaya mountains. Behold their beauty and Glory. Is there anyone that can be so deaf and blind as not to receive their living message of beauty, strength and firmness?

There is Mt. Everest standing as the highest peak of all the ranges of mountains, in the whole world of manifestation.

Mt. Everest is asking you to come forward looking higher, rising above all tests and trials, never looking back on the dead past. It is asking you to awake, arise and not to stop until you reach the highest pinnacle of realisation of Truth. What else can you expect from the hills? Assimilate their message and stand by them.

To understand the message of the hills or rocks, you must become a rock. You can never understand their message with your excitement and restlessness. If you want to understand the heart of the hills, purify your heart and go to them in the attitude of a child.

Do not go there only to have a good time and to enjoy picnics with dance with outer music. Leave behind your radio and victrola. Mountains have their own music and victrola. Mountains have their own music and rhythm. Do not disturb them with your jazz.

Compose yourself. Sit still. Try to listen to the still small voice. Recognise the Presence all around. Attune yourself with nature. Through the stillness of your heart, try to commune with the soul of the hills.

You will be surprised to know that the heart of the mountains is throbbing in your heart and their soul singing in your soul.

Once I was lying on the bosom of a rock. I was a rock among the rocks. I became so formless and nameless. We lost ourselves in the one presence.

I was no more on the top or surface of the rock but in the heart and soul of that huge rock. In that state of atonement with the rock, I asked for its message.

It replied in its mighty voice, "Little Brother! Our message is the message of strength, steadiness and firmness. Have you not heard the common saying *Be firm as a rock?*"

Assimilate this immovable firmness. Be firmly rooted in truth. Let nothing shake you from your firmness. Be the same whether it rains or shines. The trails of storms and gales can never touch your heart if you stand on your own feet, keeping the centre within your self. Self-reliance is the watch word. Let your strength be within your self. Do not seek it outside of you.

Manifest your strength standing on your own firmness. Remember that old proverb, *If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed will go the mountain.*

If you stand on your own strength, rooted in your firmness and without yielding in the least to the life of senses, the Mohammed will come to you. The Truth will come to you. The whole world will be at your feet.

However, if the Mohammed yields to weakness or ignorance, there is no salvation either in earth or heaven.

Hence, be firm, strong, sturdy and immovable. Listen to the other aspects of the message: "Behold on my back, how I am carrying heavy loads of immense forests. The animate and inanimate, even bird and animal kingdoms find repose in me. I bear and carry them all with a smile in my heart and never grumbling or murmuring. What are these little burdens to me, when I am the immovable rock of ages?"

Therefore, let your foundation be built on the unshakeable rock of firmness, but never on the shifting sands of fickleness and change. God is sleeping in us. He is resting in the rocks. Let Him wake up and manifest His full Glory of higher consciousness in the human kingdom.

May thou, as God's image, be the Rock of Ages for the whole of humanity. Be the abiding strength and support to lead the seekers of Truth to the Throne of Glory.

Listening to the sacred message of the mighty hills, I rose up in ecstasy filled with power and poise; feeling strength and firmness in each and every cell of my being, glorifying the hills all around with my silent worship.

Unshakeable strength is the message of the rocks,
Immovable firmness is the message of the hills,
Invincible power is the message of the blue mountains.

O, ye sad and depressed! Come into the hills with all your woes and sorrows to be refreshed and to get your burdens lightened. Pray! When you come, do come alone, to be alone with God. Unburden your worries and cares in the hills. They understand you. Go to them whenever you need real rest. Try it as an experiment and be alone with God in the hills, even if only for a day or even for a single hour or two. You will be astonished and benefited also, by the wonderful results.

The hills are calling you, draw closer to them. They have enough of strength to give to you. Re-member that our Lord Christ sought the solitude of the mountains, to feel his oneness or contact with the Almighty.

The hills are the open doors to lead you into the Presence of God. The doors are open now and it is with you whether you want to refill yourself with peace, power and poise or continue to lead a life of misery and agony with feverish restlessness.

Dear friends! As a friend of the hills, I send forth this loving invitation to all of you on behalf of the hills. Accept the silent greeting of the hills and thus make your lives more strong and noble, ever centring yourselves on the rock of Eternal Truth.

The Abiding Presence of our hearts is the One who is throbbing in the heart of rock, tree, bird, beast and man, as the Universal Heart-beat. May He bless His children with Peace that passeth all understanding, through the assimilation of infinite strength and invincible power from the Hill of Peace. This is the prayer of your own brother Omkar!

THE MOVING POWER OF SACRIFICE

Nov. 1929, ~~1929~~

(A SERMON BY SWAMI OMKAR IN AMERICA)

For, we were yet without strength. In due time, Christ died for the ungodly. Romans 5:6

A loving Mother is a continuous and unceasing sacrifice for her children and family. She is not even conscious that she is sacrificing, for she considers and feels the other members of her family are a part and parcel of her own life. Her life is not confined to her particular body or form but included in the lives of those who are dear and near to her. Hence, with great joy she forgoes her little comforts for the sake of their happiness. Verily she has identified herself with the lives of her dear ones, therefore she finds joy in their joy, health in their health and peace in their Peace.

Sacrifice is the outcome of love. We cannot expect any sacrifice where love is absent. A Mother sacrifices her life because of her love for her children. A friend sacrifices his interests because of his love for his friend. A teacher sacrifices his time and energy because of his love for his pupils. A devotee sacrifices his personal life because of his great love for God. In a similar manner, it is needless to say that it was Christ's infinite love for humanity that caused him to offer himself as a willing sacrifice, in order that he might set an example for all of us to follow in his sacred footsteps.

As Mother considers her family as her own home, so our Lord considered the wide world as his family or home and gave his life a ransom so that we might be saved through his sacrifice. When everything fails, it is generally the sacrifice of a friend that awakens a man from his ignorant sleep and gives him the needed stimulus. It is the sacrifice of a dear one that softens the hard hearts and changes sinners into saints, giving fresh life and strength. We are servants of those who are showing sacrifice for our welfare. It is always sacrifice that keeps anyone under a deep debt of gratitude.

The moving power of sacrifice cannot be expressed or described in words. It changes the hearts of men, the lives of individuals, and even the destinies of nations. The power of matter, even such as the elements of fire, air, etc., is dead, insentient and mechanical but ah! The power of sacrifice is not only moving, it is living. It is full of energy, life and blessedness.

The whole of the Christian religion stands on the living sacrifice of our BELOVED LORD CHRIST. Had it not been for his great, unparalleled sacrifice, the world would not have been where it is now. We are sustained by the great sacrifice of our Lord. It is through our Lord's sacrifice that we receive the atonement.

The children that cannot recognise the sacrifice of their mothers must be very cruel and hardhearted. Similarly, those who are not able to appreciate or recognise the infinite sacrifice of our Lord Christ must be people who are devoid of feelings or hearts.

It is not enough to say that Christ died for us. It is not enough to read about his sacrifice in the Holy Bible. We must believe in his sacrifice not only intellectually but also with heart and soul. Our belief should not be in mere verbal assent but in the change of our hearts and lives. A life of selfishness is a living denial of our Lord's death for us. A life of selflessness is a living proof or example of the belief in Christ's sacrifice for us.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

He was born for us, he lived for us, he is our mercy seat, he is our life and soul. He is our shepherd, our way and goal.

Verily, he bore our sins and died for us. Since he died for us what are we to do? We are to live and die for him. As true followers of Christ, we must learn to die in our selfish lives to be worthy of him. *Be dead that we may live*, is a noble precept. Verily whosoever's life is lost in Christ's name shall gain eternal life.

We need not be discouraged and disheartened with the tests and trials of human life. We should remember St. Paul's words. We Glory in tribulation also remembering that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience and experience hope. Hope maketh not shame because the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost, which is given unto us.

Verily Christ's living power of sacrifice alone is the life and resurrection for the whole of Humanity. One who keeps our Lord's sacrifice as the ideal and goal of his life, fails not to inherit eternal life.

We need freedom, not in the uncertain future but in the living present alone. We must strive for liberation while in life, but not after death. When we cannot know Him now, how can we know Him in death or after death? The only way to obtain salvation or freedom is to sacrifice ourselves in serving the Lord in cold and hunger. We have to recognise Him in each and every form, irrespective of the outer differences of caste, creed colour and nationality. *Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me!* These are the simple words of our Lord.

So, let us rouse ourselves from our deep slumbers, gird our loins, bid adieu to our lethargy and lukewarmness and strive to worship our loving Lord Christ with the moving power of sacrifice, which is the living fire of Cosmic consciousness.

May Glory be unto God and may His Peace and Sacrifice ever abide in our Hearts!

AMEN!

THREE PRICELESS GIFTS

May, 1931, 72-13

It is said by men of wisdom that three things are rare in this world. One who is blessed with these three gifts can call himself the most fortunate being on the face of the earth. Let us see what they are.

The first is the human birth. You may say: what fortune is there in human birth? There are millions of human beings every where on the face of the earth. Every corner is filled with men and women.

But dear devoted ones, you are judging this point from one side only, never going deep into the inner laws of God from your present state of human consciousness. Will you not ponder a little more deeply? What do you think of the animal kingdom? What have you to say of millions and millions of flies, moths and reptiles? For instance do you wish to be born in the body of a reptile? Are you ready to exchange thy present body, human body for the body of a worm that is ever satisfied grovelling in a putrefied sore?

When compared with these unfortunate creatures are you not fortunate in being blessed with a human body and also with intelligence, for realising thy oneness with the Almighty God? Pray use not your intelligence in robbing others, in cunning and in deceiving the all-pervading Lord. Use it in realising Him, facing Him in one and all, then alone you can be proud of your human birth. Thus alone you can call yourself a human being.

So far we have spoken about the first gift, the precious birth in a Human Body. A man should not be proud just because of his human birth. He must be proud only when he is filled with a burning desire for realising God, for this is the second gift for attaining the highest state of consciousness. One should not think that he is blessed with the second gift, namely, a desire for reaching God just because he attends church on certain days and pays the church fees regularly.

Burning desire for God has a deeper meaning than it appears to the mere eyes. One who is filled with an earnest desire for God must be filled and refilled with nothing but God consciousness from top toe. In his great desire for God, he forgets everything else. Such a one works only for God. He even drinks and eats only for God. He forgets everything else. If it is not for God, for what is this eating and drinking? His every moment is dedicated unto the service of the Almighty. Such a devoted soul will be ready to lay aside even his body for the sake of God, willingly and cheerfully.

When one is blessed with such a burning desire for God consciousness, for what else has he to wish or desire? In desiring God he is desiring nothing else. His desires are complete in God. It is the force or strength of this burning desire alone that takes one into the very presence of the Divine Lord. As a consequence of this holy desire, he will be blessed with the third gift. One gift is followed by another without even the necessity of desiring. Such are the blessings that attend a sincere soul.

Now comes the third gift that takes one unto the Almighty presence. It is the company of Holy men, divine sages and saints who have realised their oneness with God.

This is not such an easy thing as many suppose. Not every one is blessed with the company of Holy saints. This is a rare privilege.

Some moments company in the presence of a holy sage makes us to cross the world, Samsara, or the sea of the world with the blessing of wisdom. A single blessing from a Holy saint washes away the sins of ages. Verily it is the company that makes one to realise and become one with God, or that makes him to fall from the human state into the pitiable state of degeneration. One who is blessed with spiritual company attains any thing and every thing.

As such, one must be very careful in choosing companions. By mixing with the people of worldly ambition even spiritual souls get themselves contaminated with sensuality, such are the powerful effects of company, be it good or bad. A man of the world, even unwilling or due to certain reasons of necessity, when he happens to mix with sages he is bound to rise from his lower life to higher states of consciousness.

As such one who is blessed with these three gifts, namely, the Human Birth, a Burning Desire for the Realisation of God and the Company of Holy Saints, has nothing else to wish for in this world of changing phenomena. He is a living God, ever bathing himself in Glory, which follows one after the other.

The first gift comes by a rare privilege on account of his past good karma. (Karma is that which is being done. All that we do is Karma) The second is the sequence of the first gift and the third is of the second gift.

A beast is not expected to be possessed with a burning desire to realise God with the help of the company of holy men. A man alone, the human being alone is given such a rare privilege of attaining to the highest state of consciousness. Having such a rare privilege, are they not pitiable atoms who neglect and forget the living God, never caring for Truth? Such pitiable souls are not to be called human beings at all. They are human beings only in name and form but never in nature or self; they deserve to be called animal beings or two legged beasts.

As such, everyone who is blessed with a human birth must work and live only to attain the goal of human life. We can well say the Human Birth is the first state, the Burning Desire for God is the second state and the Company of Spiritual Souls is the third state. One thing leads to the other. First to the second and second to the third, and the third to the highest realisation of God-consciousness.

So my Dear Beloved ones, remembering that we are all human beings, may we attain to that highest state of consciousness by our very birth, spending all our time in the company of spiritual Souls!

VIVEKANANDA CELEBRATION

June 1931

A LECTURE DELIVERED IN AMERICA

My own indivisible, eternal and blissful Self in the form of sisters and brothers! As we have met here to celebrate the birthday anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, I love to greet you in the name of that great soul, requesting you to feel his presence and spirit as you sit here.

What are these birthdays intended for, if we cannot feel the spirit of these great ones? Therefore, let us strive to obtain even a glimpse of the Peace and Power of Swami Vivekananda

I am aware of my insignificance before the self-shining splendour of Swami Vivekananda, even to speak of him. However, I have the consolation that the same Spirit that manifested in him is manifesting in me. It is the same Spirit or Truth which is manifesting in all of you—for, Truth or Reality is one without a second. What a great joy it is to realise that the same Spirit or Truth which is expressing through me, is listening in you!

Peace that passeth all understanding belongs only to those who recognise Unity in Diversity, and the changeless Truth in the changing phenomena.

It is not enough to say that Swami Vivekananda was a great soul and that he was a saviour of humanity, or that he did this and that. It is not every one that repeats, "Lord, Lord" that enters into the kingdom of heaven, but those that do the will of the Father. He expects from us who are his followers and devotees, more than mere words. He expects from his admirers and friends that his message should be lived and spread near and far.

What is Swami Vivekananda's message? In one short sentence, the essence of his message can be summed up in the following words, *Let the Lion of Vedanta Roar*. He himself was called by many souls by the name of "Vedanta Kesari", the Lion of Vedanta.

What is Vedanta? The literal meaning of the word Vedanta is the end of Knowledge. What is the end of knowledge? It is not merely to memorise texts from the scriptures, and to give dead quotations of departed saints and sages. It is more than that. Vedanta is the conscious realisation of Christ consciousness or super-consciousness. These are rather big words and easy to repeat, but difficult to realise. Whether we can realise or not, that is the ideal.

Oh, I wish that I could make you understand what that Vedanta, the end of all knowledge is! In the first place, it is beginningless and endless, for it is Truth. It is the same yesterday, today and tomorrow. It is the same in the waking, dreaming and sleeping states of consciousness. Nay, it is above all these things. It is above time, space and causation.

These are nothing but words. To understand Vedanta we must forget all these big weary names and forms. We are no longer these physical sheaths, these gross bodies. We are the formless Spirit, the nameless Truth.

Just to feel that Glory not here alone when celebrating birthdays, but in each and every moment of our lives, expressing it in our own very thoughts, word and deeds, is practical Vedanta.

Vedanta is not bound or confined to East or West, to Swamis or Yogis. It is the common birthright, the Divine heritage of every individual on the face of the earth.

Yet, are we feeling It now? If not, why are we not feeling It? What is the cause? Is not Truth or Reality present with us now as much as in the past or future? If we cannot feel the Glory and Presence now, when can we feel? The past is dead and buried, the future is uncertain, this moment alone is ours. Oh, the sacredness and preciousness of the unity with God, in the present living moment! How can I describe it to you?

A Christ is needed to understand a Christ. In the same way, a Vivekananda is needed to understand a Vivekananda. We must all become Vivekananda to understand his great Spirit.

Mere study of books and listening to lectures will not help us to understand the Truth. Living an ideal life, we must realise the great Peace in our stillness through our discrimination, knowledge and meditations. We should strive to spread the message of Vivekananda everywhere. We should make the lion of Vedanta roar. Let it start to roar as you sit here. Let it continue to roar when you reach your homes.

Let Vedanta express itself through you, in all the activities of your lives. Spread it from village to village, town to town and all over the world.

Let charity begin in our homes, nay in our hearts first. May you express it in our homes, let us manifest it in our communities and thus fill and vibrate the whole world with the message of Truth.

Let us always remember that *individual Peace paves the way towards universal Peace*. Hence, if we want to work for Peace in the world, let our first and foremost duty be to establish peace in our own hearts.

Beloved ones! If I am asked to give out the essence of the whole life and teachings of Vivekananda in one word, I will say unhesitatingly **self-reliance**. This has been the message of all the sages and saviours. This alone is the essence of all religions. Self-reliance: no more reliance on names and forms. No more reliance on temples and churches. No more reliance on outer teachers and masters. Reliance on the Universal Self, reliance on the living Truth, which is the only reality, which is throbbing in our hearts is what we need, for our Peace and salvation.

Can you not feel the Presence, the Indwelling Presence which is throbbing in your hearts? My friends, feel, feel, feel! Now alone is the time. Swami Vivekananda's Birthday will not be complete unless and until we determine in all sincerity and stillness to allow the lion of Vedanta roar. So, let us spend a minute in quiet meditation as I chant a sacred verse. Please help me not by aloofness or duality, but by your love and Unity and also by making your minds calm, collected and peaceful.

As those great souls like Vivekananda, Sri Ramakrishna Deva, Rama Tirtha, Sankara, Suka, Janaka and others could not live even for a moment forgetting the Presence, so also let us resolve on this sacred day never to forget or forsake God. Let us live in Him, breath in Him, work in Him and behold Him within, without, above, below and all around.

May the Blessings of Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna Deva abide with all of you, is my unceasing prayer.

The body alone is the Temple of God, the individual alone is the Universal, from eternity to eternity. So destroying all ignorance of duality, let us worship Him no more with words or thoughts but by our universal Love, Infinite Peace the Supreme Silence.

OM SHANTI, SHANTI SHANTI, OM!

As we open our eyes, let us behold Him all around and in each and every one of us- for He is the only reality, manifesting in all of us all Light, Life and Love.

What can we do to put Mahatma Gandhi's Ideals into Practice? Children of God, fellow workers in the Garden of Peace, I bow down my head in a deep adoration for the beautiful thoughts expressed by all the brilliant speakers conveying appreciation towards India and the world at large.

I am standing here now not because I was asked to speak but because my soul is craving to share my thoughts of Peace and Love with all of you.

Friends, have you ever seen a number of fish caught in a net? Such is the present state of many of us. To work for freedom of a nation we must be free ourselves. A blind man is not expected to lead the blind.

We are bound by the fetters of religion, nations forms and names and time and space. How to be free? In the eastern scriptures there has been one question raised again and again. It has been the theme of spiritual life. 'What is the thing by knowing which,

everything is known? What is that by realising which, everything will be realised? What is that manifesting by which everything will be manifested?

Know the Truth and the truth will make you free. Where is the Truth or spiritual consciousness in our practical lives? As you know there are two things, or rather phases to every essential and non-essential. All these debates, discussions, lectures and sermons come under non-essentials.

What about the essential Truth? We need to manifest Truth, Consciousness, not tomorrow or the day after but right now in this moment and at this place, for it is our common heritage. It is not the special privilege of sages or saviours; it is our spiritual birthright. So if we want to help others we must stand on the firm basis of spiritual consciousness that includes all and excludes none.

We repeat often that "thoughts are things". What we think we will become and how true it is that what we are now, is the result of our past thoughts, words and deeds and what we will be, will be determined by our present thoughts, words and deeds. Hence, we should be filled with sacred thoughts of peace and power.

When you are able to do so much work just feeling that you are the physical bodies, just imagine what you would be able to do if you could only identify yourselves with the living Truth! It is not in the sky or heaven but is permeating and pervading your very being. Let us feel it, my friends not in the uncertain future but right in this place and now, for the future is uncertain and the past is buried. This precious moment alone is ours, and can you not feel you united oneness with this living Truth?

Our venerable poet-philosopher Tagore was explaining in one of his lectures that the source of his inspiration for all his poems was silence and solitude. Where is silence and solitude in our lives my friends? Can you not spend five minutes out of twenty-four hours in the morning and five minutes in the evening to be face to face with God or Truth, and thus consciously manifest His Glory in your daily lives?

It is very easy to talk and speak, but to be still, that needs more than words. *Be still and know that I am God.* It is only in stillness that we realise that we are the Infinite Truth. Friends, what is the secret of Mahatma Gandhi's Power and influence?

It is an open secret. Need I tell you what it is? It is soul-force. Where is soul-force in us? If we want to help Mahatma Gandhi, if we want to help India and the whole of humanity, we need to cultivate and develop this soul force, but not in mere words alone. Always remember that the soul of politics is spirituality. Let one man alone live in God and the whole world can be united through him. Christ lived in God and united the whole world. Mahatma Gandhi is living in God or Truth and uniting the world. Such is the soul force. If we love Gandhi you and I would help him with soul-Power or force.

We need silence, we need stillness to understand and realise the soul. My heart craves to spend even a single moment feeling this great peace and love that includes all and excludes none. Help me to enter into this silence by making your minds calm.

Now let us be silent and feel His Glory.

Now we are in the Presence of God, surrounded by His Glory, above, below, within, without and on every side. We are no longer these forms and names but the Spirit. These bodies are the Temples of God. The one who is in the body is no other than God. The individual alone is universal from eternity to eternity.

So destroying all ignorance that He is separate or away from us, let us worship Him by our universal Love, Infinite Peace and above all by our supreme Silence. May we ever feel and manifest His Presence with each and every heartbeat, with every breath and in all the activities of our lives, and thus share it with the whole of humanity, is my constant prayer.

OM, OM, OM! AMEN!