

OM TAT SAT

A PEEP INTO SAHAJ MARGA

BY
ISHWAR SAHAI

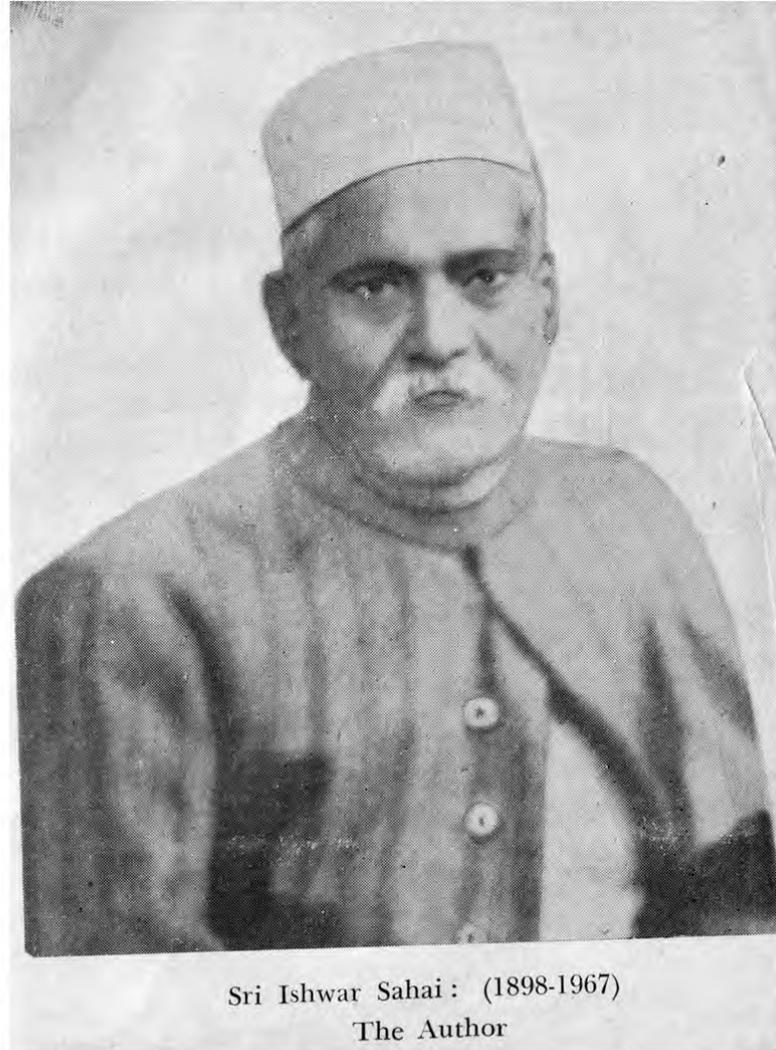
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Shri Ram Chandraj Maharaj of Shahjahanpur (U.P.)
Founder - President, Shri Ram Chandra Mission

‘BABUJI’ ---THE DIVINE MASTER

PUBLISHER'S NOTE



An increasing curiosity towards the Sahaj-Marga has made it necessary to present its principles and technique in greater details. The book is an attempt to meet that demand.

The Sahaj-Marga is a fresh contribution to the age-old six schools of Indian philosophy. It presents a practical course of Yoga easily adjustable in the normal routine of a modern life. As such, it is a great boon to the bewildered humanity held fast in the mire of delusion.

2nd edition

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

We are happy to place before the spiritual aspirants this revised and enlarged edition of "A Peep into Sahaj-Marga".

A word is necessary as a loving homage to the author who is unfortunately no more amidst us having passed away on January 2, 1967. Late Shri Ishwar Sahai Ji was an institution in himself. He was an indefatigable devoted worker of the Mission and was one of its ablest Preceptors who remained contented and happy under all circumstances.

The book is an authentic work on Sahaj-Marga and gives a comprehensive account of the subtleties and depths involved in it. Being closely associated with the Divine Master for a number of years and endowed by Him with rich spiritual experiences, the author has been able to put in simple language what an aspirant would like to be informed of the profundities of the Path. The topics he has selected are of general philosophic interest but the way he has dealt with them is to unmask the intricacies presented by the different philosophic systems.

Basant Panchami,
January 22, 1969.

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PREFACE

It is with the greatest amount of pleasure that I write this preface to one of the most authoritative presentations of the essentials of *Sahaj-Marga*. Sahaj-Marga as a new method of Yoga or communion with God, natural and spontaneous, was discovered by Sri Ramchandra of Fategarh. It is, however, Sri Ramchandra of Shahjahanpur who has perfected this and made it available to seekers after the Ultimate Reality and Freedom (moksha). Sri Ishwar Sahai who is one of the ablest of preceptors of the Mission and closely associated with Sri Ramchandra, has given us the message and insights into this Method of Yoga.

To many, Yoga means only a means or method of attainment of union or connection with God. It is not fully realised that this yoga or union once attained is a siddhi or permanent nature of relationship with God. The doubt is raised because it is usually thought that *samyoga* is a temporary union whereas *samavaya* is a permanent union. However, the goal of the individual soul is permanent union with God and not merely a temporary union or connection. In addition, the union itself has got several stages: the *samipya*—nearness,

sarupya—same form and illumination, *salokya*—same world or plane of being or same vision, and *sayujya*—complete union in which both God and the soul are reciprocally closely united. The goal or *siddhi* of sadhana is the attainment of the ultimate integral reciprocal indissoluble union with God. Some go to the extent of affirming mergence of the soul in God, *laya*.

To some seers these four stages are not all. It is not merely a return to God-union but a return to the Worlds of manifestation of God with God-union securely attained for the purpose of Divine Lila. However, this might be, the goal immediate is the attainment of God-union, the distant goal might be the fulfilment and enjoyment of the Worlds and Mansions of God, both temporal and permanent, in the company, union, of God.

The sadhana of Sahaj-Marga aims at Vision of the Ultimate Reality which is itself an attainment of Union with It. Though the great seers have said that it is necessary and possible to behold this Ultimate Reality which is called Atma or Self (psychologically) or Brahman, (ontologically) the Vast, it is said to be attained by three stages (*)—*srotavyah, mantavyah, nidhidhyasitavyah*, heard, imagined and meditated upon. It is to be seen (*drastavyah*) finally.

(*) Brh. A. Up. II 4.5: Atmavare drastavyah srotavyo mantavyo nidhidhyasitavyah.

Cf. Yajnavalkya Smṛti: Ayam tu paramo dharmo yad yogenatmadarsanam. (1.8).

Cf. Mundaka. II. 2.8: Bhidyate hṛdayagranthis cchidyate sarvasamsayah Kssiyate casya karmani tasmin Drste paravare.

Thus, the true aim of our life is to See the Divine, the Ultimate Reality, and this is closely tied up with our own salvation or release or liberation from the ignorance that is all around us. Our own nature as souls or spirits is revealed to us, and this seeing of our nature and our intimate relationship with the Ultimate liberates us from our misery, from ignorance and impotence, from mortality and fear, and grants us positive bliss. All the scriptures in one sense promise this blessedness and bliss, beyond ignorance and misery and bondage to the recurring cycles of births and deaths. It is that which grants us harmony in existence and shows us the meaning of *Reality*.

Sri Krishna stated in the Bhagavad Gita that is only through absolute devotion that one can know, see and enter into God or the Ultimate Reality: (*jñatum, dr̥stum ca tattvena pravestumca*). Thus, seeing succeeds the knowing and yoga follows upon it (*sayujya*). We can see that if knowing is philosophy, seeing is religion and union is spirituality. Our goal is spirituality or divinising of

our nature by complete union with God, being pervaded all through by Him within and without.

There are in India currently several darsanas or ways of seeing. But philosophers have held that these darsanas are the ways of knowing rather than seeing, for, in none of them does thought rise to the level of seeing or darsana. Philosophers have called these schools, siddhantas, conclusions. Though each school of thought ultimately claims to solve the problem of existence, and also claims to grant us a vision of ultimate reality, actually they have not been able to tell us how in fact the analysis of categories or the knowledge of the dualism between prakriti and purusa or even the scriptural knowledge through hearing will lead us to the Vision. In the heterodox systems mainly of Buddha and Mahavira there is the felt-urgency to go beyond the scriptural meditations or mentations and arrive as personal Vision of the Ultimate. However, they have also later on just remained as exercises of mentation or restraint of mental modifications or disciplines of morality and physical training. Thus, the shad-darsanas or six schools of philosophy without the practical counterpart of spiritual disciplines have ceased to be darsanas. It is only the Vedantas that absorbed the other darsanas trying to supply the much needed sadhana or practical training, and thus it is Vedanta that has become the only darsana today. Even the heterodox darsanas have been absorbed into Vedanta (of the three or four schools). However, even Vedanta had begun to lose this hold on sadhana because of its preoccupation with sravana of the scriptural passages, whether they be mahavakyas of Advaita, the reconciling texts (ghataka srutis) of Visistadvaita or the dualistic (bheda) texts of the Dvaita. Thus, Vision or darsana has not formed the consequential step to sravana, whatever be the reason for this lag. This is due to the fact that Yoga did not form the basic method of approach. It is the restoration of yoga as the sadhana to darsana (yogenatmadarsanam) that forms the beginnings of a renaissance. Sri Aurobindo insisted on this fact in all his writings—it is his mantra.

In a world where several events of cosmic dimensions producing enormous upheavals have been caused, it is not surprising that the call for personal experience of Reality has been insistent. But personal experience covers all that one senses, imagines and dreams, hopes and aspires after, and not those that are the Ultimate at all. All come with the directness of experience. Darsana in the fullest meaning of the sense would entail the yathartha darsana or jnana-darsana and go beyond the sensory. Contradictions between sense-knowledge and thought or mind-knowledge force the individual to arrive at that experience which can explain both the sensory and the mental. It is this inward push towards the Ultimate Vision that translates our philosophy of science into Vision and Spiritual awareness which is psychic perfection.

Sahaj-Marga aims at Vision of the Ultimate Reality and an entering into It and a life in It. Thus, whilst usually the knowing is said to precede the seeing, seeing is counselled as the way to knowing. In a sense, modern educationists have

held that visual education is good for children; only the visual fields are sensory fields in the sphere of our modern education. In spiritual realisation, the real visual field is the field of meditation or non-sensory perceptions. This, however, is a field which is not open to all except those who have the real yearning for spiritual life and reality. Those who have not this aspiration for spiritual life and realisation of the Ultimate truth of existence of themselves can hardly turn towards this path. Those who have not given up the path of wrong doing—*na virato duscariat*—as the Upanishads say—can hardly hope to see this path in its true light or enter into it. Sahaj-Marga aims at putting the seeker straight into this spiritual visual field and then develop the powers of seeing and knowing and then evolving into the higher levels and heights of spiritual infinity. Infinite nature is the characteristic of spiritual being and existence, unlike the sensory and imaginal fields of mind and senses.

Sahaj-Marga uses the method of spiritual transmission or the flow of spiritual superconscious energy into the opened up fields of the mental and physical organic life of the individual seeker, which is done by connecting the individual seeker's organic existence with the central Being. This of course is not something that can be achieved by one's own mentation or will or desire however intense. Neither reading nor hearing nor intense thinking of it or any other intellectual exercise in analysis or synthesis but the power of the Highest or Grace alone can help. This is the work of the Guru. It is true that some thinkers have held that Gurus are a hindrance rather than an aid, but it is a generalisation from the ordinary experience of gurus who have hardly this capacity to transmit or connect one with the Highest. Low-calibre gurus are just philosophers or intellectual persons or emotional devotees granting intellectual or emotional satisfactions or at best miracle-mongers and magicians who delude others and themselves.

This direct approach to the Central Reality alone can grant the Vision. The vision itself has to be appreciated in a different way. The training for this reading of the experience of the Ultimate Reality is different indeed from that which is usually given to the scientists in observation; for, the material of experience is subtle and cannot be reduced to sensory dimensions, as it is done by the microscope and the telescope, however capable of infinite magnifications. This being understood the individual develops new sensitivities or awareness which transcend his physical or gross organismal functions. Sahaj-Marga, thus, opens a vast psychical field which is incapable of being known through any one of the para-normal ways. Thus it is stated that this is something that is open only to the adhyatma or subjective spiritual life or vision that is different from the sense and *manas*-categories and even as we have to realise the will and buddhi which are all lower means of knowledge. The soul has direct vision of reality—both the subjective world of its own as well as the objective world of Nature —and this is saksatkara derived from the direct vision of the seer (*saksi*). Usually this word *saksi* is said to be just a witness, passive spectator of the phenomena of reality or

Nature. But in a dynamic sense there is real activity, the activity that is free and unbond and unbinding or reactionless activity in the self which is spiritual. Whatever this touches it liberates and is known as actionless activity. This is known as *santi* or peace and this is well-known as the experience of peace-form (santakara) which cannot be disturbed at all, for it is the ground of all. In Yoga this is the first step and it is also the last. This is the first touch of God. This is the first darsana or awareness. Darsana thus leads to greater and greater increase of the awareness (*anubhava*) of this *santi* or peace that passeth understanding and analysis and possesses, however, higher and basic awareness of Reality in all its Vastness.

The world of man is the world of the finite fragment (pinda). This restricts man because he is aware of that which is vaster and beyond this little world of sensory experiences and aspires for the larger. It is this awareness that causes the sense of annoyance and bondage; and escape from this necessity. He has to awaken a new faculty or power or create a new organ of awareness of this Vast. In evolution the senses were transcended by prana and culminated in *manas*, and in man this manas is to be transcended by higher aspiration for individuality-knowledge called ahamkara and buddhi, pure impersonal, awareness of the right and the true and the good. Beyond this lies the goal, and thus we go beyond the vast worlds of buddhi (brahmanda) and enter into the central Region of the Reality wherein alone is freedom in the true sense of the term, for no longer is there the play of ignorance of limitation by the outward shapes and forms but true transcendence over even subjectivity. No darsana has led one to this Vision, though Vedanta has shown this path towards transcendence and claimed this to be immense and unknowable in entirety and incommunicable except through inward experience. Indeed, it is something that is only known through *being* it and not through *anubhava*. The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman, says the Upanisad, and truly so. But the darsana that can lead up to this is surely not thought as such but thought that has returned on itself to the Source—*karanantu dhyeyah*—as the Upanishad—teachers have said. Sahaj-Marga is not, however, merely an intellectual work—it is positively not that. It is a practical work of gaining access to God and His Reality directly through self-offering and self-surrender and not seek any other means than God-consciousness itself to do that work of leading one to the Central Reality which grants meaning and value to everything. It is direct work not through scripture and thought and sense; and one enters into this sacred world of Reality almost immediately he is accepted by the Master. This is the initiation which initiates a series of processes under the guidance of the Master who makes the seeker cross over the several levels of matter, life, mind, ahamkara, buddhi subjectively and objectively in Nature till he realises that the Vast Nature and Individual Spirits are in the Central Reality supported by the Centre—which in one sense appears to be a Negation (Zero) and in another sense to be the Womb (*Bhuta-Yoni* or *Bhuma*) of all to come and of all that are and have come.

Sahaj-Marga in a sense is not merely one of the darsanas in the sense of a school of thought or philosophy or a methodology for attainment of an intellectual or a emotio-intellectual approach to Reality or an interpretation of Reality but a definite Siddhi of the Reality itself through superconsciousness or being of Reality. In it culminate the most important part of aspiration of man “towards divination of Godhead, fulfilment of perfection, and freedom that is real and liberating and spiritual and also the attainment of the secret immortality.” On this experience and attainment is to be based a greater life—call it the divine life or the evolution of the superman or the attainment of the Infinite with its unending stretches of unmixed bliss (*ananda*). The Sahaj-Marga starts with *ananda* and endlessly moves towards greater and greater meaning of Ananda—*anantananda*.

The greatest value of this Sahaj-Marga is in the active help rendered by the supreme consciousness as transmitted by the Guru to the heart to lead up the soul or rather strengthen its movement all through the path till the final goal is reached. Thus, the inward aspiration or ascent also is awakened and ignited into fuller and continuous movement by the superconsciousness of the Centre itself. Both the descending grace and ascending aspiration are, thus, parts of the one single divine force as supplied by the Guru at both the ends. This makes Yoga easy and swift and abridges the time for higher evolution and attainment. This is also a unique discovery of Sri Ramchandra. Thus, the Sahaj-Marga becomes the easiest and quickest means towards the Natural Life in God for God and by God.

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INTRODUCTION

Human life today has almost become quite confounded on account of the defective understanding of the real values of life. Almost every one craves for peace, happiness and bliss in some form or the other, but the means he adopts for the purpose, actually lead him just to the reverse side of it. He wants to be a worshipper of God but finally he turns to be a worshipper of mere material forms. He wants to proceed along spirituality but he falls upon materialism. He wants to develop subtleness but instead he goes on contracting grossness.

Why is it so? Obviously, it may be due to our hankering after the enjoyment of senses. Man’s physical form being the only thing open to his view all the life, the body-consciousness remains predominant in all phases of activity. In everything that he does he seeks for some sort of pleasure. He never likes to accept, follow or undertake anything that does not seem to promise him the expected joy. That is perhaps the only charm for which he undertakes worship, devotion or anything by way of Sadhana. To him peace means the satisfaction of the material desires, and worship, devotion, religion and all as the source of

Ananda or bliss commonly understood in the sense of physical pleasure. As such, it is all a material pursuit, quite apart from spirituality. That is why we are finally faced with adverse results. In my Master's words "People want to realise God through senses, which is an impossibility."

We must, therefore, come up to the thorough understanding of the fact that for the attainment of real peace or bliss, one must definitely rise above sense-cravings. That is the main point to be kept in view from the beginning. He must, therefore, be fully convinced that the means he has adopted, do actually lead him that way and that his vrittis (Tendencies of mind) are being gradually silenced. The book is meant to provide for an approach to the inner reaches of spiritualism through the easiest method of Sahaj-Marga for the benefit of the readers.

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SHATCHAKRA

From the lowest :-

- | | | |
|----------------|--------------|--------------|
| 1. Muladhar | 3. Manipurak | 5. Vishuddhi |
| 2. Swadhishtan | 4. Anahata | 6. Ajna |

1. THE WORLD AS IT IS

The Present Picture

The world today is not as it had been ages ago. The development of knowledge and experience has contributed enormously to our improved ways of living. Man today claims to have conquered the forces of Nature over land, water and air. The exploitation of space too, not having been spared, is already going on, not perhaps without apparent success. Even at this stage there is no stop to it yet. The scientific brains are still busy working out greater wonders for the expectant world. In this respect we can surely claim to be living a better life than our forefathers did. We enjoy greater command over resources which we can utilise to our best advantage.

This is one phase of the picture. But when we turn over the other side, what do we find there? Real peace and happiness is missing almost every where; fear and anxiety are disturbing every mind and a state of chaos prevails all over. Frightful apprehensions of war, bloodshed and devastation seem to be haunting the minds every moment. What is all this due to? The simple reason that can be attributed to it is the unrestrained growth of gross materialism which has driven man far away from Nature. The human life has become almost completely artificial. The unethical trend of modern civilisation, bearing no relation with moral or religious obligations is mainly responsible for it. Self, whether as an individual or as a class or nation is predominant in all phases of human life. Divinity has lost its hold upon the minds of people. God is commonly treated as a superfluous being, meant only to serve as a consolation to the weak in the hour of distress. The diversion of the human mind is mostly towards evil. Diplomacy is treated as a merit, hypocrisy as an art, selfishness as patriotism and vanity and show as the very requisites of a modern life. The achievements of science, insinuated with feelings of predominance and exploitation have promoted the growth of destructive tendencies in the human mind. In this respect it may not be wrong to conclude that the world is rushing towards destruction, which in all such cases is the last resort of Nature (*).

(*) The power of Nature which flows from the original Repository (in the form of knots) has the capacity of both creation and destruction. The sages of India always utilised the power of creation for the reformation of humanity. The power of destruction which exists in abundance is also so strong that even an atom bomb is no match to it. This power, too is utilised at present for setting up a new world in place of the present one. Spiritual renaissance has already started and India shall once again lead the world though it, no matter how long a time it may take. The world will soon realise that no nation on the surface of the earth can survive without spiritualism as its base. The age of diplomacy and strategem is now passing away swiftly and by the end of the present century, remarkable changes are bound to come into effect. Everyone must be gladly prepared to welcome what is destined to befall him and should come on to the path of spirituality whereby alone can his welfare be assured.

(Translated from Guru Sandesh)

World Peace

With this picture of the world in view, it is difficult to decide whether the world is on the path of advancement or of deterioration. To a materialistic mind it may be a fair advancement but when we look to the other side, we cannot help coming to the conclusion that it is definitely entailed with extreme misery, unrest and despair. As such it can hardly be accepted as a state of advancement. The world today is bitterly crying for peace and it is the main problem for which the best brains are busy evolving an effective formula. The world organisations set up

for the purpose are straining their every nerve to avoid the occurrence of war in order to establish peace on a permanent basis. But how far have their efforts proved successful remains yet to be judged. They may, however, claim to have postponed the war at times, and that too in certain cases only, but for sure they have not so far been able to improve the general situation so as to create an atmosphere of peace and security. The apprehensions of war are everywhere evident, and so long as they are there peace in the real sense may only be a fanciful dream. Peace commonly taken in the sense of 'no war' is definitely a wrong approach towards the solution. It is quite possible that even though there be no war in action, still the world may not be having peace in the true sense. War whether in action or in thought has the same distressing effect upon the people. It is, therefore, necessary that for the attainment of real peace, war must be banished from thought and an atmosphere of good will, security and contentment must prevail all over.

But how may that be possible? Surely peace can never be brought about by pacification, appeasement and arbitration alone. The root cause of evil is our undue adherence to self, both as an individual and as a group or nation or race. Self interest is predominant in all phases of life and one is ever ready to exploit one's neighbour by cunning devices posing a false outlook of friendship and sympathy. The highly appreciated diplomacy and statesmanship which play an important role in all world affairs invariably create an atmosphere of distrust, fear, jealousy and rivalry.

Race for Power

The race for power is going on at its top speed. Each nation tries to equip herself with the deadliest weapons of war and thanks to the marvellous achievements of science that many such weapons have already come into existence and more are in the offing. The great powers of the world with huge armament at their disposal stand as a dread to the weaker nations and as a cause of jealousy to their rivals, who try to enlist smaller nations to their side by pacts and alliances and arming them with modern weapons under the pretext of military aid for self defence. Is it all for peace or for their secret selfish designs? Let the world judge. The great organisations for peace, too, are going on with their game. Their activities are based more on policy than on fair deal.

In short, the world as it stands today, comprises of rival camps, immensely equipped with arms and ammunition, ready to come into action in an instant. Only a single match-stick may perhaps now be enough to set the whole world ablaze at any time. What is now most essential for the establishment of world-peace on a permanent basis, is the total elimination of the feeling of distrust and fear from every mind, which creates circumstances for the disturbance of peace. If the present race for power which is based on sheer selfishness is stopped the causes of disturbance may considerably be reduced. Universal love must take the place of diplomacy and statesmanship and common brotherhood of man must be fully

recognised and applied in all our actions and dealings. Then alone can favourable circumstances for the establishment of peace be created. (*)

The development of the feeling of universal brotherhood means the breaking up of the individual network that separated one from the other and the closer adherence to the tie of fraternity. It will naturally lead to mental association and greater attachment, ensuring greater peace and contentment to everyone.

(Commentary on Ten Commandments of Sahaj Marga)

Problem

Humanity is composed of individuals and it is the individual that makes humanity and not vice versa. Therefore, the problem confronting the world collectively is not, in fact, the problem of the world but of the individual. Thus, world peace, apart from being a question related with community, race or nation, is really the individual problem of every man. If man cultivates peace of mind within himself, there shall definitely be peace all round. No peace is ever possible unless there is peace in every mind. For this, it is necessary for every man to resort to means of developing peace of mind within himself. Generally, this lack of internal peace is attributed to the effect of social, economic and political conditions. It may be so to some extent, but who after all is responsible for them? Surely, it is the individual himself, one or the other. Every thing that comes in the world picture is the result of the individual actions of man. It is, therefore, the individual himself who has to mend and correct in order to create an atmosphere of peace in the world.

Wrong Notion of Peace

Unfortunately, there are certain misconceptions about the real meaning of peace. Generally, it is associated with the feeling of material happiness which everyone expects to be coming to him from outer physical sources. He thinks that if he is provided with most of what he desires for, or if his circumstances and environments happen to fall in agreement with his desires and wishes, he feels happy, thinking that he enjoys peace of mind, because, for the time being, he finds himself free from worries. Thus, his peace of mind depends upon physical happiness and happiness upon gratification of desires and wishes. This is certainly a crude view which is bound to keep a man in delusion. As a matter of fact, it has too commonly been observed that most of those who are provided with all means of physical happiness are found to be seriously lacking in internal peace in many other ways. Joy and pleasure are the sensual reflections of the inner feelings of the heart. But people mistake it for the only mark of peace and try to forget every thing else. This conception seems contrary to real peace which is a characteristic of the soul. It shall, therefore, be wrong to associate peace with the physical feeling of joy. Besides, desires (sensual) do never have an end. The more they are satisfied the more they crop up. That means they must finally remain unfulfilled.

Thus, desires which at the initial step seem to be a source of happiness (when satisfied) finally turn into cause of distraction and disappointment which lead to disturbance of peace. Moreover, our selfish desires more often bring us into conflict with the due interests of others and result in dissensions and rivalry which end in disturbance of mental peace.

The Noble Ideal

We have, therefore, to understand that it is not really the fulfilment of our everincreasing desires that can bring peace to our mind but some nobler ideal which might cover the due interests of all, reducing self-concern to bare necessity. The noble ideal of the mission, therefore, induces man 'to give every man his fair dues treating him as your own'. This is a universal principle which if followed in true sense is alone enough to solve the greatest problems of the world. It does not mean passive submission to encroachments and high-handed actions of a self-seeking individual or group. "Fair dues" applies uniformly in all cases. For an oppressed, it may be proper redress and redemption of rights and privileges, whereas, for an oppressor, it may be due suppression and punishment. Forceful resistance is not barred in cases where it is essential. One's due rights are to be defended at all cost and any violation of it must be resisted with full force. But all this must be done in a spirit of cordiality and affection and not with a feeling of enmity or malice, just as we favour or frown upon one of our dear ones in a spirit of ownness.

Individual Share

What is, therefore, to be done for the purpose? Obviously, peace cannot be brought to the world simply by preaching sermons or by building up organisations for the purpose, but only by curing the unbalanced tendencies of individual minds which are directed mostly towards self—the most predominant feature in all phases of human life. Self interest, even to the extent of exploitation of others, is the main concern of almost every one. Under such circumstances conflict of interests is unavoidable which must finally result in a state of disturbance. This is the root-problem, for the solution of which, if we depend upon a few top-heads only, we are sure to meet with failure. The individual is, therefore, to exert himself earnestly to the fair discharge of his own share of work in this respect. What the individual's share might be is not difficult to discover. It is the mending of his own individual self. No improvement in general condition is ever possible if we go on ignoring our own errors and shortcomings and throw the whole blame upon others. It is, therefore, our own self that we have first to mend and correct.

But what is there to be corrected in our individual self? It is really the unbalanced tendencies of our mind which are to be duly adjusted and set right. That comes up to regulation of mind at the very first step. This is, in fact, the basic point and the key-solution of all problems. Regulated mind brings us to a state of moderation in all phases of life and promotes within us a feeling of

contentment and resignation. Often people think resignation to be a form of passive submission to fate which is detrimental to the spirit of enterprise. This is a wrong view. The spirit of enterprise is, of course, essential for successful progress and must be maintained in all circumstances in a sense of duty, but then the result which follows must be taken with contentment and resignation. If we adopt these things in our daily routine, our life will become harmonised and peace will be reigning within, under all circumstances and environments. Thus, in short, the entire responsibility of the making of the world rests upon the individual man, who has to transform himself so as to ensure for himself a harmonious living. But, that is generally considered to be the scope of religion, on account of which, some people think that world peace can be established on a permanent basis only through religion, though, in fact, it is far from truth.

Religion

A silent recognition of some supreme force pervading all through exists almost in every heart, though one may not be consciously aware of it at the initial step. Under the influence of this dormant feeling, the soul remains fluttering for the realisation of some thing that he does not properly understand. The feeling goes on developing. He experiences uncontrollable events in life, hears about the mysterious working of super-human forces and watches the religious tendencies of those around him. The idea of God as the supreme force gets implanted in him. He finds people worshipping Him in a thousand ways adhering to the tenets of various religious groups. For the gratification of his inner instinct he, too, adopts one of the ways he is associated with in life. With the passage of time, these groups become narrow having only the outer show and missing the original feeling. Thus, we find people enclosed within the fold of religions, sects and creeds, why they do not know, what for they do not understand, adhering closely to its physical forms and prejudices only. They go with it in full rigidity and orthodoxy without any idea of aim, object and purpose, treating existence as a merry-go-round, revolving ever within the plane of grossest materialism.

Different Blocks

Religion is commonly considered to be a path leading upto God, but there are so many religions in the world. That means there are so many paths leading to a common centre. The advocate of each religion affirms that his is the only right path. Now, it becomes difficult to decide which of them is really so. In most cases, religion is based on the practical experience of its great founder. But experiences vary on account of the difference in the level of approach in individual cases. Therefore, the ideals taught and preached by them in accordance with their experiences also differ. The point of diversity arises chiefly over the conception of God, which is different and often divergent in each case. God is Infinite, almost all agree to it. But human approach being limited, the conceptions differ. Thus, every religion has its own centre based on its own conception of

God. Therefore, the Ideal set up by every religion as the object of worship is also distinctly apart from each other. When this is the case the central point of all religions cannot be taken to be the same. Hence, it would be wrong to say that every religion leads to a common goal—The Ultimate. But, if we take a closer view of it we find that every religion is based on certain divine principles which are common to all. So far, there is no difference in them. But in order to maintain the individual existence of a religion, it becomes essential to introduce into it certain formalities, superstitions and prejudices, so as to give it an outer form of individuality. Every religion, thus, maintains some distinctive features of its own in order to present it to the world as a separate unit or block. Thus, it is the prejudices and superstitions alone that form the outer barriers of a religion and which alone are adhered to with the greatest orthodoxy, in total disregard of the fundamental truth at the bottom. It is for this reason that religion has often been the cause of feud among rival groups which, sometimes, develops into serious war and bloodshed. (*)

(*) We have buried true religion in the grave, only we clap hands in the name of religion and do nothing else. The real spirit is lost, only the formalities remain in its place. Outward form and the rituals are the only things that remain open to view which are followed with orthodoxy and tenacity without even the least touch of reality. Our faith in reality has thus diminished to the point of extinction. It is rather twisted into forms and rituals alone. Gradually, it degenerates into bigotry and prejudice which has, unfortunately, become the permanent feature of the present day religion. Our blind faith in formalities keeps us in the dark regarding the reality and unconsciously we develop within us a feeling of hatred against those in other forms and rituals. There are, consequently, quarrels and jealousies among the followers of different religions.

(Reality at Dawn)

As such, religion which was originally to serve as a connecting link between man and man, has now—for reason of these narrow prejudices—become means for keeping them apart from one another and finally from God even. Religion in that sense may hardly be a solution of the man's problem.

Universal Religion

With this view, some prominence is being given to the idea of unification of all religions into one universal Religion, so as to avoid conflict on that account. This, however, is not the first attempt of the kind. Efforts have been made towards it in the past but always with little success. The Din-i-Ilahi of Akbar was probably the first attempt towards it. He tried to formulate a common religion both for the Hindus and Mohammedans but it never flourished and died with him. In modern times, too, several societies like Theosophical or Free Masonry or others have developed with the same object. They stand on international basis and include the important prejudices of every prominent religion. But the result, as is quite

evident today, led to the formation of a new institution, adding further to the heavy list of religions. Practical experience goes sufficiently to prove that religion which might have been the cause of war in the past is not so now, for, often most of the nations entering into war with each other belong to the same religion. Obviously, the causes of disturbance at present are neither religious nor social but only economic which are based on selfishness. Moreover, unification of religions brought about by combining together certain prejudices of each may, however, result in the formation of a new institution set up on conventional basis. Thus, the so-called universal religion may be nothing more than a conventional religion acceptable only to a section and an encumbering addition to the list. A universal religion in this sense may only be a farce. If the various religions are to be unified at all, it can be done only by abolishing the block system, and pulling down the barriers of each. When all prejudices connected with name, form and superstitions are washed off, every religion comes round to the common point, the Absolute, which is universal and the common goal of man. The unification of religions may, thus, in the real sense mean only the abolition of religions which alone can carry us beyond the narrow bonds of prejudices. A successful solution can only be arrived at when one proceeds with the broadest views, following the principle of love. Universal love and common brotherhood though proclaimed as ideals by almost every religion, are, in fact, only topics for platform speakers and have no significance in the practical life. Thus, religion far from being a solution of the world problem has in itself become a problem, instead.

In this sense, religion may not at all be helpful in the attainment of peace except in so far as it may offer some inducement for the same. The real path of peace and freedom lies beyond the scope of religion. We have, therefore, to rise above the level of religion and enter the sphere of spirituality which is above all religious, social and racial prejudices and is universal in the true sense.

II. THE RIDDLE OF EXISTENCE

(i) ABSOLUTE REALITY

The Centre

Taking into view the vast expanse of the universe, the physical existence of which cannot be denied, we are naturally led to the conclusion that it must have some cause or origin. Now, treating the whole universe as one great circle of existence, the presence of a centre cannot be logically denied. What can then be the centre of this material exposition of the universe? Surely, the physical existence of things is the result of certain changes in the form of matter which existed previously in a finer state. Thus, for all practical purposes, that previous form can safely be taken as the cause or origin. Naturally, we come to the conclusion that the immediate cause of the universe must be its previous form of subtler existence. Now, a centre as a point, though geometrically dimensionless is also in itself another minor circle, howsoever small it may be. As such, it too, must have another point for its centre which in its turn may again be another still minor circle. Thus, the subtler existence which serves as a cause for the grosser existence must, too, have another still finer existence for its cause. In this way, every centre, as the cause of the next existence, being by itself another subtler universe must again have for itself a centre in the form of a still subtler existence. It means that behind this material existence of the universe there are innumerable forms of existence which go on growing infinitely subtler, till it comes to the Zero-point or Nonentity. Now, there may be no difficulty in tracing out the ultimate cause of the universe, which may be taken as the remotest centre, the Zero-point or the Ultimate Base.

Existence of God

This remotest view of the Ultimate may be self-sufficient to put to an end all controversies as to whether God does or does not exist. I quote herein my Master's view over the point:---

“There has been a good deal of controversy over the question of the existence of God, perhaps from the very dawn of human intelligence. The real problem to my mind is not that of proving or disproving the existence of an Eternal Absolute but that of defining it in an adequate and satisfactory way.

Let us start with the stand taken by an atheist that there is no God. This is to say in mathematical terminology that no positive or negative value can be assigned to it. Still it will have to be expressed by some sign. The mathematical sign for that which has no positive or negative value is ‘Zero’ or ‘Naught’.

Now, let the atheist be faced with the question as to what exists. A consistent Agnostic can doubt and deny the existence of every thing, but not of his own self, viz., of that which doubts and denies. This self or ‘I’ is expressed as an

identity. Speaking again in mathematical terms, it may conveniently be expressed as 'one'.

Now look at the magic function of Zero. As you go on adding more and more of these to the right side of that which exists, viz., 'one' or yourself, it goes on swelling and multiplying itself. There is hardly a comprehensive limit to this expansion; and the Upanishads have rightly characterised this expanded Infinite as 'Bigger than the Biggest' (mahato mahiyan). And in achieving this, you have really done nothing except increasing your own value by keeping your God, viz., 'Naught' or 'Zero' to your right, i.e., positive side.

Then start adding the Zero to the left or the negative side of that which exists, viz., 'one' or 'yourself', with the function of the negativating will, i.e., the decimal point, the addition of more and more 'naughts' will gradually bring the 'one' itself closer and closer to 'Zero'. Again, there can hardly be a limit to this shrinkage of the self and the Upanishads have rightly characterised it as smaller than the 'infinitesimal' (anoraniyan). At the point of infinity the difference between that which exists for the atheist, viz., the 'Self' or 'one' and that which does not exist for him, viz., 'God' or 'Zero' is hardly conceivable. It is just nominal.

Thus, I believe the controversy over the question of God's existence is really a fake one. It really arises due to misconceptions with which the word 'God' has become loaded in the course of the history of various cultural groups of human being. The factor of blind and enthusiastic faith created and strengthened by individual miseries and cravings in different cultural contexts has added more and more confusion to the malady. Consequently, the man of reason and thought rightly feels disgusted at the very mention of the word 'God'. This attitude, however, is also equally responsible, far more, for the degeneration of man, in comparison to the factor of blind faith, which after all gives strength and assurance to man, however misguided.

The need, therefore, is to give up impulsive approach to the problem because it blurs the vision and thus impedes the progress of man towards his goal. May the man of reason and intellect rise up to the occasion and sift out the kernel of the real meaning from the chaff of confused dogmas."

Different Conceptions

Now, this ultimate view of God as the Zero point or Nonentity, being beyond common conception, sages have tried to present more comprehensive views of it to suit the grosser mentality of an ordinary man. This led to so many tangible forms presented variously, as gods and demi-gods or as personifications of the forces of Nature. This is the most widely prevalent view among the masses, who are inclined to it more for the solution of the material problems than for the real purpose—the Realisation.

Higher to it there is the idea of God as a personified being, possessing a body like that of a man but with certain super-natural features like more hands and

heads to assert its superiority over man. As such, he is but a superior man endowed with authority and power to rule over man. The idea is further refined as that of a powerful Being having a celestial body which may, on occasions, be visible only to the eye of a devotee. Higher above, we come to the conception of God as an omnipotent Being who like a great magician brings to view all things in nature by the exercise of his super-normal will. This view is interpreted in two ways, first, as represented by Trimurti of Brahma—the creator, Vishnu—the preserver, and Mahesh—the destroyer; and secondly, as Ishwar, who is sometimes treated as synonymous with Trimurti but often as a slightly higher Being. In this state, he is believed to be the possessor of all finest attributes including omnipotence, omniscience and omnipresence. This is generally the limit of most of the religions. For this reason it is often termed as the God of religion. The Hindu philosophy does not keep itself confined to this low-level conception but goes on higher to finer views. This conception of God with adjuncts (Saguna) is further refined as an eternal power devoid of all attributes. It is known as Nirguna or qualityless. This is undoubtedly a finer view in comparison to that of God enclosed within the limitations of attributes. But at this stage even, it is associated with consciousness, activity and bliss. It was, in fact, the condition which prevailed at the time of the creation. But even before creation came into being, when everything, matter, power or activity was dissolved into one common identity, the existence of God as the centre or base cannot be wholly ignored. The centre of that superfinest state of subtleness must necessarily be something finest, devoid of everything, even consciousness, potentiality and bliss. What that can possibly be is beyond words—The External, Infinite Nonentity, which in Vedic terminology is described as Neti, Neti (not only this, not only this). This ultimate Being-less state is in our Mission expressed as *Bhooma* which is the final goal of human pursuit.

(ii) UNIVERSE

Evolution

The theory of creation is represented by different schools of thought in different ways according to their beliefs and convictions. How this vast universe came into being is, therefore, a matter of deep controversy among various cultural groups. Basically, it is attributed to the sweet will of God. God wanted to manifest Himself, so the universe with everything in it came into existence. But no satisfactory explanation seems to be available as to why God wanted so, after all. Anyhow, taking it in the same way, one is led to the conclusion that it is a matter of mere accident, depending upon the Divine Will. But that may not be convincing to an inquisitive mind.

There are certain laws and principles on which the entire working of Nature stands. Everything goes on in a fixed routine. The process of birth, growth, decay and dissolution works consistently in all cases. A thing comes into being, goes on

growing up to a certain state of maturity, after that it begins to decay till it dissolves and disappears from the physical view. Is it gone or lost for ever? Certainly not. After a time it again resumes a physical existence in a similar or somewhat different form and undergoes the same process of growth and decay. This goes on unceasingly in every case and so it is with the universe. God's will works allthrough during the entire process of creation, growth and dissolution, and offers the necessary stimulus for the action needed at the time. Thus, we find the routine process of creation and dissolution also to be consistent with this inevitable law of Nature.

The Creation

Let us now start from the point when the universe, in its present physical form, was not in existence. What was there then? Nothing, as we see it today, yet everything in its subtle and absolute state. The matter was there but in its finest state as essence; power was there but reduced to almost nothingness; activity was there but in a perfectly latent state. The essence of everything in a complete dormant state existed round the centre. Thus, the centre or the zero-point, surrounded by the essence of all things of the creation, combined together as one entity is, for the sake of understanding, taken as the Absolute, the Brahman—The Infinite (*).

(*) The latent motions generated power which rushed out and created something that can for the sake of understanding be expressed as the eggs of a fish in the spawn. These egg-like things are full of concentrated essence of power and energy created by invisible motions. Now, all these three, i.e., the Centre, the Latent Motion and the so-called egg-like things are so adjacent to one another that it is very difficult to distinguish them each separately and all seem to be one or adjusted together as one.

(Efficacy of Rajyoga)

When the time for creation matured there was a mild jerk (Kshob) in the sphere below the centre. What that jerk was, may be very difficult to express adequately in words. It may, however, be expressed as a light stroke of will, a stimulus or a start; but that would all be too grosser than what it actually was. Anyhow, let it be as it may, it however, resulted in a sort of stir in the Latent Motion round the Centre. The jerk which at the first sight may seem to be accidental is really not so but is subject to the same Divine law of evolution and involution. The process of evolution having started, the gradual formation of the universe commenced.

Kshob

Now, what could be the function of the first jerk when the entire action was the result of the routine process of evolution? The jerk, too, was subject to the

same eternal law. It may be more clear if we take the example of a seed which when sown begins to undergo certain imperceptible changes in itself. After a time, it suddenly bursts forth giving out a tiny sprout. Similarly, this first jerk may, for understanding, be taken as the automatic burst of the sprout from which the growth commences in a more perceptible form.

The stir caused by the 'First jerk' increased the intensity of the revolving motion round the centre. The force of vibrations developed and power began to get enlivened. It began to force out its way forming crevices in the surrounding sphere (*).

(*) I may also reveal the reality about creation. Before creation came into effect, there was only the Latent Motion around the Centre and adjacent to it and in it was present the idea of creation (Kshob). You may call it motion, vibration, force or anything for your understanding. It was the ultimate cause of creation and of every thing else necessary for it. When the time of creation came, the idea which lay hidden or sleeping in the Latent Motion matured and churned up the whole motion and created a force or power which rushed out.

(Efficacy of Rajyoga)

It formed tiny centres near about the border limit. The action of each centre having started they began to attract material which existed in the concentrated form round about. In this way, power, motion, activity and matter all set up to work for bringing into being the required universe in its present form.

Dissolution

The process went on and every thing began to come to light, though at early stages in a subtle form, yet subsequently, becoming grosser and grosser to assume a physical form. The material forms of things now began to come to view. In course of time, the entire universe was formed. The process of creation now transformed into process of growth and everything went on growing more and more gross. This state of being having reached maturity must, subsequently, yield to the process of involution and the progressive growth shall thus, after a time, be converted into that tending towards decay and dissolution. Finally, everything having been dissolved will again return to the Origin or the Zero-point to resume afresh the next course towards growth and development.

(iii) "MAN"

The Real and the Apparent

God is eternal and so is man, but they say that man is mortal. The basis of this paradoxical view lies in the difference regarding the true meaning of man. To our outer view, man represents the grosser material form comprising the physical body. The body being composed of matter is subject to decay and dissolution. In

this sense, man is taken to be mortal. But, in fact, the existence of man does not cease with the extinction of the physical body. Some thing does survive after the physical body has come to an end, though one may not be able to see or feel it physically. That means apparent man is something different from the real man, and though the apparent man is dead and gone, the real man exists still, in a subtler state. Again, man in the subtler form which survives after death may also not be the real man, for, though relieved of the grossest coverings of the physical body it is still enwrapped within numerous other coverings of lesser and lesser grossness. Thus, in order to trace out the real being of man, one has to go far back, beyond all these coverings from the grossest to the subtlest.

The coming of man into its present form is also neither sudden nor accidental but it is the result of a long process of evolution. It commenced from the time when by the effect of Kshob (primary Stir) the power began to rush out forming centres for the action. The independent action of each centre or nucleus having started, it began to attract the necessary material required for bringing things into existence. The existence of man also came into being in the same way, in the form of individual Identity in the subtlest form. From this finest state of being, which was akin to God's, man gradually began to march down towards grossness taking on layers after layers of solidity, which are more appropriately denoted as coverings round the soul. (*)

(*) The composition of man also is exactly the same as that of the universe. Just as behind this solid external universe, there are innumerable others of finer and still finer types, so behind this grosser physical form of man there are numerous finer and still finer forms of existence. The outer-most form is the gross body, behind which there exists the astral body and the casual body. Besides these three outer forms there are innumerable other ones which are so fine and subtle that thinkers do not call them as bodies but only as fine coverings round the soul.

(Reality at Dawn)

The primary coverings, constituted of super-finest consciousness or Ego, went on solidifying by the effect of its own action. The action of Manas, Chit and Buddhi added further to its grossness. Further on, thought began to weave its own net-work which after transforming into actions led to the formation of Samskaras. Thus, every thing began to contribute its share towards solidity. Grossness went on increasing till finally the man assumed its present form of perfect solidity. The unbalanced action of senses and faculties went on adding to the opacity of being in numerous diverse ways (*).

(*) Before creation a state of perfect balance prevailed all over. When the time of creation came, the latent vibrations round the Dormant Centre got intensified by the effect of Kshob (First Stir) and activity started. The balance was disturbed. Centres and sub-centres for the action of Energy began to be formed. Each Centre began to grow more and more powerful. Actions and counter actions

went on multiplying. Grossness began to develop and coverings began to set in, giving things physical forms of appearance.

(From the Master's letter)

As a result, the real being of man got completely shrouded within these innumerable coverings of increasing grossness, like a silk-worm in the cocoon. How it came to be so, is, in fact, the result of our own actions and counter actions which contributed bit by bit to the grossness of being. In other words, man has thus set up a tiny creation of his own. He has in true sense turned into a conglomeration of all things in existence or miniature copy of the universe itself.
(*)

(*) What happens to man when he dies? Naturally we do not accept the all too simple explanation that when man dies he dissolves and that is the end of him. Life is more purposive and man has meaning. He has a soul which has a before and after. The soul is an evolving entity progressing from moment to moment and birth and death are only stages in the career. At the moment of death it is the physical body that ceases to live. The soul in its subtle body consisting of several sheaths is intact alive; it sheds the physical sheath or the physical plane and passes through several worlds or planes of transit on its way to its place of rest. It halts or is halted in each plane till its particular sheath corresponding to that plane is shed off and it is free to move to the next.

(“Highways of God” by M. P. Pandit)

Thus, the outermost covering in the composition of man being his physical body, the man for reason of its presumed identity with it, is vaguely spoken of as mortal, though the man as the real being within, is, in fact, as immortal and eternal as God Himself. In this respect, the two are almost identical in so far as the true nature of being is concerned, though apparently they seem to be widely apart from each other. Really, the only difference between them is that man as an individual soul is limited and bound while God as a universal soul is Unlimited and Infinite. Except for this little difference they are in a way identical. The idea has nicely been illustrated by the Master in the following lines:

“A thick covering of air surrounds the entire globe and it is almost similar every where. But air nearer the earth is heavier and denser than that at a higher level. The reduction of density goes on increasing as one goes higher and higher till at the highest level its very presence becomes inconceivable to human perception, and for want of capacity to realise it in that state of negation, one may safely presume its non-existence. Now, the difference between man and God is the same as it is between the air closest to earth and that at the higher most level, the former being compared to man and the latter to God. Thus, man being almost identical with God differs from Him in respect of density or grossness.”

(iv) THE HUMAN LIFE

The Aim

So far, we have discussed how the universe has come to its manifestation. Through many ups and downs, human life has come up. Now man as the centre of the universe must have a guiding principle of life. Man has an aim to fulfil and a mission to accomplish. How this aim of life can be well understood and be pursued by people is the next point for consideration. Every action has some object or motive at its back. It is true in almost every case, but whether we are able to understand it or not is another question. The same is the case with one's life which, too, must have some object or purpose at the back. What that may be, is to be traced out if one is really earnest about the solution of his problem. For the successful solution of the problem of life, it is therefore essential to have a full understanding of what we are after. This is one of the most important factors without which no success can ever be possible. It is specially so in case of spirituality where one has always to keep in mind the object he is aspiring for. It has often been found that people take up one or the other of the paths for divine purpose without having any clear understanding of what they are striving for. The result, most often, is that they remain entangled in doubts and deceptions for the whole life. It is, therefore, very necessary that before taking up a path one must have a clear understanding of the Goal he aspires for. The right selection of the path to be undertaken for the purpose is possible only when one has a clear and definite view of the goal.

Generally, the object of life is not the same in all cases. Every one finds himself confronted with his own problems and his object of life is determined mostly in the light of the situation created by them. His problems are mostly material which have resulted from his over-attachment with materialism. His physical wants, physical desires, and physical enjoyments are the only things which occupy his attention and he remains entangled in them for ever. Materiality is no doubt indispensable for our physical existence but then one must never forget that the pursuit for the attainment of the life-object is not merely a physical pursuit. One has, therefore, to take into account the other phase also which ordinarily seems to be out of view.

Man's existence is not confined only to this life. He has so far passed through numerous stages of existence, subtle or gross; and for the future nobody can precisely say how many more he has yet to pass through till end. The cycle goes on indefinitely unless one awakened to higher consciousness sets himself to the solution.

The Material View

From the view point of an absolute materialist, to whom life is but a span of existence extending from birth to death, the case is otherwise. He does not bother himself about anything concerning his past or future, nor does he aim at anything

beyond matter. His only concern is his material self or anything physically connected with it. He remains ever held up by the physical charm of the world which to him is all in all and his object of life is the attainment of a joyous and happy living.

Again, there are some who accept that at times they are somewhat prompted to religious consciousness for their material purposes, are in all other ways saturated with feelings of worldliness. Their entire thought rests upon the world of their physical self though they may at times of distress be inclined towards godly thoughts to serve their purpose. They worship Gods in a formal way but always for worldly ends such as worldly happiness, material gain or gratification of sensual desires. As a matter of fact, they too are no better than a down-right materialist who disregards every thing other than matter in the physical form.

The Religious View

Religion induces men to worship God for the attainment of some ideal and the people follow it with orthodoxy worshipping Him in the set form and in the prescribed manner. But it has generally been found that in majority of the cases they proceed with it without any idea of aim, object or purpose. If any of them is asked as to why he worships at all, he finds it difficult to answer and is greatly perplexed. The reason, obviously, must be the lack of clear understanding of the object, and whatever he does is only for the sake of observance of an old custom or perhaps for some supposed charm. If someone, however, ventures to answer it in some way, he may say, "Why! We worship Him because He has created us and provided us with means of livelihood. We must, therefore, be thankful to Him and worship Him in return." But at the same time they admit that the world is a prison-house wherein man comes for the sake of undergoing the effects of his past doings (Samskaras). As such, our position in the world is like that of a prisoner who has been put in for the punishment. Now who among the prisoners would ever be grateful to Him who sends him to jail? As for providing means of livelihood, one who likes to keep us in bondage will naturally look to our bare needs, not minding whether we are thankful to him or not. Thus, worship of God with that view carries no sense. Some interpret it in another way saying that they worship Him in order to please Him so that he may save them from pain and misery. (*)

(*) Total absence of sufferings and miseries in life is, however, impossible and unnatural. In fact, they are rather meant for our betterment. They are just like bitter pills of medicine given to a patient to restore health. The misuse of even the best thing creates trouble. So is the case with miseries. Proper utility of every thing at the proper time and in the proper way is sure to bring forth good results in the long run. Miseries are really our best guide which makes our path smooth.

(Reality at Dawn)

This, however, may not be quite out of place, for to be relieved of pain and misery is the natural instinct of all animated beings. But then we know and believe that so long as we are in this world, it is impossible to be free from pain and sorrow, since without them, Bhoga, for which we have come down here will become quite ineffective and the Samskaras will remain as they are barring our way to liberation. In fact, pain and sorrow are indispensable in life and none can ever be free from them in life. Even saints of the highest approach have to undergo sufferings. Pain and pleasure go together side by side and the existence of one is never possible without the other. Hence, worship for the sake of deliverance from pain is but a mockery and devoid of true love and devotion.

Bhakti

Bhakti or devotion is no doubt an essential feature of worship as everyone knows full well, but what it really is, may not be quite easy to comprehend. Commonly, it is misunderstood as excitement of emotion, most often caused by the effect of recitation or music or similar other means. In this sense, it is only a form of sensual enjoyment and is most pleasant to a devotee who likes to keep himself attached to it only for that purpose. Bhakti as it is generally understood has two aspects: the inner and the outer. Most of the so-called Bhaktas take it up in its outer aspect. They go to temples, stand before the idol, pour water over it, offer flowers and sweets and eulogise it with songs of praise. What for? Only perhaps for the sake of some physical charm or to beg for the fulfilment of some of their worldly desires. In short, all that they do is but a recreation, hence devoid of true sense. Yet they are known and acknowledged as Bhaktas. There are others who follow the mechanical practices of Japa, Patha or Kirtan with apparent excitement and emotion but only for the charm they feel therein. They are also considered to be Bhaktas. But, as a matter of fact, in all these affairs, they only mean to display physically an outward show of emotional feelings, wrongly interpreted as Bhakti or devotion, whereas in true sense they are inwardly as barren as a profound non-Bhakta. To them all that Bhakti perhaps seems to mean is an excited display of emotional feelings for the purpose of assuring Gods of their sincere love unto them. Really, it is only flattery and the entire process is a mere show. Flattery is, in fact, only an outward show of sincerity and love for the specific purpose of fulfilling some of the heart's desires. It may, however, deceive a man but not the God who according to his own conviction is the knower of all things. Consequently, the utmost that a worshipper can perhaps gain thereby may be something by way of wages for his physical labour. In fact, the inner aspect alone is the true form of Bhakti. In that sense it is devoid of all external showy features. There is no excitement; no emotional outbursts; no crying, ailing or wailing. It is a kind of calm, silent, smouldering fire within the deepest core of the heart and consuming all thoughts, emotions and feelings without any physical awareness.

The Real Purpose

What must then be the object of worship? Freedom from pain and sorrow is of course a genuine desire of a pining soul, but for that if we fix our eye upon those passing events of life which are necessary for the process of Bhoga, it would be perhaps a serious blunder. For this, we have really to take into account the root cause, which, if wiped off, will save us from pain and misery. The cause as all perhaps know is only our physical existence in the world for the purpose of undergoing the effect of the Samskaras. Hence, we come to the conclusion that if somehow we can stop our return into the world, we shall be relieved of the consequent miseries. In case of those who do not believe in the reappearance of man in material form after death, the object of life is determined in terms of heaven or paradise for which they have only to adhere to moral and religious rules of life. But that does not offer any solution to those who believe in the past, present and the future existence of man according to the law of Karma. The routine of nature goes on in a consistent way. There is no stop or end. Every thing is subject to the inevitable law of cause and effect. In the same way, the existence of man, too, goes on in the fixed routine of birth and death following each other in natural sequence. His problem of existence, therefore, does not relate only to this one life but also to all subsequent lives that one might have till the end. Thus, what one has primarily to achieve is freedom from rebirth which would save him from the miseries of lives to come. For that the only solution is Moksha.

Moksha

Literally, Moksha means freedom from birth and death. It is interpreted in two ways, the salvation and liberation. There is a great difference between these two states. According to my Master's view, salvation is like a temporary pause in the routine of birth and death. It may be of different durations in individual cases according to the level of attainment. After the expiry of the period one has to come back again into the material form and follow again the routine of birth and death. In this respect, salvation is by no means the solution of the problem of existence. Liberation alone is of course the solution in the true sense. In that case, one does not come back again to assume a material form of existence. It is an end of the process of birth and death. But even that is not the final end of existence; for, though relieved of the grossest covering he remains still enclosed within finer and subtler coverings. Thus, the bondages round the soul persist still which are all to be dissolved in order to attain a state of complete Freedom. The term Moksha as commonly used, implies a confusing sense referring both to salvation and liberation. But Moksha interpreted as salvation is not the solution of our problem. Liberation, of course, may be the correct interpretation of the word Moksha which means freedom from rebirth. The different types of Moksha as classified in the religious books are a mere confusion which baffles the mind of a reader and leads him into delusion.

The Spiritual View

The present physical form of man is the result of innumerable coverings of grossness which have settled round the soul during the process of evolution. (*)

(*) The soul which was originally a part of the Universal Soul got detached from it and formed into an individual identity. The consciousness of individuality or Ego was the first covering in the composition of man. From this primal state it went down taking on grosser and grosser layers till it came to the present state. Our only problem is to get back to that primal state. That means we are to march from grossness to subtleness upto the farthest extent. Now, in order to do away with grossness we have to give up all that we have gathered so far in order to build up our individual existence and which we possess as our belongings.

(Master's letter)

The real essence which lies buried within is also dormantly active. It promotes in him a latent craving for its return to the Origin. Now, for our return to the Origin it is but essential to revert to the process of involution which means dissolution of all things created by us for building up the universe of self. That means removing of all coverings upto the last. Thus, the final object of life being our return to the origin or the attainment of the primordial state of existence, the only process will be to remove all the covering we are enwrapped in. Just as Mahapralaya (Final dissolution) is essential for the return of everything in existence, so is the dissolution of this universe of self, essential for our return to the origin. This is what we do in meditation. We gather ourselves on one point – The Absolute, ignoring all things of our making, which begin to fade away like unwatered plants. In this way, we go on proceeding towards negation which is, in true sense, the real pursuit.

Perfection

We also hear so much about perfection and about saints who are known to have attained perfection. Ordinarily, one vaguely supposed to have achieved realisation (in his own sense of the word) is thought to be perfect. But what the word perfection or even realisation actually signifies is often very ambiguous. According to common level understanding any one who has made some marked improvement so as to impress commonalities by his knowledgeable exposition of dogmatic problems or to influence them by the display of some super-normal powers is generally considered to be perfect. It is for this reason alone that there might not perhaps be one among the whole horde of Sadhus roaming about at large, who does not claim to be perfect and is acknowledged to be so by his followers, for every one of them has definitely at least a few followers to help him in his designs. The term perfection carries widely different meanings in accordance with the particular ideas and notions of individuals. Taking up the ultimate view of Reality in the spiritual sense one may easily understand that the

term perfection carries no real significance. To be virtuous and God-fearing may be noble but that is not perfection; to be devoted to God in thought, word and deed may be a stage of progress but it is not perfection; to be in communion with God may be one of the highest stages but that too is not perfection; to be in a state of permanent Bliss may be a Divine blessing but still it is not perfection. Really, God alone is perfect and no mortal, however advanced he may be, can ever claim to be perfect. We are marching on, right across, to the inner most centre, the Infinite Zero-point which is beyond human conception. Our ultimate approach upto the farthest possible limit in that direction is all that perfection may vaguely be presumed to mean. In fact, it is quite impossible to put a hall mark for perfection. Hence the term conveys no real sense and may almost be meaningless.

The Solution

Not taking into account the view point of an avowed materialist, whose entire activities are concentrated in his own material self, the problem of life is to be tackled in the light of the ultimate point of the Man's existence. We have, so far, come to the conclusion that we have finally to secure return to the source we have come down from. For that it is essential that we must from the very start fix our eyes upon that final state of superfinest subtleness which is almost synonymous with Reality. The only solution can be to dispense with our grossness upto the last possible limit. This can only be possible if we adopt subtlest means—which are free from the effect of materiality—for the attainment of that which is the subtlest. The material view of the object, aimed at, formal physical practices and mechanical methods prescribed by religious teachers and preachers are seldom useful in this respect; rather they are, on the other hand, detrimental to our sacred cause. To realise the subtlest Being by grosser means is next to impossibility. It is for this reason that religion in its present form may hardly be helpful to us in our spiritual pursuit.

Spirituality

The only recourse open to us is spirituality, which is free from the grosser effect of religious entanglement. It is beyond all superstitions, prejudices and complexities. It is the only path which can lead a man successfully to the final state of subtleness which he aspires for. In fact, it is the process of unfolding of the self. That means removing of all coverings which serve to keep the real self in bondage. Our march from the present grossest state of existence to the ultimate state of subtleness is, in the true sense, the very essence of spirituality. But, unfortunately, the subject has been so grossly misrepresented in various ways that its real significance is altogether lost. Most commonly it is misunderstood as religion; or religion with all its grosser effects is considered to be spirituality. Every thing based on religious convictions, the grosser view of the Ideal, mechanical ways of worship, bodily exercises and even rituals and other formalities are all thought to be associated with spirituality. Not only this, even

the use of thought power in the material plane, the treatment of diseases by hypnotism and the mysterious workings of ghosts and spirits are counted as spiritualism. In this way, spirituality, like religion, has become a mystery which has confounded the people into delusion. This is mainly due to the verbose preachings of the practising teachers who themselves having no approach upto it, impose upon the people mere theories and convictions based upon their bookish knowledge and do not allow them to breathe in the lighter air of practicality. Therefore, all that it infuses into the people is merely grossness, opacity and denseness, the very poison for a spiritual life. Thus, instead of growing lighter and subtler we go on becoming grosser and denser—just the reverse of what it ought to be. In this way, our march towards finer states of subtleness gets impeded and we remain bound to the grosser sphere of materialism for ever. It is, therefore, essential to discard all grosser views and grosser methods and adhere to the subtlest means for the attainment of the subtlest state.

Crude Methods

But there may perhaps be occasions when strict application of the above principle may not be practicable in the very beginning. Such may be the cases of those undeveloped and uncultured minds, commonly known as Murhas, who at the initial stage may be quite incapable of taking up the subtler views. For such, the grosser views may, for the time being, be advised, but with all necessary precautions to minimise the grosser effect thereof to the utmost possible limit. For example, if in any such case, the worship of the image is to be advised in the beginning he must be asked to take it up with the Bhava (idea) of the Almighty. That is, he must bear in mind that the image he is worshipping represents God and not that the image itself is God; and even this practice must not be a life-long pursuit for him. As soon as he is able to fix himself upon subtler conceptions, he must give up the image and come up to finer ways. In short, he must be very careful to avoid contracting the grosser effects of the means he has temporarily adopted for the purpose.

Similar is the case with other type of practices like Japa, Kirtan, etc., which are vaguely proclaimed to be the only means of emancipation in the present age, the Kaliyuga. The recitation of the Lord's name or hymns and Mantras may be helpful to a certain extent only when it is done in the proper way, meditating upon the real inner aspect of it. But in most of the cases it is rarely so. Generally, most of those following these practices do them more for the charm of music, enjoying the rhythm and rhyme of the melody than for the reality at the back of it. They do not get themselves linked internally with the vibrations caused thereby. Thus, the process remains merely external in character and the good effect thereof, whatever little it might be, is altogether lost. In this way, the entire process instead of being helpful becomes harmful to our purpose and hampers our progress towards subtleness.

Homeland

What we have after all to arrive at is our Homeland, whence we have travelled down to our present state. The following is my Master's view in this relation :

“Where we are, we do not know; where we have been, we know but little. Is that not the clue of our Homeland? That is the target to hit at, first by the force of will, then by total dissociation from will and intellect. Suppose you have got this stage, then you know where you are. That conveys the idea that you have discovered your starting point or the origin. That is the only knowledge which one gets from all the different activities and it also shows that activity has, for good, been absorbed in some real centre. Suppose this happens in the case of all embodied souls, then the world is gone and there is complete dissolution. The activity gone back to the centre will revive again after some time. That is the phenomenon of Nature—‘nothing is destroyed but it only transforms.’ When there is descent there must be ascent because the source of power, which sends down activity, is somewhere there. Beginning must have an end and vice-versa. The activity having revived, things returnable begin to come down again. What was the process? The essence was there; the material was there and the action was there. Formation of different bodies started and man came into being. The activity brought us here together with all that we have. But since it was backed by a powerful Energy, it gave out its results, which set down in different parts of the body implanting their own effect caused by the combination of matter with soul. Now we begin to move within ourselves. The soul is at work as a commander, mind is working passively, heart is giving clue to each of them. Thoughts are arising and working in their own field. The centre nearest to subtleness acted as the chief governing force and produced power in its own region. That is exactly the stage found in every living soul, but we have to find out where the things originate from. Cause and effect we do not bother about. We only deal with activity which was closest to the soul. The condition of the state, discovered by Yogis of yore might have been given in books burnt down by savage hands. But now the necessity having arisen the thing has been brought to light. We have to seek out wherefrom the nerve centres of the spinal cord regain activity for their work. God's primary thought to effect creation was there round the centre and that was the Mind-lake or the thought producing machinery of Nature. It was the source of activity even when it was in its mind-lake in the man's sphere. This is the source the starting point of Thought. If somehow we succeed in freezing it, the activity is gone and a man will turn exactly like a living Dead.”

Thus, in order to secure our return to that subtle state we must necessarily take up means and practices which ensure the subtlest results and relieve us of our grossness of being. That must be the first outlook of a true Abhyasi who takes up the path with earnestness. The surest path shall, therefore, be that which leads us not through beliefs and convictions, but through direct perception and practical

experience, onwards to complete Freedom. In short, the only means by which surest success is possible is spirituality in pure and unalloyed state. It is not religion, but far beyond it. It is quite simple and natural and is, in fact, the only solution of the man's problem.

III. THE SCIENCE OF YOGA

Different views

Yoga is the only path that leads one upto the highest level of spiritual elevation. Though almost every one is quite familiar with the name, there may perhaps be only a few who understand it in its true spirit. Numerous misapprehensions are prevalent about what it really is. Some think it to be a mysterious science leading to certain supernormal powers known as Siddhis. Others confine it to physical exercises of Asana, Pranayama, etc., meant only for the purpose of building up a sound physique so as to be able to demonstrate extraordinary feats of muscular strength and endurance. Still others treat it as a means for developing hypnotic powers to display wonders or to cure diseases by will force. But what the real purpose, basis and technique of Yoga may be, is not so well understood. Really, Yoga is a great psychic science based directly on the natural principles. It is neither religious moralism nor self-extinction; it does not involve hatred of existence nor ascetic escapism. It does not uphold mortification or strangulation of the physical or mental faculties. It covers all the phases of human life—moral, religious, social, political, etc. It is, in fact, the real natural life of a man. It lays down an accurate way of living in divine consciousness, away from egoistic consciousness. It offers, in the real sense, a complete solution of the human problem of existence and is open to every body without any distinction or reservation.

But, the system though quite simple and natural, is unfortunately, so much shrouded in mystery that its real significance is almost lost. The wrong interpretations put forth by unpractised idealogists who have dealt with the subject from the level of reason and philosophy have led to great confusion. The numerous commentaries written by learned professors on the basis of their partial knowledge have dealt with the subject in parts only, representing part as a complete whole. This has so much added to its complexities that almost anything, mysterious, occult or esoteric, has now come round to be counted as Yoga. It is for this reason that ordinary feats like resting on thorns, lying buried for some time, are considered by the masses to be Yogic attainments. Such are the views commonly held by most of the people today. Even those gifted with a better sense of understanding often take Yoga as something dreadfully disappointing because of its numerous odd implications involving austerity, penance and asceticism which are wholly unadjustable in an ordinary routine of life. For all these varied reasons Yoga which is one of the most efficient means of realisation of the Ultimate, has, on account of these misleading notions, been converted into a mere

physical pursuit aimed at the achievement of certain miraculous powers or Siddhis. It is, therefore, essential in the interest of spirituality to present to the readers a correct view of Yoga, purging out from it all complexities and misplaced notions.

Kinds of Yoga

We hear of numerous types of Yoga most of which often seem to be distinctly apart from, and sometimes even contradictory or incompatible with, each other. Still each of them is given out as a complete Yoga. Thus, what Yoga really is or what it is meant for, remains for the most part a mystery. For example, they talk of Japayoga, Tapayoga, Mantrayoga, Tantrayoga, etc., each presenting varied views and widely divergent means for the attainment of their particular objects which in most of the cases is, of course, not the realisation of the One, Absolute. Again, we have Karma-Yoga, Bhakti-Yoga and Gyan-Yoga with the characteristic features of each leading one only to outer formalities. Further on, there are Dhyana-yoga, Laya-yoga, Samadhi-yoga, Kundalini-yoga and what not. In short, any thing that one might take up for any purpose, physical, material, occult or esoteric is given out as yoga. This is, however, very baffling to a true seeker who for that reason is quite unable to decide what yoga really is and which of all the various types is the correct form and best suited to his ultimate purpose. The real significance of Yoga having thus been lost in mystery, whatever is therefore told to the people by their selfseeking teachers, they take it as real and follow it tamely thinking it to be correct.

As a matter of fact, Yoga is very old and was followed by saints and sages long before Patanjali's Yoga Shastra was introduced. Reference to yoga can, however, be traced out even in the Upanishads. But during that period, there being no systematic exposition of the subject, the practices (Upasanas) followed were based on personal understandings and experiences of teachers, and they passed down from heart to heart or from the teacher to the taught. But on account of difference in the level of approach in individual cases, the individual experiences, too, were different. Thus, what one taught or preached differed from that what the other did. This, in course of time, developed into different forms known by the common name of Yoga. This may account for the introduction of so many types of Yoga, as they have come down to us. In fact, all these classifications of Yoga, given out as separate types, are like partial inferences drawn out by a number of blind men who wanted to ascertain the true form of an elephant. The elephant as a whole being beyond their comprehension each one presumed it to be like one of the limbs he came in contact with, thus concluding it thereby to be like a rope, a snake, a fan, or a pillar. Such being the case, Yoga owing to these partial inferences has been represented in so many different forms or types. This is one of the initial mistakes which is responsible for its so much mystification.

Patanjali's System

With a view to remove these complexities, the great sage Patanjali made a marvellous effort to present a consolidated form of Yoga by coordinating all the different systems prevalent at the time. The system expounded by him is known by the simple name of Yoga without any suffix or prefix. It includes almost all the essential features represented as different types under different names. Karma, Bhakti and Gyan are its essential features; Japa, Tapa, etc., are the means or practices advised in individual cases according to the particular needs of the Abhyasi; and Laya, Samadhi, etc., pertain to the results. It is, thus, a systematic course complete in almost every respect and suited to the ultimate purpose of an aspirant from the beginning to the end. It is only this form of Yoga which I mean to refer to while talking about Yoga, and not to any of its sub-kinds.

The Two Sections

But yoga as expounded by Patanjali can, however, be divided into two sections, the Hathayoga and the Rajyoga, though the expounder himself makes no such distinction nor does he even mention the two names. Hathayoga pertains to the physical side of yoga and deals with bodily practices to control the activities of the body and the mind, whereas Rajyoga pertains exclusively to the real pursuit and deals with finer experiences connected with the soul. Under Patanjali's system Hathayoga was treated as an indispensable prelude to the main pursuit—the Rajyoga. But the rigid rules of life incumbent under the system of Hathayoga, not being in keeping with the routine ways of modern living, the two, i.e., the worldly life and the yogic life came to be treated as the two alternatives, in complete contrast with each other. That is without doubt a highly misleading view. In fact, it is only the transformation of life that is needed for the purpose so that our worldly life may be converted into a yogic life. That means co-ordination of the two types of living. But, unfortunately, no serious attention has so far been paid towards this most important point, so as to render yoga possible and practicable in the ordinary worldly life of the common man. Hathayoga so far as it relates to the physical regulation of the body and the mind may have been a preparatory step for the main pursuit in cases where it is found to be essential. But its indiscriminate enforcement in all its minutest details, in all cases under all circumstances is perhaps nothing short of an obstinate prejudice. If the sole purpose of these practices of Hathayoga is the suppression or strangulation of the mind and Indriyas so as to stop their normal working it is definitely an unnatural course and highly detrimental to our main purpose.

Yoga and Worldly Life

As regards practicability of yoga in the ordinary worldly life, almost everyone is fed up with constantly hearing that yogic pursuit is impossible and impracticable in a natural Grahastha (household) life, hence higher divine attainments are not possible for a common man unless he gives up his worldly

living, bids farewell to his wife, children and relations and assumes the saffron robes of a sadhu. The same thing is being preached from almost every platform, even by men of high fame and well-established supremacy. Excessive attachment to worldly objects is no doubt a hindrance in the divine path, but that does not mean that by giving up the worldly living and deserting the children and relations, one definitely gets free from feelings of attachment. Practical examples offer ample proof to show that it is seldom so. A brief review of the routine life of one of these self-styled renunciators (sadhus) will clearly show that though clad in saffron robes it is all saturated with worldliness just in the same way or perhaps in greater proportion than that of a grahastha. Besides, they more often contract, in addition, greater evils in the form of self-love, self-indulgence, arrogance and pride—the deadliest poison for a spiritual life, from which a householder is free to a great extent. Thus, so far as the inner state of mind is concerned, they are far worse than a simple-natured householder who struggles hard for the discharge of his responsibilities in diverse ways. In short, our real problem is to conquer the feeling of undue attachment (Maya-moha) for which false detachment imposed by external means is no solution at all. The feeling relates directly to the tendencies of mind for which one has only to look to the proper regulation of the mind in order to relieve it of its misdirected trend. If that is done every thing will be set right by itself and one shall be totally free from undue attachment even though he be leading a worldly life connected with all the worldly objects.

Brahmacharya

The next important point in this connection relates to the indiscriminate enforcement of Brahmacharya or celibacy, which is proclaimed to be vitally essential for the yogic pursuit. But, how they define Brahmacharya remains commonly unexplained and unspecified in almost all cases. In ordinary sense it is taken to mean complete cessation of sex life and segregation of sexes and the same view is presented by almost all sermon-preachers of the doctrine. But though the importance of Brahmacharya can in no way be underrated, not only in the spiritual field but also in all phases of human life, yet its application as commonly insisted upon is far too rigid than what it actually ought to be. The commonly accepted notion of Brahmacharya is total abstinence from conjugal relationship. In this sense, its uniform application at all stages of life is definitely wrong and unnatural. Both the sexes are the necessity of Nature and it is not without purpose that they have come into existence. Thus, total segregation of sexes proclaimed under rules is an open violation of the Divine Law, hence absolutely unjustifiable on social and moral grounds.

In the true sense, the term Brahmacharya refers to perfect discipline and regulated moderation in co-relationship of sexes, avoiding abuse and extravagance arising out of feeling of lust of sensual enjoyment. If this is overcome, the conjugal relationship turns into a sacred tie brought into effect for the fair discharge of the Divine Duty. Generally, people think it to be an impossibility and

hold that putting together the conjugal relationship with the absence of sensual enjoyment is like bringing the two poles together. But it is not really so. In fact, it depends upon the right training and proper regulation of mind, which, if thoroughly disciplined, will effect an all-round adjustment in every phase of life.

Of course, at different stages of life the form of Brahmacharya must necessarily be different according to the particular needs. In the early stage of life, which is a period of growth and development and is reserved for the acquisition of knowledge and self-discipline, complete segregation of sexes in thought, word and deed must strictly be adhered to. That means total abstinence from sexual feeling in the strictest sense. But during the later period, which is reserved for worldly pursuits, the rules of Brahmacharya must necessarily be different so as to meet the due requirements of the worldly life for the fair discharge of the Divine duties. The conjugal relationship between sexes during this period demands modification of the rule. But that must strictly be confined to proper limits related with due response to the natural urge or to the fair discharge of co-related duties. Under such conditions even a married man in his ordinary worldly life may rightly claim to be a Brahmachari in the true sense. Thus, it is not the conjugality that is detrimental to the yogic pursuit but only its abuse and the wrong ways of living and general conduct which are to be set right. In fact, vairagya and Brahmacharya are the two frightful bogies set up by the ignorant teachers of Yoga to scare away the common people from the path in order to maintain their elevated position as godheads of religion.

(i) 'MISUNDERSTANDING ABOUT YOGA'

Sadhan Chatushtaya

The four Sadhans or means of Yoga, prescribed under the Vedanta system are Viveka, Vairagya, shat-Sampatti and Mumukshutva. Much importance is attached to them and an Abhyasi is required to practise each in turn in his usual routine. According to the Vedantic view the practice of Yoga must start with Viveka, a sense of discrimination between the real and the unreals. The physical forms of things being subject to change and finally to dissolution are treated as unreal. The universe with everything it contains is taken to be false and illusionary whereas the only real thing at the root is the Unchanging and Eternal Brahma. This understanding is, of course, essential for the pursuit and none can ever deny it. But to take it as the primary means or Sadhana would perhaps be the gravest blunder which may probably lead to grosser physical imposition for making an outward show of it without having the least effect upon the mind. Viveka refers actually to the inner feeling of the mind which brings to our cognizance the real value of life in respect of the material forms. Man's concern with matter is indispensable. The grosser physical forms—in which matter appears—are so deeply inter-related with the physical existence of man that they cannot be avoided under any circumstances so long as he possesses a physical

body. His over-attention to the physical form of self is, in fact, the root-evil which causes all entanglements. It is on account of this alone that our attachment with material objects deepens so much that we lose consciousness of the transitory character of things we are connected with. The physical self, being the foremost in one's view, begins to appear to him as real and every thing connected with it acquires a substantial value. Thus, unchanging eternal phase at the root of the entire material manifestation is almost lost sight of and practically ignored in all physical activities of the mind. It is this understanding of the instability of the physical existence of things which is really referred to by the word Viveka which is to be awakened at the very preliminary step, and for which we have to trace out proper means to achieve. Viveka is, thus, in no way a sadhana in itself but it is only the result of certain sadhanas.

When this understanding is awakened and the real character of things is revealed to mind, the true knowledge of existence is gained. Naturally, then, an Abhyasi would begin to feel less inclined to and more disinterested in things he is surrounded by and whose transitory character has established upon his mind. Every thing will then lose its charm and he will, to some extent, be free from attachment. This is, in true sense, the beginning of what is known as Vairagya. It is, thus, the direct result of Viveka and pertains to the inner feeling of the heart. It can by no means be a Sadhana of Yoga.

The popular interpretation of Vairagya as ascetic aloofness from world-relationship or hatred for worldly possession, rejecting and discarding everything, is based on a grossly mistaken notion. The real difficulty on the path is not in regard to possession of things but to the charm and attraction which they offer by reason of their being a source of sensual joy and bodily pleasure. This over attachment (Maya Moha) with worldly objects in the interest of the physical self is, in fact, the root-evil which is responsible for all our entanglements which finally result in the diversion of mind from Reality. Vairagya, in true sense, is neither physical detachment nor non-possession nor anything of the kind but only pure and simple unattachment or disinterestedness in things which are needed for the fair discharge of the duties of life.

The Sahaj Marga, therefore, does not treat Viveka and Vairagya as the Sadhanas but only as results achieved by continued practice of certain Sadhanas. For this reason it makes a start from *shat*-Sampatti, the third Sadhana of the Vedantists which pertains to the regulation of mental tendencies in six different ways. The first of these, 'Shama', relates to the proper regulation of the mind and is the very initial step in the Yogic pursuit. The second, 'Dama', refers to the control of senses and Indriyas. The third, 'Uparati', is self-withdrawal, the fourth 'Titiksha', the state of fortitude, the fifth 'Shraddha', the real faith, and sixth 'Samadhana' a state of self-settledness. But here, too, the Sahaj Marga effects a diversion from the set old routine in as much as it does not treat all the sub-classes of this Sadhana in any way different from each other. In fact, they are all one, differing only in their outer aspects.

The primary-most among them is the proper regulation of the mind, which when effected, will produce corresponding effects upon other tendencies also. Thus, the control of senses and Indriyas, self-withdrawal, etc., will all follow automatically in the natural course. In fact, Regulation of the mind covers all these and causes an all round effect regulating every tendency. Therefore, while taking a start from *shat*-Sampatti, under the Sahaj Marga System, under the Sahaj Marga System, we take into account only the regulation of mind leaving every thing to follow as its natural result, and for this, the process (Sadhana) prescribed under the system is also one, viz. Meditation on the heart.

Ashtanga Yoga

The routine practice prescribed by Patanjali is depicted in his favourite Ashtanga-Yoga, the eightfold steps of Yoga, viz. Yama, Niyama, Asana, Pranayama, Pratyahar, Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi. According to the old view they served as the successive rungs of the ladder for the Abhyasi to climb upto the highest summit of Samadhi. In this respect, Ashtanga Yoga of Patanjali is considered to be an indispensable essential for the successful pursuit of Yoga.

But if we analyse all these steps, we find that the first five, viz. Yama—self restraint, Niyama—observance of rules, Asan—posture, Pranayama—control of breath, and Pratyahar—abstraction of Indriyas, relate purely to the physical side of Yoga and are confined exclusively to the bodily exercise for the cultivation of the body-discipline. The last three steps which comprise of Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi are internal (antaranga sadhana) or the real Yoga. Dharana pertains to the process of locating the attention to one specific point or idea taken up for meditation and is, thus, an elementary stage of Dhyana. Its interpretation as a state of concentration is basically wrong and has been the cause of misleading people into the false notion that concentration is the preliminary feature of meditation. The point will be more clear if we examine the entire process in its natural course. To start with meditation, we have first to fix our attention to the point we take up for meditation. That is what Dharana implies. Then we begin thinking over it with continued attention. This may be taken as meditation. When we get absorbed in the thought with or without conscious knowledge of it, it is then the state of concentration or Samadhi. Thus, attentiveness, continuance of attention and absorption are the three natural stages which follow in the usual course during the process of meditation. We, therefore, come to the conclusion that Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi, instead of being three different steps of Yoga to be practised separately one after the other are, in fact, the three phases of the one and the same process of meditation. Dhyana-meditation begins with Dharana and ends in Samadhi-concentration. Concentration is, therefore, the direct result of meditation and not the preliminary feature. It would, thus, be a wrong process to attempt at concentration in the very beginning of the practice of meditation, for, in that case one has necessarily to resort to physical force for suppressing or strangulating the

mind which finally leads to inner grossness, a thing far away from the real purpose.

The commonly accepted routine of Ashtanga Yoga comprises mainly of two parts: the Hathayoga section and the Rajyoga section. But, unfortunately, so much unnecessary importance is attached to the mechanical observance of every item of the routine that most often the real purpose is altogether lost sight of and only Asanas and Pranayama remain to view all the life which one adheres to, boastfully exulting over his physical attainments, whereas, in the true sense, he remains as far away from the real spirit of Yoga as ever. Rigid adherence to the mechanism of the process without taking into account its real significance is seldom of avail and very often seriously harmful to the real pursuit. One must adhere closely to one's ultimate object and choose and try the best available means for it. It does not matter if for the purpose he has to deviate from the mechanical routine, for, our real purpose is to achieve the end and not the formal courtesy of adherence to the set routine. Moreover, it may also be a grave mistake to presume that what the great sage has laid down thousands of years ago, is all, and that nothing more or beyond is ever possible or conceivable. The development of experience brings to view changes, modifications and improvements in all branches of knowledge and science. As such, without meaning any discredit to the great sage, I may say that Patanjali's Yoga thesis may not justly be taken as entirely beyond modification or improvement especially in view of the present ways of man's living. But, not entering into any detailed discussion on the point, I confine myself only to points directly related with the topic taken up herein.

The mechanism of Ashtanga Yoga starts from the body and proceeds from the physical to the mental by the centripetal course. Naturally, it would be a long and tedious process which may not be complete in the course of a whole life. It is for this reason alone that yoga is generally believed to be a pursuit of life after life continuously. But who knows of the lives other than this one? The final attainment is thus indefinitely postponed. We, therefore, need think over it seriously and modify it in such a way as to be able to achieve the end within the span of this one life.

The real Yoga pertains to the finer faculties of the inner being, concerned directly with the soul. Mind being the central force in man controls everything in him whether outer or inner. Thus, everything, good or bad, that happens through the medium of the body proceeds originally from the mind. So, the proper course for regulating the activities of the body would be to modify the mental tendencies accordingly. That means the centrifugal course, proceeding from the mental to the physical—a natural and the most efficacious process. It is, therefore, the mind and not the body that is first to be tackled with for the purpose. That comes to the proper regulation of the mind at the elementary step leaving the body discipline to follow in the natural course. In this light we can safely presume that the physical means prescribed under the provisions of Ashtanga Yoga may not be quite suited to our purpose and be, therefore, an unnecessary waste of time and energy.

In view of all these facts, the Sahaj Marga does not support the prejudicial view regarding the essentiality of Ashtanga Yoga for the yogic pursuit and prefers a more natural and better effective centrifugal course, taking up the regulation of the mind at the very initial step. The system, thus, starts from the central point, Dhyān—meditation, the basic point of Rajyoga, omitting the Hathayoga exercises from the course. The last three steps, too, being originally the different states of Dhyān are treated as one process of meditation. Thus, of all the eight limbs of the Ashtanga Yoga there remains only one, the meditation, which covers every thing, physical, mental and psychic and is all-efficient in every respect. The Sahaj Marga, thus, confines itself only to meditation, setting aside all unnecessary projections, and recommends but one process, meditation, throughout for the achievement of the one object, the realisation of the Absolute.

In short, the Sahaj Marga, thus, presents a modified course of Yoga adoptable in an ordinary worldly life and easily adjustable in all circumstances and conditions of life, rejecting all misplaced superfluities imposed by idle commentators and self-seeking teachers. A practical experience alone can verify the fact and convince an aspirant of the efficacy of the system.

The Real Purpose

The real purpose for which yoga is undertaken is not very difficult to understand. An inner craving for the realisation of Reality exists in every heart, though one may not be consciously aware of it in clear form. Numerous means for the gratification of this natural instinct are offered in the form of various Sadhanas prescribed by the different cults, but in spite of all that, the problem remains a mystery and the hankering after its solution still continues. There may be different factors responsible for it, of which one may be the clear understanding of purpose for which the means are undertaken. This applies specially in the case of Yoga, which aptly may claim to be the most efficient means of realisation of the One Absolute. This is the only purpose of Yoga in true sense. But, for the realisation of the One Absolute—the subtlest Being—it is essential to dispense with grossness of the individual self, as far as passible, in order to assume the subtlest form of existence in close conformity with Nature. But, usually, as it is found today, the real motives of a pursuer of the Yogic Path is the attainment of power and not the development of subtleness of being. This is definitely wrong; for, when the attention of the pursuer is located on power, it is only the power and not the subtleness that will develop by the practice of Yoga. Power, undoubtedly, is heavier and grosser than the subtleness we finally aim at. Consequently, Yoga for the purpose of acquiring power is undoubtedly a deviation from the path and, hence amounts to degradation of Yoga. But though certain extraordinary powers do develop as a result of Yogic attainments, their treatment as the object of pursuit is wrong and detrimental to our interest. The Shastric injunction against the utilisation of the powers thus gained also confirms the same view. But that is generally understood to apply only to matters of purely material nature, though it

is not exactly so. As a matter of fact, power in its absolute state has no action unless it associates with matter. Consequently, for the utilisation of power, be it for any purpose—worldly or spiritual—one has necessarily to revert to the same material plane from which he had started. Consequently, the attainment of Yogic powers as the final aim is wrong and against the very principle of Yoga.

(ii) YOGIC ANATOMY OF NERVES

Nervous System

The nervous system plays an important part in the life of a yogi. It controls all sensations and feelings. The action of nerves is subject to the activities of mind which is the vital force in man. The nervous system is divided into two groups, the voluntary nerves and the involuntary nerves. The voluntary nerves can be controlled physically at will or by the force of habit, but the involuntary action of the subconscious nerves is beyond control. It is this part of the nervous system that plays an important part in the pursuit of yoga, and for this, the yogis generally resort to physical practices of Asana, Pranayama, etc.

The nervous system is composed of microscopic units called cells, which are highly specialised. From the cells collected in the brain and the spinal column, thin nerve fibres extend practically to every tissue of the body. They carry impulse from the body to the mind and vice versa. The yogic anatomy deals with ten important nerves of impulse (Vayu-nadis), of which at least three are the most important. They are Ida, Pingala and Sushumna. Ida is located on the left side of the spinal column and ends in the right nostril. Pingala is on the right and ends in the left nostril. By conscious control over the incessant working of these sympathetic nerves it is possible to reduce the katabolic activities of the body and suspend the general wear and tear of tissues to help the prolongation of life. Sushumna is centrally situated and passes through the spinal column. It originates inside the Kanada i.e., the sacrum, which corresponds roughly with the level of umbilicus. From this point it runs up towards the head to join the Sahasra-dal-kamal. At the level of throat (region of larynx) the Sushumna divides into two parts. The anterior part goes towards the frontal lobe of the brain while the posterior portion towards the cavity of the brain. It is this posterior portion which is very important in yoga and which when, developed governs all sensations.

Chakras or Lotuses

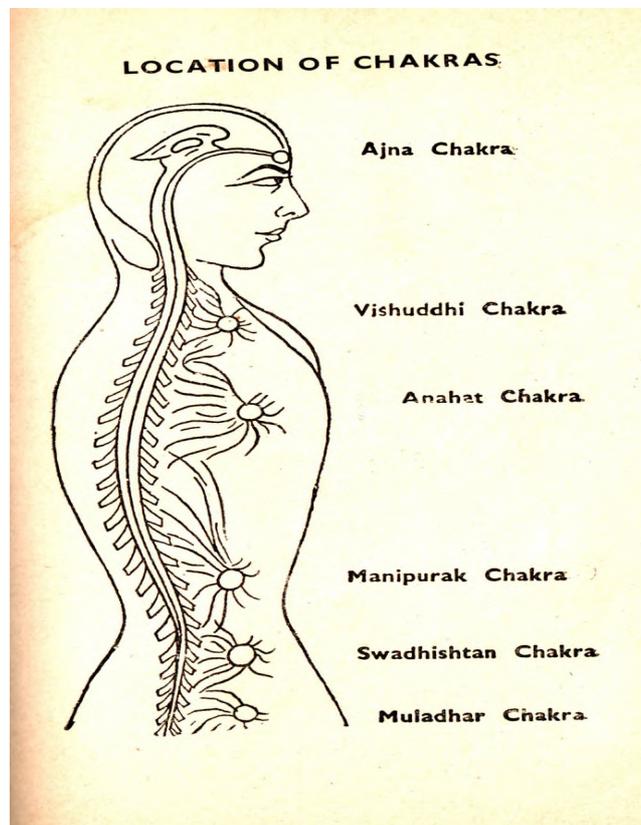
Sushumna Nadi is connected with the nerve cells in the spinal column from which nerve fibres proceed to the body. After leaving the vertebral column they divide into numerous branches. They make connection with each other forming several net-works known as plexuses (Chakras) located in different parts of the body. They are the chief centres of supra-vital force and serve as stops or checks to increase the force of resistance. Each Chakra is connected with a particular

section of the anatomic nerves and controls its sub-conscious activities. Stages of spiritual development are governed mostly by them. It is, therefore, the persistent effort of a yogi to acquire conscious control over the sub-conscious activities of these centres. For the purpose, it is necessary to purify the Chakras so as to relieve them of the grosser effect, settled on them as layers. This is, therefore, one of the most important items of the pursuit. When the Chakras are thoroughly cleaned, they resume their original glow and the properties lying dormant therein are released. This is known as the awakening of the Chakras. The Chakras, when awakened, smoothen our passage to higher states of finer super-consciousness. But, if the awakening of the Chakras is forced by physical means, such as exercises of Asanas and Pranayama, the real transformation seldom comes about into effect and instead of subtleness power alone develops.

The following are the six important Chakras :

1. Muladhara Chakra : (Basic plexus) near the side of the rectum.
2. Swadhishtana Chakra : (Hypogastric plexus) in the pelvic region, on the level of the root of the penis.
3. Manipurak Chakra : (Solar plexus) in the region of the umbilicus.
4. Anahata Chakra : (Cardiac plexus) in the region of the heart.
5. Vishuddhi Chakra : (Pharyngeal plexus) in the region of the throat.
6. Ajna Chakra : (Cavernous plexus) between the two eye-brows, at the root of the nose.

LOCATION CHAKRAS



OF

The Modified Course

Under the old system of practice these chakras were taken up in the order proceeding from the lowest to the highest. The Sahaj Marga makes a diversion from the set old path in taking a start from the heart, the three lower chakras being left out in the preliminary stage. The reason for this modification is that the heart being the centre of the human system sends out blood to the whole body. By meditation at this point the fine paramanus (atomic particles) of purity and piety introduced into it are carried over to the whole body by the blood flowing out from it. Thus, the purification process of the entire physical system goes on automatically and unconsciously. This view, i.e. meditation on heart, has been supported by many of the eminent teachers of Yoga including Rishi Patanjali. There are, however, other points of concentration, too, but they are not so greatly useful. The Sahaj Marga, therefore, recommends meditation on the heart as the most efficacious process. From this point our march is directed upwards to the higher chakras namely the Vishuddhi and the Ajna. Thus, of all the six chakras our march remains confined to the three higher ones setting aside the other three, which get automatically cleaned to some extent by the effect of the process undertaken for the purification of the heart and by the transfusion of the purified blood into them from the heart. Further awakening of these Chakras to their full glow, not being needed for our spiritual purpose at the stage, is not brought into effect with a view to safeguard against the abuse of the roused up powers, which are, of course, mainly material. They, however, get awakened automatically when matured or by the reflected power of the Guru when genuine need for it arises; and this is mostly in connection with the Nature's work entrusted to him at higher stages. This modification in the system of yoga has considerably reduced our labour by omitting half the number of Chakras from the course. Thus, our path which formerly covered all the six Chakras has now been cut short by half, saving thereby a good deal of time and labour on the part of the Abhyasi.

Tantra

In yoga a man starts from the physical plane and proceeds along the prescribed lines taking up the different centres in turn, which are purified and transformed. When they are transformed their characteristic properties are released and the natural action thereof starts in an automatic way. Their natural tendency remains directed towards the ultimate. These properties though generally taken into understanding as powers, can in no way be taken in that sense because at this level they have no perceptible physical action in the material plane. They do not even attract the attention of the pursuer who normally remains unmindful of their existence even. They come to our conscious knowledge only when their course is diverted and the curvature begins to be formed. The curvature comes, as in case of Tantra, when one begins to treat them as powers and adopts means and practices to develop them for physical purposes. The idea of power promotes within the heart a secret feeling for its display and utilisation

for which a material base is essential. Thus, from that higher plane of subtleness, the curvature, in course of time, brings him down to the same material plane from which he had started. This is what all occult, esoteric and Tantrik systems finally lead to. As such, Tantra may justly be regarded as pure and simple materialism, far away from the range of spirituality. In all such cases, the exploitation of power becomes the main pursuit and material gain the chief purpose. This leads to numerous extraordinary phenomena, worked out with selfish motives by the application of the thought-force.

Siddhis

The cleaning of the Chakras is an important item in the Yogic pursuit. When these centres are cleaned and transformed, their characteristic properties are released and the natural action thereof starts in an automatic way. The super-normal powers associated with the Chakras are often wrongly interpreted in numerous odd ways, giving rise to scepticism. Each Chakra is characterised with some particular powers which are released when its awakening is effected. But, the rousing up of these powers by forced physical means results mostly in the development of Siddhis (miracle-working capacity) which are commonly considered to be a sure test of Yogic attainments. For example, flying in the air like a bird, walking over the surface of water as on land or standing in the blazing fire unhurt, are some of the achievements proclaimed to be associated with the awakening of these Chakras. But, such vague assertions which at the very surface seem to be fabulous or imaginary like the fairy tales or the stories of birds and beasts, have always remained short of practical evidence and experience. They may, however, offer temptation to those lovers of extraordinary powers who want to display themselves as super-normal beings. There may, however, be some basic truth underlying these assertions which may not have been properly understood, but the way in which they are exposed to common understanding is, beyond doubt, grossly inappropriate and confusing. For instance, flying in the air may be supposed to be referring to the reduction of the density of being, which as an advancement towards subtleness is, of course, the persistent effort of a yogi. At higher stages, the condition is sometimes described as being lighter than air even, for the attainment of which, a parallel lightness of one's own being is essential. Its interpretation as power to fly in the air is wrong and misleading.

Some extra-normal capacity, no doubt, does develop by the effect of illumining these vital nerve centres, but that is not a matter of any serious concern to a pursuer unless he is internally inclined towards it and applies his will and effort to transform it as power. In that case, his mind gets diverted towards miracles alone and the main objective is altogether lost sight of. This is what the so called siddhas usually profess and display in order to attract towards them the silly masses who are hit hard by their various worldly problems. They extend their open invitation to all those who wish for having a son or relief from some misery or any of their selfish desires. They may, more appropriately, be said to

have set up their trade concerns in this manner, going about from place to place for the purpose of earning money. They make it a regular profession and are amply paid for it. It may not be out of place here to mention an incident related with my master. Once a wealthy business man who owned as many as twenty business concerns at different places, hearing about the master's calibre from one of his friends, remarked, "If your master displays to me some striking miracle, I shall give away all my twenty business centres to him." By-and-by, it reached the Master's ears too, who meekly replied, "Please advise him to search for a sturdy ass, who might well bear the burden of his big concern." The man when he heard this replay realised his mistake and repented for his folly. In short, such is usually the mentality of the common people, on account of which they often fall an easy prey to the cunning devices of miracle mongers.

Yet, in spite of all our uptodate knowledge and improved understanding it is often not very easy to decide whether a miracle is a reality or a hoax. Everything that we see or believe can be explained by reason but a miracle is sometimes very difficult to explain in that way. Some miracles can be exposed as cunning devices planned out very skilfully. People sometimes make a show of miraculous powers by predicting things in a vague language which can be interpreted in numerous ways. Ordinary Yogic feats and cases of petty jugglery are sometimes thought of as the same thing.

On the other hand, there are sometimes cases when a man cannot but be convinced of the genuineness of a miracle. Such miracles are mostly the results of powers excited by particular exercises of the anatomic nerves and are brought into action by the force of thought or will. They cannot, however, be explained at the ordinary level of understanding. But the question is whether, though they are un-understandable to an observer, they are also un-understandable to the performer. It is just possible that what may be mystifying to a spectator may not be so to the performer who is acquainted with some particular art not known to the observer. For example, a man sits down all night buried deep in the ground without any passage of air, still he comes out alive the next morning. To a lay-man it may be a miracle but to one who knows something about breath-control, it is quite understandable as the result of continued practice of Pranayama. Thus, in almost all cases, a miracle which at the ordinary level seems to be mystifying to most of the people may not be so to those who have the knowledge of the particular art associated with it. In this sense, a miracle is seldom a miracle to one and all and perhaps there might be a few who can analyse it on the basis of certain knowledge not known to others.

The mystery can further be solved if we look into the motive of the performer. In most of the cases, it is either some personal gain or a show of greatness and superiority or perhaps a cunning device to attract people to one's fold of Gurudom. In this light it may not be wrong to say that almost every miracle is more a hoax than a reality.

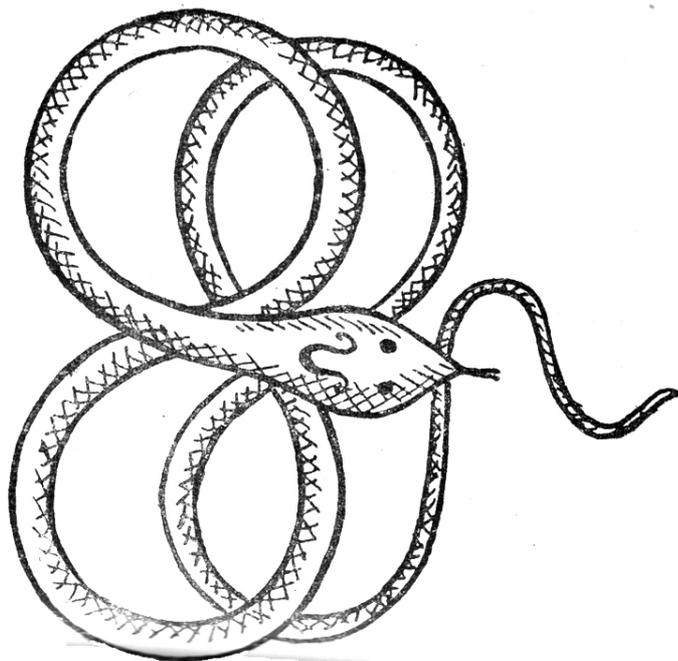
But, this wholesale condemnation may not be quite justifiable when, at times, we find real saints of calibre or great founders of religions associated with some striking event of the kind. These, though miracles to our outer view, do not fall under the class discussed above. They generally come into action—only when there is genuine need for it—by the effect of the subtle powers, without any thought or intention on the part of the doer. They happen quite automatically without the least implication of thought or will and even without the conscious knowledge of the doer. Such miracles, if they can at all be called so, happen through the medium of some great soul in persuance of the Nature's work for the universal good.

Kundalini

The centre of all such powers is commonly understood to be the Kundalini-Shakti, the vital subtle force in man. It is located in the lower part of the body near the level of the navel. It corresponds with the pelvic plexus of the human anatomic system and is represented as a coiled-serpent. It is supposed to possess immense power and its importance in Yoga is thought to be very great, especially in Hathayoga, where it is often treated as the real pursuit of a Yogi. The action of the Kundalini in the physical plane is not known. In its normal state, it appears to be lying dormant without affecting any of the conscious or the sub-conscious nerves of the body. When awakened, it becomes active and is supposed to affect all the important centres of the anatomic system. The awakening of the Kundalini is brought into effect either automatically when matured at higher levels of advancement or by the force of physical exercises of Asan, Pranayama, etc., as provided for under the old system. According to the current view, Kundalini when awakened stretches forth through the vertebral canal right from one end to the other with its head-point at the centre of the Sahastra-Dal-Kamal and its tail in the Muladhara region. The effect is then supposed to be carried through the spinal column and reflected upon the chakras through the medium of the nerve fibres. This is usually known as Chakra-bhedan or the piercing of the Chakras. The Chakras are presumed to be awakened automatically with the awakening of the Kundalini. The awakening of Kundalini is believed to result in the acquisition of super-natural powers known as Siddhis, and, it is, in fact, this attainment alone that most of the pursuers of yoga generally aspire for, but which in a true sense, is far removed from the real purpose.

The wonderful discovery of the Master about this mysterious force offers a more scientific explanation. He says that Kundalini instead of being like a coiled serpent is more like an open ring, the two ends of which are but slightly apart from each other. They face each other and serve as poles for the flow of energy. One of them is the positive pole and the other is the negative. From each end one type of energy flows on into the other forming a circuit within itself. For this reason the action of the Kundalini force remains confined within itself, without affecting any part of the human system. But when awakened, its ends get a little more

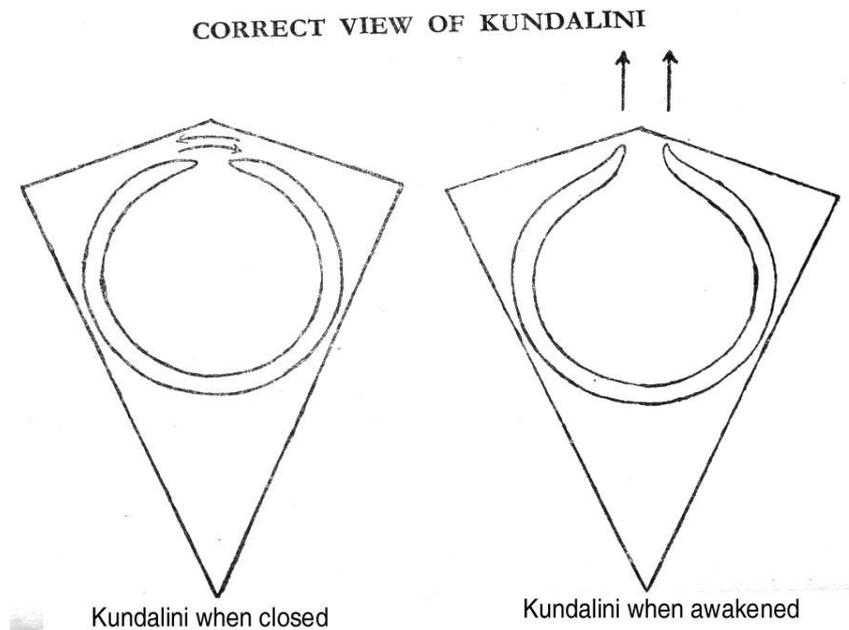
apart and turn slightly upwards. The energy then flowing out from the ends does not remain located within the Kundalini but goes up through the medium of the Sushumna Nadi, covering a larger circuit extending from the base up to the centre of the Sahasra. It is not that the physical nerve itself actually straightens to stretch forth through the spinal column but that it is only the extension of the circuit of power located in the Kundalini. The super-normal power acquired by the awakening of the Kundalini is often misunderstood in numerous ways. In cases where premature awakening is effected by physical means, the power acquired is commonly utilised for material purposes only. In this respect, the awakening of the Kundalini may be taken as an exclusively material pursuit and may amount to degradation of Yoga. As a matter of fact, Kundalini is the seat of sensations which come under control by its awakening. The Divine Wisdom dawns with it and the Nature becomes an open book. The super-normal capacity acquired thereby is meant for the Nature's work which a yogi at higher stages of advancement cannot avoid. It is by no means the final object of the pursuit or the real criterion of a yogi or even an essential factor in spiritual elevation. There is no doubt that the Kundalini of a yogi does awaken when he attains a certain stage of advancement, but that does not mean that by effecting its forced awakening by physical means one necessarily becomes a yogi in the true sense. In most of the cases forced awakening leads to grossest evils. It is for this reason that Kundalini which may, in its natural course, be an asset, may otherwise be a means for making a demon of the worst type. Greatest precaution is, therefore, necessary in this respect and its premature awakening must not be resorted to in any case.



KUNDALINI, AS DEPICTED IN THE "TANTRIC" BOOKS

The following is the view of my Master, based upon his revealed knowledge of this mysterious divine energy which goes a good deal to explain the mystery of Kundalini :

“The automatic awakening of Kundalini sets the dormant energy into action for the unfoldment of the knot related with the super-consciousness of higher levels. It means the dawn of Divine knowledge, which goes on developing as one



proceeds more and more towards subtleness. After crossing the mind region we come to the sphere of the Seven Rings of the so-called light (vide *Efficacy of Rajyoga*). The divine wisdom thus acquired begins to assume a finely subtle state and by the time one reaches the third ring its automatic working in consonance with Nature starts by itself. It reaches its final stage when we have passed through all the seven rings. The attainment of this final stage may be taken as a mark of completion so far as human capability is concerned. The action of Kundalini at the early stages is grosser in comparison to that at higher levels.

One thing which must specially be borne in mind is that awakening of Kundalini is not at all essential or indispensable for the attainment of liberation. Those who hold so may seek for its verification within their own hearts and decide for themselves whether it is the Kundalini or the real significance of their being that helps them along the path. They will definitely come to the conclusion that it is not the Kundalini that helps them in this respect and all the time and energy

applied to it is thus lost in vain. On the other hand, in most cases, it leads to worst abuses and grossest evils.

My latest discovery in this connection is that Kundalini contains in a finer form all the particles which are present in the Sahasrara. There are cells in it which resemble closely the brain cells with the only difference that those in the Kundalini have a conical shape. When awakened in a matured state, the conical shape of the Kundalini cells begin to transform into a roughly round shape with its top-point projecting a little upwards. It is only after this transformation that this powerful energy takes up the natural course of action directed towards Godly work. In case of forced awakening, as in Hathayoga, the conical shape of cells remains unchanged. In that case, its utility in the spiritual field is practically nil, and the power aroused thereby is, in almost all cases, diverted towards material plane, resulting in numerous untold evils. If the same condition, i.e. the conical formation settles down on other centres or Chakras, the vice maybe unlimited and may finally result in the formation of a demon of the worst type. This was exactly the case with Ravana whose entire cells connected with all the vital centres or Chakras including the Kundalini had become rigidly conical beyond all possibility of transformation. The only solution in that case, therefore, was destruction. The above example goes sufficiently to show that it is not really the awakening of Kundalini that counts but only its proper transformation. It may, therefore, be far better to let this vital centre remain in a sleeping state than to awaken it without the necessary transformation. By the process of Hathayoga such a transformation is hardly possible, because the attention of the Abhyasi is fixed more upon the acquisition of power than upon subtleness. The proper transformation in such cases, if at all, can only be effected by the super-normal powers of a master of the highest calibre if such a one is available and accessible.

Another important feature which lay undiscovered so far relates to the passage of Kundalini-force through the spinal column. Ordinarily by Hathayoga the awakened Kundalini-force takes a straight passage through the spinal column from one end to the other. The awakened energy which in ordinary course should have come into action through its top-most point at the base of the Sahasrara is impeded on account of the unpurified state of the point. Thus, it does not connect itself with the subtle state of the Sahasrara but gets diverted towards lower planes of materialism. In Rajyoga the Kundalini force goes up with a bow-like curve with almost a hair-breadth curvature at the centre. This keeps the power confined to its proper natural course leading to finer states of subtleness. In this case, the transformation goes on automatically resulting in the removal of grosser elements there-from. Under the circumstances, there is no risk of wrong diversion or misuse.”

IV. MIND AND MEDITATION

(i) MIND (*)

(*) The theory related to the origin of the human mind as expounded in this book (*Efficacy of Rajyoga*) stands on quite rational grounds. The primary Stir, brought into action by the dormant will of God led to be the cause of existence. The Stir set into motion the Latent Powers and the process of creation and animation started. The same Root-Force, appearing as stir or stimulus descended in every being in the form of the chief active force. In man it came to be known as the mind at the root of which there is the same dormant will just as it was in the stir. Thus, the human mind is closely identical with the Root-Force or the original stir which it is part of. As such the functions of both are also closely similar.

(*Efficacy of Rajyoga p.2 -2nd Ed.*)

The mind is the root-force in man. It owes its origin to the First Stir (Kshob) which set up the process of creation into action. In its primordial state it existed in an extremely subtle form. From this super-finest state it went on growing grosser and grosser till it came down to the level of our conscious mind. The thinkers have divided the human mind into two classes, the conscious and the sub-conscious. At the level of the conscious mind (also known as the physical mind), its actions, which are within our direct perception and experience, can be controlled physically and by the force of will. But the actions of the sub-conscious mind remain subdued and are beyond our conscious control. But these two broader divisions do not explain all the different levels of the human mind, which may, in fact, be innumerable. Thus, the sub-conscious mind covers all the different levels of consciousness which lie beyond the limits of the conscious mind. At all successive levels the state of consciousness goes on growing finer and finer till it attains its original state as it had at the time of the creation. *Philosophy* ought to take into account all these successive states of consciousness for its ultimate spiritual purpose. The conscious mind is usually known as the sthula (gross) mind. Next higher to it is the sukshma (astral) mind, which governs all the activities of the lower or the grosser mind. At this level there may again be numerous different states each varying from the other in respect of density or grossness. Higher above, we come to the level of karana or the causal mind which governs the action of the astral mind. Thus, it may be evident that everything that passes into the conscious mind proceeds actually from some higher centre of subtler consciousness where impressions of our thoughts and actions in the lower plane have been implanted.

Control of Mind

The mind, thus, being the centre of all human activities, controls everything in man. It governs all actions, thoughts, passions and emotions. It is unceasingly

active. If it is let loose, as is generally the case, to work in its own way, it usually associates with body-consciousness and begins to work for the gratification of our physical desires and cravings. Thus, most of its activities are diverted towards material purposes and it gets entangled in them. This unrestrained trend of the human mind, directed only towards one side is, in fact, responsible for most of the evils which finally lead to our general degradation. It is for this reason that mind is often condemned as the worst enemy of man, for which drastic measures of suppression and annihilation are usually recommended. But it is quite evident that such measures, though they might, at times, serve temporarily as a check upon the mind, cannot relieve it of its evil tendencies which remain buried within for ever. The control is required only when evil persists. Thus, when we mean to resort to the control of mind, the underlying thought of retention of the evil is also implied in it. That means that the poison is allowed to remain as it is, and efforts are made only to check its outward action. In case the control is at any time relaxed, the evil will again shoot up and begin to display its action. For this reason, it is clear that control of mind is in itself a wrong term. It should rather be the purification of mind which implies elimination of all undesirable elements from the mind. This is really the proper course which is suited best to our purpose.

Purification of Mind

All evils, no doubt, breed from the mind, but it is so only when it has gone off the rails. The proper course would, therefore, be to correct it by directing its tendencies towards the right channel. It can best be done by throwing out the poison of evil which lies buried within. That comes by proper cleaning and purification of mind by which it may be relieved of its evil tendencies. Purification includes not only the purging out of its evil tendencies but also of all complexities and grossness of being, caused by the overruling influence of materialism.

Inner purification is, therefore, one of the most important items of the pursuit. Unless such complexities are removed or at least considerably reduced one is hardly able to proceed along the path of spirituality. But, unfortunately, this most essential feature of the spiritual life is sadly neglected under most of the current systems. As a result, in spite of their life-long labour with mechanical routine of worship they remain submerged in solid grossness from top to bottom, barring for ever their approach to Reality. In fact, spiritual elevation is only a dream unless it is supplemented by thorough cleaning and proper regulation of mind. This is no doubt a tedious job which requires whole-hearted attention and persistent labour on the part of the Abhyasi. The help and support of a worthy guide is also very essential in this respect.

Regulation of Mind

In fact, regulation of mind is the main objective for which cleaning and purification are undertaken. It implies a sense which is slightly more than what

purification conveys. Regulation of mind refers not only to the purging out of evil or grosser elements from the mind but also to proper adjustment of and due moderation in all things related with it. That means a thoroughly balanced state without rise or fall or excitement. But this does not mean total elimination of all feelings, passions or emotions. Passion, emotion, etc. may, at times, be quite necessary for our daily affairs of life which must definitely be displayed according to need but never beyond the required limit in an uncontrolled way, and, at the same time, mind must ever remain free from its weighty effect.

(ii) MEDITATION

Since the proper regulation of the mind is an essential feature of the pursuit it is but necessary to adhere to it from the very start. The only effective process for that would be meditation which deals directly with the functioning of the mind. The non-stop wanderings and all the multifarious activities of the mind can be overcome by gradual change in its general trend. The mind which on account of its close association with body-consciousness has fallen on evil ways, thinking all the while of its sensual cravings, is to be diverted towards higher and nobler ideals. This is what we do in meditation. In meditation we try to attach ourselves with one subject for some time. That means, for that period at least, we are to some extent relieved of its obnoxious trend. When the practice matures and mind becomes accustomed to it, a state of peace and calmness begins to develop within. This is the elementary result achieved by the practice of meditation.

Concentration

The general view that concentration is the initial step for meditation, is a grossly mistaken notion. Most of the people are induced to believe that for practising meditation it is necessary to start practising concentration first. This fallacy has perhaps arisen out of the wrong interpretation of the term 'Dharana' which according to the routine of Ashtanga Yoga precedes 'Dhyan' or meditation. But 'Dharana' simply means attentiveness and not concentration as commonly understood. If we examine this question in the light of our daily routine, we find that when we think over some of our worldly problems we naturally pass through the three steps implied in Dharana, Dhyan and Samadhi. In all cases, we first fix our attention on the thing and then begin to think over it in a continued way. Sometimes, when our thinking becomes very deep, we feel lost in it, which may rightly be presumed to be a state of concentration. Thus, it would be wrong to presume that concentration is the preliminary step for meditation. Besides, if we first try to concentrate we must necessarily resort to physical force for suppressing the activities of mind in order to create a state of suspension, which is definitely a wrong course and away from our real purpose. The suspension of mind brought about by forced physical means may, however, result in temporary state of coma

which is wrongly presumed to be a spiritual state. It may be more like a state of senselessness brought about by the effect of chloroform or some other drug.

Object for Meditation

The next important point in this connection is the fixing up of an object for meditation. Some of the teachers have classified meditation in two ways, the concrete and the abstract. The concrete meditation is that in which some material object in solid form is kept in view and meditated upon. Numerous objects are advised for the purpose. In most cases, it is the image or a picture of some God which is commonly considered to be the best. Others advise objects like a flame, a mountain peak, a river or even a flower to meditate upon. The significance of such objects which have no relation with the Divine thought is not understandable at all, unless thereby they mean only to practise concentration for developing certain hypnotic power for the sake of their material gain. Meditation on image also serves the same purpose. Besides, when some solid object in physical form is taken up for meditation, the characteristic feature of the object, i.e. solidity or grossness, is also sure to shed its effect upon the mind with the result that grossness instead of being reduced will go on increasing. But, a supporter of the above view will stand up to defend himself saying that it is not really the image that is being meditated upon but the reality at the root of it. But that may only be for the sake of vain argumentation. In fact, perhaps not one among thousands does ever take it in that way. Really, they do meditate upon the very image in its solid form ignoring the Reality at the root, and that is but natural, for when the solid object is taken into view, the Reality at the root is automatically lost sight of, and they remain practising only concentration in an imposed way. Thus, they naturally keep on contracting greater and greater of grossness. It is, therefore, evident that meditation on solid form causes adverse effect which hampers our march towards subtleness. In this respect, the so-called concrete meditation is by no means helpful to our ultimate purpose, hence not of any avail in spirituality.

With this view, meditation on objects of the subtlest nature and in the subtlest way is thought to be the best. For the purpose, generally, one of the Divine attributes is taken up to meditate upon. The same do we follow in Sahaj Marga. By this we mean to proceed from the quality to the possessor of quality. Since we aim at the final state of subtleness, it is but essential that the object we take up must also be subtlest in nature. No imaginary form should be put to it in order to bring it physically into our mental vision. Any attempt to visualise the thought-object in a supposed form will lead to grosser effect and consequently the efficacy of the process will be lost and ultimate success will become doubtful. It may even lead to mental disorder if it is practised in an intensified way. For this reason it is very necessary for every one to be very careful in the selection of the object for meditation. The best course would be to follow the tried methods and to try at all cost to avoid grosser views connected with concrete objects for meditation.

Meditation on Form

An alternative method for meditation is advised by Shankar in his *Viveka Chudamani* which provides for meditation on the form of a personality of calibre who is, in the true sense, Brahmanishtha or completely merged in the Infinite Absolute. The form to be meditated upon must be the original and should be taken up with the idea of its being super-natural. The form in no case should be one as represented by the visionary concept of an artist. But to find out such a one to judge him correctly is perhaps the most difficult task. As a matter of fact, it is almost beyond the power and capacity of a Sadhaka to arrive at a definite conclusion as to whether one is really so or not. What generally happens is that people finding one according to their own inclination of mind, feel pleased by his dextrous display of simplicity, unattachment, and love, accept him as being beyond everything or really merged in the Infinite without having any sound criterion for their judgement. In most cases, that is not merely due to their own ignorance or lack of understanding but also to the efforts of those so-called elevated personalities who spare no means and pains to give themselves out as realised souls. It must be specially borne in mind that if the form meditated upon is of one who is deficient in any respect, the result would be that he, too, will remain equally short of the mark. One who is himself in bondage can never help another in attaining freedom, though he may meditate upon him for a thousand years. On the other hand, if the form is that of a rogue or an impostor, the results achieved will definitely be of a similar nature. It is, thus, absolutely essential that the form taken up for meditation must be of one of the highest calibre who is one with nature and has permanently established himself in the ultimate causeless state—The Absolute, otherwise, it would be safest to avoid the practice altogether. The Sahaj Marga, though it favours the practice in principle, does not generally recommend it unless there be one such available and accessible.

The Right Course

The right course would, therefore, be to take up meditation in the simplest and most natural way, avoiding forced restraints or mental struggle. As a matter of fact, meditation is simply a process of thinking over and over again on a Divine aspect so as to form a connected link of thought. It has no connection with concentration, suppression or struggling. It aims at the gentle diversion of mind towards Divine thought in the most natural way. The process, therefore, as it normally should be, is to start with meditation taking in the subtlest consciousness of the thought taken up for the purpose. Sahaj Marga recommends meditation on heart and the thought taken up for the purpose is the presence of the Divine light (Ishwariya Prakash) in it. But though in words one may call it as meditation on heart or on Divine light, yet, in the true sense, the meditation is neither upon the heart nor on the Divine Light, for, neither of them is our goal. The heart is taken up only as a base for locating our attention and the presence of Divine Light as a

mere supposition, without the slightest effort to locate the position of the heart or to visualise the Divine Light. Meditation practised in this way shall be the subtlest in character, hence completely free from all grosser effects.

Pranahuti

In the present age of degradation in all phases of human life, physical, social, moral and spiritual, it has almost become impossible to keep up the normal standard of virtue and righteousness. The simple reason is the diversion of mind towards grossest materialism. All that one has, therefore, to do is to turn the tendency of the mind towards the right channel. This is really the only purpose of all the Sadhanas or practices, generally undertaken. But, unfortunately, the Sadhanas prescribed for the purpose are mostly mechanical and deal with only the physical aspect. Hence, they do not prove to be very helpful. This is the reason why despite all the teachings and preachings of the learned teachers of religion, the masses are still wading deep in the mire of ignorance without the slightest hope of emancipation. The only effective means for regulating the unbalanced tendencies of the mind is meditation in the right manner. But meditation can be successfully followed only when it is backed by the Yogic power of Pranahuti (Transmission). It is a great psychic science by which the master through his own psychic powers awakens the dormant intuitional forces of the Abhyasi to action towards spiritual elevation. This helps a great deal in the making of the Abhyasi and in the removal of complexities and obstructions therefrom. This scientific process has been the very basis of Ray Yoga ever since, and the great sages of the past utilised it for the spiritual uplift of the people of which there are numerous instances in our past history. But due to our present degradation this noble science has been relegated into complete oblivion, so much so that today only a few perhaps might feel inclined to believe it even. They are better acquainted with baser arts of telepathy and hypnotism which appeal more to their materialistic understanding and, consequently, they are induced to interpret it as nothing other than hypnotism, without perhaps having any substantial knowledge of either. To elucidate the wide contrast between the two, I may briefly say that hypnotism deals mainly with the material forces in man, whereas this yogic process relates to the finer powers of Prana, pertaining directly to the soul, without the least touch of matter. The effect produced upon the Abhyasi's mind is also different in each case. In the former case, the will and intelligence of the hypnotised individual are completely shattered and he begins to act like a puppet in the hands of the master, while in the latter case, the will and intelligence of the Abhyasi grows wonderfully strong. His powers of soul get awakened and he begins to feel peace and lightness all through. In Sahaj Marga the impulse is imparted through this very process (Pranahuti). This is one of the greatest specialities of the system, which enables a man to rise upto the highest level of spiritual elevation in a wonderfully short time and in the easiest possible way. The practical results achieved through this

process offer sufficient proof of the efficacy of the system, which every one is quite welcome to try and experience personally.

Teacher's Job

The teacher's job is by far the most important factor of spiritual life. It is specially so in Sahaj Marga, where the entire responsibility of success rests upon the teacher when the Abhyasi has duly submitted himself to his charge with will, faith and confidence. The selection of a worthy guide is, therefore, the most vital point in this respect. For that it is essential first to have a clear understanding of what one finally aims at. People generally take different views of the final approach in accordance with their own conception of the Reality based on their mental taste and likings. They also find guides of the standard they crave for. But, for one taking up the path of spirituality with the object of acquiring one-ness with the Absolute the guide, too, must be one of the highest calibre, who is capable of applying his own psychic powers for the uplift of others. In fact, highest attainments are rarely possible unless one is supported by a true and worthy guide through the yogic process of Pranahuti. It rests entirely upon the calibre of the guide to regulate properly the working of the inner forces of the Abhyasi towards the right channel. In short, it is the guide from whom the true Divine impulse comes to the Abhyasi. It is he who awakens and accelerates the dormant intuitional forces of the Abhyasi to action towards proper regulation and higher ascent. It is he who removes obstructions and complexities from his mind and leads him all along by his own powers. Such a one we have to seek if we really aim at the highest.

(iii) SURRENDER

The most vital factor of the Sahaj Marga Sadhana is surrender. It is, in fact, the sum-total of upasana. Anything that an Abhyasi does by way of Sadhana has the same underlying purpose at its back. The common purpose of almost every Sadhana is defined as Realisation, which may be taken to mean merging in God. It implies an idea of negation. In other words, the negation of our individual self is the Realisation in the true sense.

But what does the term negation imply? For an explanation of this, we must trace out the whole course of man's evolution. The primal state of man's existence was in the form of an individual identity—a state of super-finest subtleness, pure and simple. From that subtlest state man proceeded down towards grosser forms of existence, taking on layers after layers of opacity which settled round it in the form of coverings. The grossness went on growing denser and denser till finally man assumed the present form of opaque solidity. With the awakening of the Divine consciousness in the heart the course is reversed and the downward march changes into ascent towards the Origin. We came down gathering, swelling and expanding physically; now we go up reducing, shrinking

and contracting materially. The former course had resulted in the building up of a formidable Ego, wholly merged in physical consciousness. The latter process now serves to relieve us from egoistic consciousness and leads us on through Divine consciousness to the point of Origin. That is, in a word, the whole story of the man's existence.

How do we now proceed through it? Our march towards the Ultimate commences with an honest recognition of the greatness of the Divine Master. We link ourselves with Him through love and devotion—a devotion in the real sense and not in the form of assumed flattery. This promotes faith which strengthens the link all the more. Submission and resignation follow in the natural course which may be treated as a preliminary step for surrender.

There may be several steps which we have to pass through one after the other during our march towards surrender. We start with submission abiding by the will of the Great Master in all our daily affairs. In a way, we begin to resign everything to Him. But, resignation does not apply only to uncontrollable results which are forced upon us by circumstances. That may only be by way of consolation in cases of despair, when we are compelled to take up that view. In the real sense, resignation covers the entire course of man's efforts from the beginning to the end. Resignation proceeds with dedication. We dedicate all our thoughts and actions to Him and proceed on with our affairs in a spirit of Divine Duty. The easiest elementary method for the beginners, prescribed by our Master is as follows :

“A man begins his work dedicating everything to his Master. He starts with the idea that he does every thing for the Master, nay the Master within him, is himself doing that. He gives life to his supposition and the object becomes animate. He starts with his day's work, attends to morning ablution and takes his breakfast thinking that his Master is doing all that. He goes to the office or attends his day's routine of work thinking that his Master in him is doing that. In the evening he returns from the office. On the way he finds an attractive dance going on. His eyes are caught by the charm and he cannot check himself from it. What he is to do then? He should think that it is not he, but the Master in him who is witnessing the dance. The Master's power will at once begin to flow in him and he will be relieved of the temptation. He comes home after finishing his day's work. He finds his children rejoicing at having him again in their midst after so many hours. He also enjoys their merriments and that is but natural. Thus, for the time he finds himself away from the sacred thought of the Master. But that is not the case if the thought that the Master in him is himself enjoying their merriments is there. Now friends come to chat with you. You also drop into conversation with them, just think that the Master within is talking with them. Similarly, you can adjust yourself in all your daily routine of work. While walking you can think that the Master himself is walking and at the same time remain in the thought of the Master as well. That means you are going on with double force. While

meditating think that the Master himself is meditating on his own form. This is of utmost importance and the very key of success.”

The process if followed earnestly will help one immensely in stopping further formation of Samskaras. This we try to cultivate by our efforts. But so long as our effort is there it is only formal and physical, though in order to start with, we have to take it up in that way, with will and faith, of course. By continued practice it turns into habit and in course of time it becomes automatic, spontaneous and natural. The conscious feeling of submission, dedication or resignation fall in the background and only the Divine consciousness remains active all through. The individual will identifies itself with the Divine will and the Divine becomes prominent in all our being. In this way, we proceed on with surrender giving up all our belongings bit by bit. In my Master’s words we have but to vacuumise ourselves so that the Divine current may go on flowing into us. We do it by the above means. By and by the gigantic Ego begins to melt away yielding place to the Divine. The transformation thus goes on and in course of time the entire system becomes divinised.

Surrender involves the idea of giving up all that we possess as our belongings to the Divine Master, having no concern with them at all. But if one knows that he has surrendered, he has really not, in the true sense. Moreover, direct efforts for practising surrender do not bring forth genuine results. We have, therefore, to adopt such ways and means as may result in promoting the feeling in us. Meditation supplemented by constant remembrance is the only best and the surest means for it. Meditation in itself is really a process for dissolving things of our own creation. But it is so only when it is directly associated with the divine thought and the divine purpose. In meditation we try to gather ourselves on one point—the Divine, ignoring all the rest. In course of time when we become closely attached to it, they begin to fade away from our mind and we are thus relieved of what we possessed. It may be of great value to add here my Master’s view over the point :

“The conscious idea of surrender entails with it the growth of ego-consciousness also. The absence of the idea means extension of surrender. Now the question is what measures should be adopted for the purpose. If we are able to cultivate surrender by means of our Abhyas and the Master’s grace, so much the better. The Master’s power helps the Abhyasi only till the flow of Divine Grace is not directed towards him. When that is done his responsibility is considerably reduced, though not totally ended. People crave so much for the Divine Grace and it is but right too, for, it is needed every moment. But they do not realise that at initial steps it comes to them through the medium of the Master alone. But how to invite it is not commonly revealed. It can, in fact, be revealed only by one who has it, rather one who is dissolved in it. How easily it can be had thus. But for that it is essential that the Master, too, must be of great calibre. The problem of having the Divine Grace is thus solved. But how does it benefit us is the next question. The Divine Grace transforms the very nature of the entire being of the

Abhyasi who thereby goes on getting more and more absorbed or merged in it. As a result there at last remains nothing in him but the Divine Grace alone in all his being. That is what divinisation actually means.

In Sahaj Marga we start with it from the very first day. We have not so far taken into account the idea of surrender at all and we have finally reached up to the stage where the very existence is dissolved or negatived. Now decide for yourself whether it is surrender in the real sense or not. Absorbency in Brahm is the end of all activity and surrender is the first step.”

(iv) SOME COMMON ERRORS IN MEDITATION

The regular process followed under the system (Sahaj Marga) is meditation on heart, thinking of the presence of the Divine Light there. It is a simple process but sometimes, due to complexities of thought in individual cases complications arise which deprive an Abhyasi of the full advantage thereof. For this particular purpose an endeavour is made to clear some of the technical points of the process which are commonly misunderstood.

In the first place, it must be clearly noted that we mean to practise meditation and not concentration. Concentration brings to our mind the idea of fixing rigidly at one and the same thought. This naturally leads us to apply the force of will for the suppression of mind or driving out irrelevant ideas. But experience shows that more we exert ourselves to it, the stronger grows the reaction in the heart and the rush of thoughts grows more intense. Consequently, the Abhyasi remains involved in a mental struggle all the while and there is practically no meditation at all. We start with Dhyan, meditation and when we get absorbed in it we reach the preliminary state of Samadhi or concentration. This sort of concentration should not be confused with the concentration defined above, which required exertion of will power. For such concentration an Abhyasi need not struggle within himself. It is the natural outcome of meditation when one's being merges into one thought or feeling. Thus, real concentration follows meditation in due course. It would, therefore, be a wrong process to take up to concentration first. So, an Abhyasi must practise meditation in a simple and natural way, keeping away from the idea of concentration. Meditation implies a sense of thinking over and over again. At the initial steps it may be with breaks and interruption but after some time it forms a connected link of unconscious thought in the sub-conscious mind. That is the true form of meditation. With this view we must only take up meditation without the least effort to concentrate and go on with it in the simplest way avoiding all physical and mental strain.

The next mistake which sometimes baffles an Abhyasi is—as he often complains of—that he is not able to see the light or to grasp the exact location of heart. This is but an error of understanding. It is not that actual visualisation of the light that is necessary for the purpose but only a faint idea of it in the form of mere supposition. Those who hanker after visualisation of Light mean to put it

under a material cloak which must necessarily be the outcome of their own imagination. Thus, the thing coming to view, if at all, would be artificial and not the real one. Moreover, the light is not our goal. We take it up only as a base for the thought to rest upon, in order to proceed by it to the Possessor of the Real Light or glory. In this way, we mean to proceed from the quality to substance, from the apparent to the Real. So it is quite immaterial whether we see the light at all or not. The proper course would, therefore, be to turn one's attention gently towards the heart and suppose the presence of Divine light there. All efforts to localise the position of heart or to visualise the light must be avoided.

Another difficulty which sometimes arises relates to the feeling of awareness during meditation. Generally it happens that after starting meditation with a conscious idea of the object he is gradually drifted into a state of apparent forgetfulness. In such a case, he generally concludes that he had drifted away from the point and had missed meditation for the time. But it is not so. The awareness remains only so long as our thought remains in touch with the physical mind. But when it goes deeper into the finer layers of consciousness the physical awareness is lost although silent meditation goes on unconsciously in the sub-conscious mind. The only thing to be done under the circumstances is to revert gently to the object, whenever one feels himself lost, and he should go into meditation again without the least worry for the previous unawareness.

The other error, perhaps the most serious one, relates to the abnormal rush of thoughts during meditation. This is generally most annoying to an Abhyasi, though in fact it is not so if it is properly dealt with. The ceaseless flow of thoughts is not confined only to the meditation hours but it continues every moment. But, it is more acutely felt during meditation because at that time we try to make ourselves empty of all thoughts and ideas. In other words, we try to create a thought-vacuum in our conscious mind. Now, just as the rush of air towards the vacuum is stronger so must the rush of thoughts be more forceful towards the thought-vacuum. There is a huge store of thoughts lying buried in the deeper layers of consciousness. When by the effect of meditation, a void is created in the conscious mind, the buried thoughts rise up and force their passage into the void affecting our grosser consciousness to some extent. The mind being unregulated begins to move in conjunction with them creating all sorts of troubles and disturbances. It is, in fact, not the rising of thoughts that is annoying to an Abhyasi but his own over-attention to them which brings him into direct conflict. The reaction thus caused makes thoughts all the more powerful and the trouble is aggravated.

The commonly advised process for dealing with the situation is the suppression of mind by means of forced restraints and physical mortifications. Mind is generally represented as a restive horse which requires a sharp whip for keeping it under control. But the whip may serve as a means to keep the evil tendencies of the mind suppressed for a shortwhile, not allowing them to materialise into action. In other words, the evil within is retained just as it is and only its outward action is

checked. How far this can be successful is a matter of serious doubt unless the mind is physically disabled to move that way, for the poison of evil, buried within, may at any time begin to display its action when perchance the control is relaxed. That means a life-long game of contest involving all the risk of reverses and failures. Besides this, the physical suppression by strangulation of mind leads to internal grossness and renders the mind incapable of higher ascent in subtler planes. It is, in fact, not the controlling of mind that is suited to our purpose but its right moulding and the proper regulation of its activities. This can be effected not by the use of whip but only by purging out the evil through the process of internal cleaning. This is the only effective way for the transformation of the real being of man.

Unfortunately, there are some amongst the teachers professing to guide the people in spirituality who apply their material will-force for suppressing the thoughts in order to create a state of coma. The Abhyasi who is incapable of understanding its true spirit feels greatly impressed since it offers him a sort of sensual pleasure which is grossly misinterpreted as 'Anandam.' Nothing related with the working of senses can offer the real Anandam and this being only a play of senses is far away from the range of spirituality. The state of suspension commonly misunderstood as peace is likewise another serious error. It is more like a state of senselessness caused by the effect of chloroform, hence not the least spiritual in any way. Besides, the suspension of thoughts is greatly harmful for another reason too; if the buried thoughts are kept suppressed in the mind the chances of Bhoga or consumption are stopped. There can be no liberation unless the process of Bhoga is complete. Thus, the suspension of thoughts bars the door of liberation for ever.

For our spiritual purpose it is essential to make ourselves free from thoughts as far as possible, but it can never be effected by means of suppression but only by throwing out the poison from the mind, which would stop the creation of thoughts. The rising of buried thoughts helps to exhaust the store by effecting their Bhoga. Thus, in due course, the Abhyasi becomes free from them and attains a harmonious state. His mind-lake is thus free from the ripples and perfect calmness begins to prevail within him.

The proper course would, therefore, be to pay no heed to thoughts arising in the mind during meditation and to remain unmindful of them, treating them as 'Uninvited guests.' In this way, their intensity will be lost and they will cease to be a source of disturbance.

V. THE SAHAJ MARGA

Shri Ram Chandra Mission

The Mission is named after the great Master, Samartha Guru Mahatma Ram Chandra Ji Maharaj of Fatehgarh, U.P., whose life marks a new era of spiritual awakening. He trained people in spirituality through remodelled and improved methods of yoga which suited well to the need of the time and the capacity of the people. He brought to the light of the day the long forgotten system of Pranahuti or Yogic transmission which forms the very basis of the system followed in the Mission. The Mission was founded in 1945 by his successor and representative, His Holiness Mahatma Ram Chandra Ji of Shahjahanpur (U.P.). The system expounded by him is known as Sahaj Marga—or the Natural Path. It is a rarefied form of yoga based upon his practical and personal experiences. The system runs along purely spiritual lines without any amalgamation or superfluity. It is the simplest yet the most efficacious. It is quite easily adjustable in the normal life of the present day. It offers the surest short-cut to realisation and is in this respect a boon to the suffering humanity.

Misconceptions Regarding Yoga

Yoga as expounded by Patanjali has been supposed to be the only path which corresponds closely to spirituality. But that it is absolutely free from the grosser effect of materiality may not be acceptable on rational grounds. The preliminary steps of Patanjali's yoga are exclusively physical and serve to that extent only. The real pursuit begins from Dharana and covers the last three steps viz., Dharana, Dhyana and Samadhi which are really spiritual in character. The former was meant only to serve as a preparatory ground for the latter. The Sage, in introducing this consolidated form of yoga, has no doubt rendered a great service to humanity for which he deserves fullest credit. But what may have been the best for the need of the time in his days may not be quite fitting and adjustable today under the changed condition of the world. The methods involving austerity and penance believed to be incumbent under the provisions of the old rules, not being in agreement with the modern routine of life, the system has ever remained unpopular with the masses. This is also due to numerous superficial implications imposed upon it by unpractised teachers and theory expounders. There may, however, be some who claim to be practising yoga but only as a physical pursuit to build up muscles and nerve or to acquire certain super-normal powers. They adhere mostly to the physical exercises of Asanas and Pranayama without perhaps moving an inch towards subtleness. To them, the highest attainment is perhaps a state of coma, brought about by the strangulation of the mind and the Indriyas, which they misrepresent as Samadhi.

The ultimate object of Yoga being the attainment of the subtlest state of existence, akin to God's, the means adopted for the purpose must also be the subtlest and most natural, so as to promote within us a similar state of subtleness

to the greatest possible degree. Grosser means are sure to produce grosser effects, which must be harmful in the long run. Consequently, Yoga as codified by Rishi Patanjali must need be modified in that light so as to relieve it of the grosser effects and ensure the subtlest results in the shortest possible time.

New School of Thought

This is what we have in Sahaj Marga. It is, in fact, a complete overhauling of the Patanjali's yoga, purging out from it all physical, occult and esoteric appliances, and runs from beginning to end along purely spiritual lines without slightest amalgamation. As such, it is a valuable contribution to the world-thought, presenting a new school of philosophy. It reconciles all systems of philosophy and yet has a separate entity of its own. Since the introduction of the Vedanta system there has practically been no substantial development in this branch, though there has been a good deal of moulding and twisting of the same old ideas in several odd ways. Most of the commentators having attempted approach to it through reason and intellect without any effort to gain practical insight into it, have presented multicoloured picture of the same, leading only to the creation of doubts and dissensions. A material problem can be understood at the ordinary level of reasoning and a sound theory can be built on it by the efforts of super-normal brain; but such is not the case with subtler problems related to God or soul which have ever been the basis of Indian philosophy. An Indian philosopher with that phase in view, depends more upon perception and practical experience than upon reasons and inferences. It may not here be out of place to translate in words my master's view that the impression of modern philosophers that philosophy begins with doubt, is in itself a wrong basis in as much as it implies a sense of presupposition of knowledge which may in itself be faulty and misleading. The real basis of philosophy is, in fact, not doubt, as they say, but wonder. Wonder implies a sense of ignorance and curiosity and that can be the only efficient basis for arriving at the reality of things without any adulteration of thought.

Philosophy thus not being a subject based upon reason and conclusion, the Indian philosophers have purposely refrained from making additions and modifications in it on that basis unless one has secured a practical approach to it after undergoing all the experiences of the various subtle planes of higher consciousness involved in it. It is, however, the need of time and the Will of Providence that brings down such higher souls into the world for the uplift of humanity. Fortunately, the time has now come and the Sahaj Marga presents to the world a new system of practical philosophy aimed at the realisation of the Ultimate by the simplest and the easiest means suited to the need of our time and the capacity of the people in general.

Scientific Basis of Sahaj Marga

In the present age of science and reason, nothing perhaps can be convincing to a common man unless it is presented in a scientific spirit and language. In its popular sense the term 'scientific' is applied only to that which can stand a laboratory test for the purpose of physical observation. This may, however, hold true in the material phase, which takes into account only the grosser form of matter; but, for the subtler problems related with the soul or self, modern science can offer no convincing explanation or test. As a matter of fact, material science is a widely different subject, distinctly apart from the spiritual science which rests upon the inner perception of the subtle experiences. As such, Sahaj Marga which is based upon the real essence of Rajyoga is thoroughly scientific.

Mind, the vital force in man, is the centre of all human activities. Being unceasingly active it is all the while busy weaving out problems and intricacies both internal and external. Human life has numerous phases of activity which can broadly be summed up under two heads, the material and the spiritual. Generally, the majority of people take up the material view of life and hold fast to the worldly side in total disregard of the Divine. There are, however, a few, especially in India, who stick exclusively to the Divine, ignoring altogether the worldly one. As a matter of fact, human life is one integral whole, including within it all its different phases which must have their due place in life and must be attended to in the sense of duty. Consequently, there can possibly be no justification for one ignoring the Divine for the sake of the worldly, or for the other ignoring the world for the sake of the Divine. Both of them are equally wrong and misguided. The Sahaj Marga, therefore, recommends a harmonised way of living taking into account both the phases in due proportion, running in conjunction with each other. That means a coordination of the worldly life and the Divine. It upholds none of the artificial ways implied in processes of denial, penance and strangulation. It discourages efforts for the development of Siddhis and Shaktis. In the real sense, the Sahaj Marga, treating a man's worldly duties to be a part of his divine duty, brings into effect a coordination of the worldly and the Divine life, or, in other words, the conversion of the worldly life into the Divine life in the easiest possible way; and for that it offers a simple and natural process which is easily adjustable in the present normal life.

Practices prescribed under the system are practically none except meditation under the support and guidance of a true master. There are no rituals or ceremonials. Do and don'ts there are few. It is a practical process of 'give and take' or 'do and feel' and not merely read and enjoy or hear and believe. There is, in fact, nothing in it to believe or disbelieve but everything is quite plain and simple, to be experienced by any one who likes to do so. The method followed under the system is so natural and efficient that even the most degraded of the human beings has a fair chance of setting aside his polluted coverings in an instant and advance with amazing speed on the path to Freedom.

The Aim

The system aims at the spiritual regeneration of mankind in general without any distinction of religion, race or nationality, in accordance with the need of the time and the demand of Nature. The solution of all the various problems of the world lies in the spiritual awakening of the man which can be brought about only through proper spiritual training. Close adherence to gross materialism is, in fact, the root-evil. If it ends, all our problems are solved in a moment. It can end only by taking up the spiritual ways of living in constant divine consciousness. Spirituality is really our march from the present plane of grossest existence to higher and higher planes of subtleness up to the farthest possible extent. To achieve that last state of unchanging subtleness and to abide in it permanently is the final aim of Sahaj Marga.

How the System Works

The Divine impulse imparted through Pranahuti (Yogic Transmission) affects the mind of the Abhyasi and helps to bring it to a state of somewhat higher consciousness with the result that he begins to feel an inner awakening. The tendencies of mind begin to turn more and more towards the Divine and he begins to feel comparatively calm and peaceful. This is the first step towards spiritual advancement under the system. Now, the impulse thus imparted begins to act upon deeper layers of consciousness related to finer forms of existence. Ordinarily, the conscious mind is not touched at all in the beginning, except in certain special cases where it is absolutely essential. The effect of the impulse is implanted on the causal sheath creating godly impressions thereon. The impressions in the form of tiny seeds buried in deeper levels begin, in course of time, to develop for Bhoga. Soon, the process of Bhoga starts automatically, with the result that the effect of the impulse begins to expand. After some time, it begins to expand over to the astral mind and then to the conscious (Sthula) mind which begins to get moulded accordingly. It is generally at this level that an Abhyasi begins to feel some subtle changes in his inner tendencies. This is why often an Abhyasi is unable to feel the effect of the impulse for some time in the beginning. But the effect produced in this way is deep rooted and permanent, because the process being centrifugal, the effect thereof proceeds from the centre to the circumference. The moulding of mind thus goes on in the most natural way without any physical labour or mental strain. After continued practice the conscious mind also begins to get merged in higher consciousness and begins to feel the reality of things. This develops in him an automatic sense of discrimination between the real and the unreal. Consequently, we begin to lose charm for the changing objects of the material world and get more firmly attached to the Reality at the root. This means the beginning of the state of Vairagya, which in the true sense is a condition of mind which develops from within and not by forced circumstances. Sahaj Marga does not support the imposition of assumed physical detachment as the true form of Vairagya. It does not mean non-

possession, no work and no responsibility of self, society or the world. It is an inner feeling related with the absence of attachment (Maya-moha) with the worldly object connected with in life. When we are relieved of the feeling of undue attachment, our actions in respect of worldly affairs assume the form of duty. Duty for duty's sake without attraction or repulsion is the highest form of devotion. The state develops automatically from within as one proceeds farther with meditation in the proper manner and under right guidance. This, though not an ordinary achievement, is but one of the elementary attainments under the system. Desirelessness is the direct result thereof and with it the formation of Samskaras begins to decrease and finally comes to a stop. With the stopping of further formation, there remains only the Bhoga of the already formed Samskaras to be undergone. This goes on in natural course till they are all fried up, by the effect of his own devotion to some extent, but mostly by the power of the Master. The store of samskaras having thus been exhausted, one is freed from the endless circle of births and deaths. But that is not the end of the pursuit. The spiritual march continues still to higher and subtler planes.

Comparison with the old system of Yoga

1. The concept of God according to the old yogic view is that of an Absolute Being, devoid of all attributes and distinctions. It does not confine itself to the low-level conception as held forth by religion. The Sahaj Marga agreeing with this view makes a further advance to a still subtler conception of God as the Centre or the zero-point of Existence—the Absolute Base—which is devoid of even power, activity or consciousness. It is this subtlest state of pure Existence, the Nonentity, which in the Mission's terminology is known as '**BHOOMA**' and which is the final object of Sahaj Marga.

The system aims at complete merging in that ultimate state of subtleness or oneness with the Infinite Absolute. This can be achieved only when the grossness of being is dispensed with up to the last possible extent and complete freedom from bondage is secured.

This state of oneness with the Infinite causeless state can be achieved only by the process of meditation in the right manner and in the most natural way. For this purpose, the help and support of a worthy guide of calibre, who is permanently merged in that final state is in all cases essential and indispensable.

2. The Sahaj Marga does not agree with the old view regarding the use of intricate means and complicated methods for the realisation of that which is the simplest and the subtlest. Simplest means alone can ensure the subtlest results. In my Master's words, if one tries to lift a needle by means of a crane, it may well nigh be impossible to do it. Simple means are those which are free from forged impositions and unnatural appliances aiming at the strangulation of the mind and the Indriyas. They can only be those which go in perfect concurrence with Nature and are easily adjustable in the normal life of a man.

3. The Sahaj Marga does not favour the forced detachment as the genuine form of Vairagya. Forced detachment results in the creation of an artificial physical atmosphere of aloofness, quite unconnected with the inner tendencies of the mind. In true sense Vairagya is an inner state of mind in which one feels himself unattached with sense-desires; consequently, the material objects he is connected with in life lose their charm. The Sahaj Marga, therefore, does not treat the Grahastha life as an impediment in the Divine pursuit. The worldly life and the divine life are in fact the two phases of a natural life, which must go together side by side in conjunction with each other.

4. The chakras as the vital centres of spiritual energy, play an important role in yoga. They get awakened as one proceeds on to finer states. The usual routine followed under the old system started from the lowest, the Muladhara Chakra and proceeded on to other Chakras in turn. But the lower ones, i.e. the Muladhara, the Swadhishtan and the Manipurak, being associated with material energy, their awakening generally results in the release of super-normal powers known as Siddhis and Shaktis. In majority of the cases these powers are misutilised for material purposes and thus they lead to degradation of Yoga. This happens especially in cases where the eye of the pursuer is fixed upon acquisition of power and not on the attainment of subtleness. The Sahaj Marga, not aiming at acquisition of powers, makes a diversion from the set old path and starts from the Anahata Chakra (Heart plexus) omitting the lower three at the initial step. The reason for this modification—besides being a safeguard against the abuse of power—is that the heart being the centre or the nucleus of the human system sends out blood to the whole body. By continued meditation at the point, the fine paramanus (atomic particles) of purity and piety introduced by the touch of Divine thought, are carried over to the whole body by the blood flowing out from it. Thus, the process of purification of the entire system goes on automatically and unconsciously. Besides, the heart having been purified at first, the chances of abuse of powers awakened, are considerably reduced. From this point our march is directed towards the next higher Chakras, namely the Vishuddhi and the Ajna. Thus, of all the Chakras our march remains confined only to three higher ones. The lower three are not taken up separately but they get automatically cleaned to the extent necessary for the purpose by the transfusion of the purified blood from the heart. They, however, get awakened when matured or by the transmitted power of the Master when genuine need for it arises. This happens mostly in connection with the Nature's work which a yogi at higher stages of advancement cannot avoid.

5. Another modification relates to the Vedantic view embodied in Sadhana Chatushtaya, (the four Sadhanas or means of yoga), which comprises of Viveka, Vairagya, Shat-sampatti and Mumukshutva. Viveka refers to the feeling of discrimination between the real and the unreal and Vairagya to the feeling of unattachment with everything that is unreal and transitory. The two given out as Sadhanas or means are really the two spiritual states which develop within the

mind by the effect of the right type of practices or Sadhanas, and Vairagya is the direct result of Viveka. The Sahaj Marga, therefore, not accepting Viveka and Vairagya as the two Sadhanas of yoga, bypasses them, making a start from Shat-sampatti, the third Sadhana of the Vedantists, which comprises of six attainments. Here, too, the Sahaj Marga treating its classification under several heads as superfluous, strikes at the very root, the regulation of mind. Thus, for a follower of Sahaj Marga there remains, in place of all the six attainments of the Shat-Sampatti, one and only one and that is the regulation of mind which serves his purpose in every way.

6. The old system prescribes the usual routine of Ashtanga yoga which covers both the Hathayoga and the Rajyoga sections. According to the old view, the practice of the Hathayoga at the elementary stage was thought to be essential and indispensable for the successful pursuit of yoga. Consequently, the physical exercises prescribed under Hathayoga were thought to be an essential factor of Yoga. For a follower of the Sahaj Marga system, which concerns only with the real pursuit, they are all unnecessary in as much as the spiritual growth under the system is brought about by the internal working of the Divine impulse, through the yogic process of Pranahuti or transmission. The system, therefore not taking into account the eight steps of Ashtanga Yoga, makes a start from the central point Dhyana or meditation ignoring all unnecessary preliminaries. The practice followed allthrough is meditation which covers all the steps from the beginning to the end.

7. Last of all, the most remarkable feature of Sahaj Marga is the wonderful system of Pranahuti (the yogic transmission) which in the present age of spiritual degradation is the greatest boon to the bleeding humanity groaning under the weight of grossest materialism. This, though not quite a new thing, has during the intermediary period been quite forgotten and so much so that today few might perhaps be induced to believe it even. But there is no question of believing or not believing it. None is, however, asked to take it on presumption; but, its practical experience is always open to all without any reservation, and anyone can try and experience it personally, if and when, he may like to do so.

For all these varied reasons Sahaj Marga, as a new school of philosophy and a valuable contribution to the world thought, offers a direct way out to realisation. It runs along the simplest and the most natural lines easily adoptable in the normal life of a common man and yet the most efficacious to ensure the quickest results in the shortest possible time.

TEACHINGS OF SAHAJ MARGA

I. Have firm faith in God, the one Absolute, and live in Him.

God as the ultimate point of existence is the real origin from which everything has sprung up. Faith is the most lively factor of life. Faith in God

implies cognizance of the ultimate, the origin, or the Goal which one has finally to arrive at and which one has to keep in view allthrough his life-journey. In Sahaj Marga it is represented as the centre or the Zero-point of existence. That is really the correct view which is to be taken up if one aims at the Ultimate. The lower conceptions of God as the various powers of Nature, represented as gods and demigods or as the main creative force in the form of the Trimurti or even as higher being like Ishwar (Saguna or Nirguna) can but lead one up to that particular level only, which is undisputedly far below the final level. Thus, the final attainment shall definitely remain short of the mark. Hence, while aiming at the ultimate centre or the Zero-point it is but essential to rise above all these low level conceptions and to take into view the very Origin.

Now living in God refers to the attainments of closest Union with the ultimate state of the real being which differs from our present state of being only in respect of grossness. It is, therefore, the dissolution of our grosser self or the attainment of the subtlest form of existence that is all needed for the purpose.

II. The two phases of life, the worldly and the Divine must go side by side in conjunction with each other and must be attended to without the slightest neglect of either.

Callous disregard of the worldly responsibilities and the desertion of the dependents for the sake of Divine purpose is almost unpardonable for a follower of the Divine path. In fact, the unnatural gulf created between the worldly and the Divine aspect of life is quite baseless and unnatural. Life is one integral whole, covering both the phases, which are closely inter-related so that, in fact, no segregation can ever be justifiable. It is really not the worldly living that is detrimental to our Divine purpose but only our wrong ways of living which create entanglements impeding our path towards the Divine. Our close adherence to our physical self, for the sake of sensual joy and bodily pleasures, is, in fact, responsible for all the evil for which the desertion of the worldly living, in utter disregard of our due responsibilities, is no solution at all. Practical experience offers ample proof that even after giving up the worldly living most of the so-called renouncers remain merged in worldliness from top to bottom.

The Sahaj Marga, therefore, does not support such irresponsible and cowardly ways of shirking worldly duties and leaving the dependents to a miserable fate. It recommends a natural living conjoined with all the necessary requisites of life in respect of the world we are born to live in and of the Divine we are finally destined to attain. That means co-ordination of both the phases of life, the worldly and the Divine.

III. Take every thing in the sense of duty and attend to it faithfully without any feeling of attraction or repulsion.

The transformation of life into Divine can be easily brought about if we treat all our thoughts and actions to be subject to the Divine will. Earning money,

maintaining dependents, taking care of the children and fulfilling obligations towards relations, friends and society are all the essential parts of the duty entrusted to us by God. But the evil sets in when we begin to treat them as our personal concern, unconnected with God. We begin to act under the influence of our personal interest or desires, taking thus the responsibility of the result upon our own selves. That is the real entanglement which tends to segregate us from the Divine. The only solution, therefore, can be to take up every thing we have, to be God's and utilise it for the sacred discharge of the duties entrusted to us in respect of our family, friends, relations and society. This will eliminate the feeling of personal touch in all matters and relieve us from attachment (Maya-moha).

IV. Love all beings with a spirit of service and sacrifice.

Love is an essential factor of life and it ensures highest results. It is for this reason that devotion to God is so much insisted upon under all systems of worship. Now, one devoted to God in the true sense will naturally develop similar feelings for things connected with Him. So, with God as an object of our love and devotion, similar feelings will develop in us for other beings. This comes to the feeling of universal love when we are saturated with it; service and sacrifice will follow as its natural result. Now, reversing the process, if a man dedicates himself to the selfless service of the fellow-being, sacrificing his personal interests the Divine love will take deeper roots in his heart.

V. Give everyone his fair dues, treating him as your own.

This is one of the most important principles of life which, if earnestly adhered to, will solve almost all the worldly problems. The world is today groaning under the torturous effect of sorrow and misery. Apprehensions of war, devastation and exploitation are too common all over. There is no peace, no contentment and no rest. Every one is drowned in thoughts related with the interests of self, without any regard to the harm and damage caused thereby to others. Fair and honest dealings in a spirit of good will and sympathy, giving up forged claims to usurp what is rightly due to another—a key-solution of the problem of world peace,—is wanting everywhere. Causes of disturbance can easily be minimised if the world is, somehow, induced to adopt this noble principle in life. But this does not imply the Gandhian principle of non-violence nor passive submission to anything that may even be unfair to our just cause. Evil whether directed towards self or towards another, must be resisted with full force. 'Fair dues' applies equally in all cases; for an oppressed it may be the proper redress of the wrongs and the redemption of his rights and privileges, whereas for an oppressor it may be resistance, suppression and punishment. The use of force is not restricted in cases where it is essential. But all that must be done in a spirit of friendliness and not in a spirit of enmity or malice, just as we favour or frown upon one of our dearest in a spirit of own-ness.

VI. Treat elders with respect and younger with affection abiding by the general rules of etiquette.

This is one of the common principles which is insisted upon by almost all saints and teachers. It refers to the rules of general conduct which must be adopted by every one in his daily life. It is of great value in building up character which is a necessary step towards transformation. It promotes softness of heart, moderation of temper and all round gentleness of nature. It is the most essential virtue that helps to make a man the true being. It is the most essential virtue that helps to make a man the true being. It is a disguised form of devotion which is indispensable in spiritual pursuit.

VII. Meet adversity with resignation, banishing from the heart feelings of anger and vengeance.

The painful phase of life is adversity which is entailed with all kinds of miseries and sorrows. It is inevitable too, because of the effects of the Samskaras which cannot anyhow be avoided, unless they are exhausted by having undergone their effect. In this sense, they may be treated as a blessing in disguise. When it is so, we must take it as a fortunate event, submitting ourselves to the will of God. There may, however, be men who apparently appear to be responsible for the wrong done to us for which they most often become the target of our anger. But that feeling only aggravates the trouble. If this principle is adhered to, the effect of the miseries will not only be minimised but altogether naturalized and one will begin to feel some sort of pleasure in it. It is for this reason that sages have often prayed to God for giving them all the miseries of the world.

VIII. Follow tolerance and moderation in all activities of life.

Tolerance and moderation are the essential factors of a harmonious life. The basic cause of disturbance, both inner and outer is the unbalanced tendencies of mind. Moderation refers to restoration of proper balance. Toleration is, however, the means for developing moderation. When moderation is acquired, the unbalanced tendencies get adjusted and inner peace is restored. This may also serve as a key solution to most of our worldly problems.

IX. Aim at the highest, putting in honest and sincere efforts for its achievement.

This is a vital point which is applicable equally in all phases of man's life, worldly, religious and spiritual. Fixing up of the aim is essential in every case. Only then can success be ensured. Now, since our ultimate purpose in spirituality is the attainment of the ultimate state of subtleness, it is but essential to fix our eyes on the final state. Highest success can be achieved only when the aim is the highest, and our efforts can be intensified only when the craving for the realisation of the goal is the greatest.

General Rules of Moral Discipline

1. Lead a simple life, uninfluenced as far as possible by surroundings.
2. Be gentle, polite and sweet.
3. Maintain cordial dealings with neighbours and relations keeping yourself free from narrow bonds of relationship.
4. Husband and wife should act like the two wheels of a vehicle for the due discharge of household duties, paying proper attention to their responsibilities towards children, family and relations.
5. Give up the mania of friendship.
6. Develop uniform taste for all articles of food, with due regard to the pious and the unpious.
7. Behave with your officers with proper submission, abiding by the rules of subordination.
8. Avoid imposing your uncalled for opinion.
9. Avoid prescribing medicines to patients (physicians exempted) except in most exceptional cases where you are convinced that the case is otherwise getting out of control.
10. Avoid telling your secrets to anybody; let not one feel that it is being held up from him.
11. Avoid accepting personal services from any one, except under unavoidable circumstances and that too only to the extent to which you can yourself be prepared for in return.
12. Avoid indulging in loose talks or reading of novels, etc.

VI. AS IT IS TO BE

The Saviour

“Though unborn and immortal and also the Lord of all beings, I manifest myself through my own Yogmaya (Divine Potency) keeping my nature (prakriti) under control.”

Thus spoke Lord Krishna, the great incarnation in existence in human form. It is a clear indication of the fact that the Divine Soul incarnated in human form as Avatar or Saviour does, at times, come down to earth. Such is the routine of Nature as proclaimed in the Hindu scriptures and which is a bare truth. The Divine Energy descends only when Nature demands its presence on earth. The coming of the Avatar or Saviour is not a matter of mere accident but in accordance with some specific plan of Nature. The Divine will sends him down on earth for the accomplishment of the Nature’s work. Similar views are held by some of the other religions too. The Bible records an assurance about the re-coming into the world of the second Christ, The Saviour. The Mohammedans also proclaim the

advent of one such personality, Imam Mehdi, towards the close of the fourteenth century of the Hijri era. Besides, there are numerous prophesies and predictions of similar nature made at times by saints of the past and the present. Thus, most of the views regarding the coming of the Avatar or Saviour closely correspond with each other. Most of the great saints of today, accepting the above view, are looking forward with eager expectations for the appearance of such a great personality in human form.

The Purpose of Coming of the Incarnation

Obviously, the purpose of His coming down to the world in human form is to destroy the forces of evil which are over-predominant in the world, leading to the creation of a chaotic state all-round. The entire world civilisation, as we have it today, is based on pure materialism which has acquired such a great prominence in the human mind that the very existence of God appears to most of them as superfluous. Social, moral, religious and spiritual degradation has almost reached its final limit. Religion in most cases has become only a profession. Ungodliness under the cloak of religion is commonly prevalent everywhere. Hypocrisy, selfishness and vanity are predominant in every phase of life. Gloomy atmosphere of sin and degradation is spreading all over. The normal working of the Nature's machinery seems to be at stake. Such is the horrible state prevailing all over, which being quite beyond human control, requires Nature's strong hand to mend or end it. The following words of the Master support the above view:

“The present structure of the world-civilisation based upon electricity and atomic energy shall not remain in existence for long. It is destined to fall soon. The whole atmosphere is so much charged with the poisonous effect of absolute materialism that it is almost beyond human control to clear it.”

Such may be the condition when the coming of the Avatar becomes inevitable. The purpose for which he comes down on earth may be clear from the following verse of the Gita. Lord Krishna Says :

“O! Arjuna, when there is decline of righteousness and unrighteousness is in ascendance, I come down assuming the human form.”

That means he comes down in order to clear the world atmosphere of all the poisonous effects caused on it by the ungodly ways of man and to build up a new world based on the principles of purity, piety and godliness.

Time of Coming

The time of His advent also must verily be as indicated in the above verse, i.e. when the ungodly ways of life, breeding an atmosphere of evil and sin be predominant everywhere. Now, it rests upon us to judge and decide whether the present condition of the world is really so or not. If it is so, then, we must naturally conclude that it is the time for the Avatar to come down to earth. If it is not, then we must wait for it till degradation comes up to its final limit. Most of the great souls of the world seem to agree that it is just the time or the very Zero-

hour for the long-expected advent of the Divine personality, to save the pining humanity from disaster and destruction. From the views expressed by so many godly persons of the world, I am glad to note that the question of the coming of the Saviour is uppermost in almost every mind. There are, however, a few who, though they believe that he is soon to come, feel somewhat reluctant to accept that he has already come down. This may be due to their inability to trace out signs or to feel within themselves His presence in the world. There are, of course, others who feel convinced that he has already come and is in existence among us this day, busy with his Divine programme silently and imperceptibly. My Master is perhaps the only one who makes the boldest assertion in this connection. In His book "The Efficacy of Rajyoga" He says:

"Nature now requires a change, a thorough overhauling of the world; and for that purpose, I may assure you a special Personality has already come into existence and has been at work for about two and a half years," (till the date of publication).

This view may not be appealing to a materialistic mind but it is a fact beyond doubt. He may at present be unknown and undiscovered, yet the time is soon at hand when his presence shall be revealed to the world by the events coming to light through his medium. I may, therefore, on the basis of all evidences and my own personal experience assure the world in all earnestness that the godly soul in human form (the Avatar or Saviour) is in existence in the world today, busy with his programme of work, the change.

Indications

The Avatar's advent is not to be proclaimed to the world by the beat of drum, neither by any super-natural phenomenon in the sky nor by any other miraculous means to satisfy the curiosity of the materialistic mind of the people in general. But though he remains generally unknown to the majority, still godly personalities are never unaware of his existence, for to them even the slightest hint in Nature is enough to reveal the fact. The most common indication of the Incarnation's advent as given by saint Ram Krishna Paramhansa, is---

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

Let us now see and judge with a clear conscience whether such a condition prevails in the world today or not. If it does, it undoubtedly proclaims the presence of the Incarnation amongst us today.

Swami Vivekananda also makes a reference to it on the basis of his intuitional reading of the Nature's course, in one of his speeches at New York about seventy years ago. He says :

"Today man requires one more adjustment on the spiritual plan; today when material ideas are at the height of their glory and power, today when man is

likely to forget his divine nature through his growing dependence on matter and is likely to be reduced to a mere money-making machine, an adjustment is necessary, and the power is coming, the voice has spoken, to drive away the clouds of gathering materialism. The power has been set in motion which at no distant date, will bring unto mankind once more the memory of their real nature; and again the place from which this power will start will be Asia.”

Test of His Presence

To test His presence as my Master suggests, I may say, let any one who may, meditate for some time sincerely thinking that he is receiving spiritual impulse from the great personality in existence and feel and judge whether he receives it or not. If he does, it is a sufficient proof of his existence. Another sure method to discover Him is to meditate for it for sometime continuously with confidence. These are the simple methods by which one can feel and realise His presence in the world and can even trace out His actual whereabouts. He can even secure personal contact with Him if he earnestly desires so. For saints of calibre it is always open to read the signs in Nature or to intercommune with Him direct through clairvoyance.

I shall most earnestly entreat my brethren all over the world, not to take my words lightly, but to give up all delusion and to try sincerely the means suggested above and avail of the Divine Grace, so fortunately fallen to our lot this day. I may assure you by all means in my power that the present time is one of the rarest occasions, when with the slightest effort on our part we can secure the highest approach in the shortest possible time by the gracious blessing of the great Incarnation. Do not believe blindly in what I say here but do at least try to ascertain and realise for yourself in a practical way and be convinced if it stands your test.

A Warning

But there is one thing more, very important indeed, in this respect, which one must be very careful of. It is that the Divine Personality being yet unknown and undiscovered, there may come out dexterous persons making false claims of their being the Saviour or Avatar. They may be going about, displaying extraordinary wonders and miracles to impose themselves as supernatural beings who have come down to save men. It is, therefore, very essential for every one to be on his guards and be not deceived by them. Lord Christ also warns people against them in the following verses from the Bible : (Mathew 24)

23. Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here is Christ, or there, believe him not.
24. For there shall arise false Christs and false prophets and shall show great signs and wonders in so much that if it were possible they shall deceive the very elect.
25. Behold, I have told you before.

26. Therefore if they shall say unto you, behold, he is in the desert, go not forth; behold, he is in the secret chamber, believe it not.
27. For as the lightning cometh out of the East and shineth even unto West, so shall also the coming of the son of Man be.

In the last verse Lord Christ assures the people that the son of Man (the Avatar, the Saviour or Christ returned) shall come into existence in the East and from Him the true light will travel on to the West, making every thing open and visible and clearing all mysteries.

His Physical Form

It may perhaps be one of the most difficult jobs to judge such a great personality from his outer appearance or the physical form. Generally, everyone has his own pre-supposed notions about the physical form in which an avatar is expected to appear in the world and they are all based on the allegorical description of the ancient writers or thinkers. One might be induced to believe only when that particular form comes to his view. Usually, we expect Him to appear in an imposing form full of external grandeur, exhibiting super-natural powers at every step in order to command submission at sight. He is commonly believed to rule over earth; so one naturally expects Him to be a great king or at least a great religious head in his outer form. But what we think or believe to be may not be literally true. It is, in fact, upon us alone to judge and realise the Divine grandeur in His Being and not in his outer form or appearance. Externally, he may be so simple and unassuming that his very simplicity may serve as a veil to his true being. He shall not be belonging to any nation, race or religion through apparently he may have been born within the fold of the one or the other. His existence is universal. Imagine for a while an ordinary man going about by the road side in the humblest possible way, having nothing about him to attract the eye of a passerby. Will anyone be prepared to accept him as an Avatar or Saviour? I believe, certainly not. But just as a jeweller's eye cannot fail to recognise a jewel lying in a heap of rubbish, so shall the eye of a true saint of calibre with divine insight, never fail to judge him as such, however simple and unassuming he may apparently be. His entire outward life shall be just like that of an ordinary man, facing the ups and downs of a normal worldly life, for, being in the human form he must necessarily play the part of a man in the true sense. Therefore, those who think of judging Him merely by his external form, his extensive knowledge or his miraculous actions, are sure to meet with failure. Therefore, in order to have a true knowledge of the Saviour or Avatar, we must set aside all our self-conceived notions and beliefs and sincerely try to discover Him by any of the means suited to our purpose or rely upon the experience and judgement of those great saints with Divine in-sight, who have read the signs in Nature or have intercommuned with the higher souls.

His Real Nature

The Avatar or the Saviour possesses all the godly attributes. He is omnipresent, omniscient and omnipotent. He can appear in the sun, the moon and the stars in astral form, all at the same time, in spite of having his physical body at one place only. He is kind, benevolent, just and merciful and gives everyone his due without reserve. He lavishly bestows his blessings upon the righteous but also punishes and destroys the vicious and the ungodly. His power is unlimited. He commands all the forces of Nature and can at any time set them to action for the accomplishment of the task before him. All his activities are divine and may, at times, appear to be most wonderful and miraculous. But that may only be when there is genuine need for the fulfilment of the Nature's plan. His will in all matters pertaining to godly work is unfailing. He can in a moment charge any place, country or even the whole world with the highest spiritual force so as to bring all men in a state of trance. He can at a glance bestow upon anyone the highest spiritual approach if he is so pleased. He can at a single stroke of his will remove or destroy the effect of all the past Samskaras (results of actions) of a man and free him from all bondages. When fortunately you happen to find one possessing these super-natural powers, know him not to be an ordinary man but the very Incarnation, who has come down for the emancipation of the world. May we all know Him in time ! Amen.

His Work

The Avatar or Saviour comes on the earth for some specific purpose, and with a definite programme of work as stated in the following verse of Gita :

“For the protection of the virtuous, for the destruction of the evil doers and for the establishment of Dharma (righteousness) on a firm footing I take birth from age to age.”

Thus, the foremost item of his work is to eliminate unrighteousness from the surface of the earth. It is wrong to think that with the appearance of the Avatar on earth all men will instantly turn holy and virtuous and that all things on earth will at once be set right, and that one and all creatures on earth will be saved. The Saviour, as he is rightly called, may not be only a saviour in the strict sense of the word but also a killer and destroyer. Of course, for the righteous he may be a Saviour but for the wicked and the ungodly he shall be a destroyer as well. He comes to change the very face of the earth. Therefore, the world shall not be to him a bed of roses, but he shall have to work hard, to struggle, to contrive, and to endeavour bringing all means into action to remove evil and the evildoers from the world. He shall meet opposition from almost every quarter. He shall be hooted and reviled by the ungodly persons who form the bulk of the world population. Followers and supporters, he may probably have but a few, yet in spite of all these adverse circumstances he shall go on efficiently and successfully with his programme of work of destruction and construction. To mend or to end shall be the only alternatives with him. He shall be quite unsparing in his work. Evil doers

who do not mend in time on account of the effects of their past Samskaras (impressions of actions) shall have to face destruction.

The Final Phase

The programme of his work has already been started and the signs of which are clear and distinct, though they may not be visible to one drowned in himself. A period of extreme tribulation and unprecedented misery is soon to cover the entire world. Such has always been the course of Nature under similar circumstances. Rama's war against Ravana, the battle of Mahabharata and the Noah's flood are a few instances. A similar trend has been adopted by Nature for bringing into action its present programme of change, for which the Divine Personality, come down as the Avatar or the Saviour, is actively on with his work. Signs are evidently clear to indicate the rapid progress of the world towards the final phase. Fresh causes are cropping up every moment, material is gathering and multiplying and the tendencies of mind are changing for the worse. All events coming to light are pointing directly or indirectly towards the same end. The disaster is imminent and inevitable. Such wholesale destruction of the undesirable element from the surface of the earth comes into effect at different places through different causes. It may be through storm and flood, through famine and disease, through war and massacre or through heavenly calamities like volcanic upheaval, etc.

The Bible also predicts such an unprecedented destruction, coming upon the earth with the advent of the Saviour. Lord Christ warns the people of these unhappy events and promises his help and support to those who are righteous. My Master also speaks of it with greater preciseness in the Reality at Dawn :

“The time is now ripe for its final phase and the world is rushing towards it with a headlong speed. The action may come into full swing by the close of the present century.”

“Signs are evident that the destruction of the undesirable elements in the world has already commenced.”

“There shall be enormous bloodshed all over the world and the loss of life through various causes shall be so great that the world population shall be considerably reduced.”

All these views establish the fact that the world is on the very verge of ruin and that there is no time now, to be lost. What is, therefore, to be done for one's own safety, must be done now and at once, lest it be too late.

Such is to be the fate of the world (the world as we have today); the old order shall change and a new world shall be born. My Master puts it in the following way :

“The new structure of the coming world shall stand on bones and ashes. A type of civilisation based on spirituality will spring forth in India and shall become in due course the world civilisation. No country or nation shall survive without

spirituality as its base, and every nation must sooner or later adopt the same course if it wants to maintain its very existence.”

It shall be wrong to treat this as a mere prophesy. It is the revelation of the mysterious facts included in the future programme of the great Divine personality. Believe it or not, but signs are evidently clear that the world is rushing towards it with a headlong speed. Time, it may, however, take but that too shall not be very long. Most of the items of his programme of change are bound to come into effect by the close of the present century (of the Christian era). Let us, therefore, wake up in time and mend, in order to secure for ourselves a safe place in the new set up of the coming world, based on the principles of righteousness. I now close with the prayer:

May the good gracious God bestow upon us light and guidance to lead us to the true knowledge of the great incarnation, the World Saviour, and inspire us with devotional surrender to his Will ! Amen.



Shri Ragavendraro – Shri Babuji – Shri Ishwar Sahai