

CHICAGO CALLING

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EDITORIAL

WORSHIP OF THE GOD OF ALL HUMANITY



The small group of 150 people, including monks of the Ramakrishna Mission & representatives of nine different religions, along with men, women and young people, started moving hand in hand under the banner of their respective faiths, following the banner held by two girls and a boy saying, “Come, let us make this

world a heaven.” The monk, who was leading the procession, was ringing the bell that is used in evening worship. The sweet sound of the bell was announcing to the neighborhood that “Truth is one, sages call it by various names.”

When the procession reached the junction of Grace Street and Keeler Road in the Irving Park area of Chicago, the church bell started ringing to welcome them. It struck 10 times to announce the 10 different religions that were entering the Home of Harmony to worship the God of all humanity. It was like different rivers, starting from different times and different regions and passing through different places, mingling in the same ocean and becoming the ocean itself.

The Supreme God, the creator of this universe, wants its creation to continue through its mesmerizing power, and the creatures start believing that the creation is more beautiful than the Creator, but the Creator becomes as if happy, when someone breaks through the net of illusion and reaches the Creator.

The whole process is known as religion. It is like the coach, who has trained his students to run faster, then puts some hurdles in the way, and waits for the students to cross the hurdles and

come to Him. The religions are on different paths, but the goal, God, is the same. People call the Creator by different names because of different languages, but it is the same God.

All realized souls state that God is love and unselfishness. If we analyze ourselves, we will find that every being has love and, to some extent, unselfishness. A tiny bird will take so much trouble to feed its baby birds. Sometimes the parents, themselves, will not take any food. That shows the love that is within the parents. The same thing is true of all animals. They have love, and they will sacrifice for their young ones. Every human, whatever may be their language, religion or nationality, also has these two unique qualities: love and unselfishness.

Now, where did these two qualities come from? The spiritual researchers debated for thousands of years to reach a conclusion about the Creator and the creation. There is no problem to answer the first question, “Who is the Creator?”. The Supreme God is the Creator! But then the question arises, “What is the material out of which this universe has created? It is obvious that for creation you need two things: a material cause and an intelligent cause. If we accept God as the intelligent cause, then what is the material cause? If we say that different materials were there, and God used the materials to create the universe, then we will fall into the ditch of duality. Whenever there are two, they will surely collide and get destroyed. That is absurd. That is the reason all religions and philosophies proclaim that God is one, and there cannot be any two.

If God is one, and if God is the intelligent cause of the universe, then obviously we have to conclude that God is also the material cause.

That is the reason in almost all religions we find statements like, “Let there be light and there was light.” God created by His own will, and that

is why God is considered all-powerful. The best creation of God is the human being. This is accepted by all the different religions. We find statements like, "God created man in His image and likeness." 'Image' doesn't mean that God looks like a human, but that the qualities of God are manifested in the human mind to the maximum. Love and unselfishness, which is a quality of God, is manifested to a great extent in the advanced human mind.

If we ask each other what we need in our life, the answer of all people would be "Happiness!" We do everything for happiness, but most of the time we search for happiness in the creation, which by its very nature is temporary. And that is why humans remain unsatisfied, unhappy, through life after life. The richest and most powerful king is also unhappy for some reason or other. Understanding the truth, a few great souls withdrew their minds from the created world and directed them to the Creator. This process is known as religion.

Religions are different is due to the social, economic, political, and geographical

backgrounds, but it doesn't matter. If one is sincere in the attempt to find God, they will find eternal happiness. We can understand this through an example. Suppose five students are studying math in five different countries, like India, Japan, Great Britain, France and America. Obviously, the teachers are different, the languages are different, the school environment is different, but when these five students complete their education and graduate, the knowledge of math will be the same.

Now, the time has come to understand this simple truth that religions may be different, but the goal of all religions is love and unselfishness. The Creator may be called Jehovah, God, Allah, Buddha or Ishwara, but it is the same God. The time has come to stop misunderstanding and misusing the unique paths created in different parts of the world at different times by enlightened beings, who are known as, the "Son of God", the "Messenger of God", or the "Incarnation of God."

Our goal is to be happy ourselves and to make this world as happy as heaven. Let us worship the God of all humanity, which is the repository of love and unselfishness.



School of World's Religions in the Home of Harmony

"To His bhaktas [loving devotees of God] He reveals Himself as having a form. It is like a great ocean, an infinite expanse of water, without any trace of shore. Here and there some of the water has been frozen. Intense cold has turned it into ice. Just so, under the cooling influence, so to speak, of the bhakta's love, the Infinite appears to take a form."

-- Sri Ramakrishna



The Message of Harmony in Judaism



Rabbi Adir Glick
Temple Har Zion, River Forest, IL

I'd like to thank Swami Ishatmananda, my friend. I think that rain while we were walking was a rain of blessing over this whole endeavor. To the esteemed leaders of the Ramakrishna Mission, to my fellow faith leaders, this is a great and wonderful accomplishment, continuing the vision of Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna!

Good morning, fellow brothers and sisters of all faiths,

I speak to you this morning as a rabbi and as a Jew, and today is our Shabbat. I say to you, Shabbat Shalom. Shabbat Shalom means a Sabbath of peace. Shalom means peace, but Shalom also means wholeness. It is wholeness and harmony that leads to peace. And in our tradition, these are the most treasured and blessed values. So how can religions develop friendship and peace among themselves? Our Jewish path has always believed that it is the harmony of all the different particular paths together, that creates the beautiful harmony.

Our religion Judaism first appeared 3500 years ago when God spoke to Abraham. He called Abraham the first Jew and said, Lech-Lecha - go, go from your land, go from your native land, from your father's house, and go to the land that I will show you and be a blessing. But literally, Lech-Lecha - go surely means go to yourself. And it was both a particular approach and a universal approach. It was a divine call to one man and to his family, eventually a tribe that became a people, the Jewish people associated with a holy land and a mission. And yet there was also a universal path to go to yourself, to the divine essence at the core of your being and let the universal power flow

from that self and be a blessing to all peoples.

And we are small people. We are just 20 million or so. We have our long history that incorporates everything, mysticism and language and civilization and culture. And this is our natural path to the divine. It resonates with who we are and within our path, we believe that each one of us has a role to fulfill, to flower, to deepen, maybe as in the words of Swami Vivekananda, to live our religion deeply and spiritually.

And perhaps it is the same with every religion. And from our particular path, we find a larger universal vision, where all paths work together to bring God's vision and plan to fruition, of bringing God's kingdom into this very world. And ultimately, we serve not just for our own religions, but all humankind. Yet I do not want to stop there today. And in this day and age, we're living in a period of great cross-fertilization of world religions. And I believe we are called to embrace the other side of Swami Vivekananda's mission and vision, which is to live with openness. So yes, we are to appreciate each other's religions, but even more, we ought to share in each other's religions, to be with each other and to pray together and meditate together and learn about each other and experience each other's rituals.

I believe that this cross-fertilization leads to the opening of doors for all religions, enabling us to see the wisdom in each other's religions, but even more, the wisdom from others can help illuminate the dark places within our own religion. It's not only about universality, it's about learning, sharing, and experiencing, because the multiplicity of our paths as we share them together is much greater than just the sum of all of our parts.

In Jewish mysticism, we have a concept called the Sefirot, which means that all spiritual life and physical life can be divided into 10 forces, also present within each human being. But those forces are not separate from one another, they're interconnected and interdependent and they create the fullness of all worlds. In this matter, we create a tree of life of all humanity, a beautiful, diverse, vibrant living force. But then we are also to gather all of that truth, all that wisdom that each expressed, the energy that we each bring, the truth that we each bring, the wisdom we each bring, and to bring it to the holy mountain, to Jerusalem, to Sinai, to Mecca, to Kailas, to Arunachala, to Bodh Gaya, to Mount Meru, wherever we each find the Eternal One.

We are told in our scriptures, the Torah, that our forefather Jacob, who was the grandson of Abraham, had to flee his home when he was young and his future was very uncertain. One day he came to a secluded forest and he was all alone and he made a prayer and went to sleep. And that night he dreamed of a ladder going from earth to heaven with angels going up and down the rungs of the ladder. And he woke up startled and he said, this is the house of God and the gateway to heaven, and I knew it not. Right here is the house of God. And this place where we are standing right now, not in some far away mountaintop or a hidden monastery, but right here among us and here in the house of God, right here, is the place of our unity, the place of our friendship, because we

are all seeking the same source as we have all been saying. In one of our prayers, which is the Aleinu prayer that we say in every service we stand and pray "bayom hahu yihyeh Adonai echad, u'shemo echad", "God will be One, and his name will be One." What does it mean, that God's name will be One? Well, in the Talmud Ta'anit we teach that at one point, at the end of days, in messianic days, all peoples will be in a great, huge circle. And in the middle will be God. And each one of them will point to the middle and say, this is the God that we were hoping for. And on that day, we will know that God has many names, but also his name is one. And so, this is the work before us.

And finally, I'd like to mention that in our tradition, the name for God comes from the verb "To Be" because God is a pure being HaVaYaH. I am That I am. Because we believe that ultimately everything will return to that pure being. I am That I am. Everything will merge together. And that place is the basis of our friendship, from that place of unity, of oneness, from where we seek to transform ourselves into each other in the whole world. And so, I end with a prayer, Almighty one, may we each be guided to that Single reality that may bring everlasting joy, of divine oneness to all of us, understanding and peace and friendship to our city, to this nation, to the whole world, as Sri Ramakrishna taught and Swami Vivekananda proclaimed in this very city, 120 years ago, Shabbat Shalom, peace to everyone.



Harmony Walk, May 21, 2022



Message of Unity and the Parliament of World's Religions

Stephen Avino
Executive Director, PoWR

My name is Stephen Avino and I am the Executive Director of the Parliament of the World's Religions; the world's premier interfaith convening organization. I want to thank the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago and congratulate them for the opening of this Home for Harmony. This Home is not by mistake in the same city that 129 years ago hosted the first Parliament of the World's Religions. The first Parliament of the World's Religions was held in 1893 in Chicago, and is widely recognized as the birthplace of the modern interfaith movement. 100 years later, the world returned to Chicago in 1993 to celebrate the centenary of that seminal event. Since then, there has been more modern Parliaments in Cape Town, Barcelona, Melbourne, Salt Lake City, and Toronto. I am here to tell you today that next year thousands from all over the world will come back to this great city. The 2023 Parliament of the World's Religions will be held from August 14-18th at the Lakeside Center at McCormick Place.

In 1893, Swami Vivekananda said the he "fervently hoped that the bell that tolled this morning in honor of this convention may be the death-knell of all fanaticism, of all persecutions with the sword or with the pen, and of all uncharitable feelings between persons wending

their way to the same goal." I would like to think that Swami Vivekananda was right about that bell. That with that bell a movement began that led to the building of this home for harmony and a movement for peace. A movement that will eventually lead to the end of fanaticism and persecution.

You see: Freedom, human rights, and democracy are under attack all over the world today. Violence and hatred, like we saw last weekend in Buffalo, but also here in Chicago is an epidemic. This is why it is so important that places like this Home for Harmony are built as an example of a better way of life for us all. It is also why next year the theme of the 2023 Parliament is "A Call to Conscience: Defending Freedom & Human Rights." We are all being called to build the world that Swami hoped for in 1893. We can make the world a better place. Please join us next year at McCormick Place. And again, Congratulations to all who conceived of and built this holy place that is being opened today.

As a visitor to the 1893 Parliament once said "All the joys of Heaven are in Chicago; I wish I were sure that all the joys of Chicago are to be in Heaven."

Home of Harmony is now part of that joy.

Courtesy: The blog of
parliamentofreligions.org



These two articles are based on the transcriptions of the talks that were delivered during the Inauguration ceremony of Home of Harmony on May 21, 2022. The theme of the program was: "The Message of Harmony".



Compassion in Hindu Philosophy: A Tantric View

Swami Bhajanananda Saraswati

Kali Mandir Ramakrishna Ashram, Laguna Beach, California

This article is a transcription of the talk delivered at Hinduism Panel discussion on October 17, 2021 at the Parliament of World's Religions 2021 (Virtual).

Jai Ma! Jai Ma!! Namaskars everybody, Shubha Vijaya! We just finished a ten-day celebration, very much steeped in the Tantric tradition of the Divine Mother so we are still flying high on this very holy occasion! We are very, very honored to be part of this august assembly.

We are often nervous to use the word Tantra because it has such a bad reputation in the West. Tantra to be an esoteric tradition in the East, and esoteric things are by nature a little bit hidden and not so obvious. People tend to take aspects of it and popularize it in a strange way. The problem in the West is that it has been identified with sexual and hedonistic practices. This happens also in the East where it can be considered almost like magic. But despite its misrepresentation and misunderstanding, it is actually a very profound ancient tradition. What we now consider and recognize as aspects of Tantric philosophy, world view and practices can be found in a very early strata of Indian society.

References to what we recognize as Tantric ideas can be seen in Vedas texts as well as in pre-Vedic and non-Vedic artifacts. The foundational ideas and practices seem to be very ancient. But as a self-understood tradition, it is a much later tradition. Clearly defined Tantric texts appear about fifteen hundred years ago and continue to develop in almost our contemporary times. Some scholars believe that some influential Tantric texts, such as Mahanirvana Tantra, are only two to three hundred years old. Tantras, in a certain sense, can be seen as modern revelations that are akin to the divine revelations of the Vedas, but for a different period of time. Often Shiva, or Vishnu, or Devi is speaking and revealing a new spiritual approach

out of compassion for humankind. This is how the text are seen.

We find Tantric ideas not just in Hinduism. While Hindu Shaktism generally has is the most developed forms of Tantra, there are also elaborate forms of Tantric practice in Buddhism and Jainism. Tibetan Buddhism is overtly and self-understood as Tantric. As Indian philosophy and ideas spread, Tantric ideas and practices have found expression in other religions as well.

We can start with the name Tantra. There are different ideas as to where this word comes from, but I will give the self-understood definition from a Tantric scripture themselves. Tantra comes from the two words Tanotri and Trayati. Tan in the world tantra means "to extend and expand" and trayati means "to liberate, to free". So in that sense one purpose of Tantra is to liberate us from delusion, liberate us from suffering, liberate us from limitations, and ultimately to liberate us from samsara, the world of birth and death. It could can also be as concrete as liberating us from disease, from problems with a neighbor, or as abstract as liberation from the cycle of birth and death itself.

Tantra is hard to define. Like most things in Hinduism, anything you say, the opposite could also be said to be true. It is a trend right now to understand Tantra is a non-dualistic philosophy and we ourselves understand Tantra to be a non-dualistic philosophy. This is because we follow the non-dualistic forms of Tantra. But the truth is that the statistical majority of Tantria is dualistic, which means the soul, the world, and God are not identical in a absolute ontological sense. But many sophisticated theological thinkers, especially in Kashmir, began to give highly non-dualistic

commentary on Tantric text and themes. But the non-dualism of Tantra is different than the non-dualism we find in classical Advaita Vedanta. In Advaita Vedanta there is ultimately only one divine reality which is Brahman. But what about us (jiva)? What about the world (jagat)? If there is only one reality, then the world does not exist. Why do we see it? Advaita Vedanta there must be a mistake that makes us see ourselves as a separate entity and see the world as existing. There are various methods of correcting this mistake in perception and identification.

But Tantra does not start with this premise. It starts with the idea that there is only one reality, AND we (jiva) also exist, our bodies exist, and this world exists. Our body and world really exist but, but not forever. The body is obviously changing, the world is changing every moment, the universe comes and goes in the cosmic scheme of time, but they are real. They are the manifestation of the one reality.

So in a technical term this falls under the philosophical school known as Parinama-vada, which holds that the cause transforms into an effect. The cause is the one supreme divine reality. The effect is the individual soul (jiva) and the world of name and form (jagat). The Divine Reality transforms Itself into the individual and the world that the individual experiences. In Tantra, rather than calling the Divine Reality Brahman, they call it Shiva. Of course there are different sectarian perspectives or sectarian traditions in Tantra, such as Vaishnava, Shaivite, and Shakta. But speaking in general terms, Shiva is the absolute supreme ground of being, consciousness, awareness. Shiva is the one reality that exists ultimately. So what about us, what about the jiva-jagat, the world and the individual souls? We, and our world of experience is only Shiva's manifestation.

The manifestation of Shiva is called Shakti in Tantra. Shakti is the word for energy. It is a feminine word. In Sanskrit, words have gendered connotations. But Shakti it is not just a gendered

word, but a gendered idea. One of the characteristics of Tantra is that has a highly gendered understanding of the world: Shiva and Shakti, or Purusha and Prakriti, between masculine and feminine, Shiva and Shakti, spirit and nature.

How does the One become many? Tantric scriptures teach that if there is one consciousness, it must be conscious of something. Otherwise consciousness is not consciousness. So if you have consciousness, automatically you have something to be conscious of. In Tantra they use the terms prakash and vimarsha. Prakash is the light of awareness. It has to see something. It has to be aware of something.

What does it see? If only one reality exist, then It can only see itself. It becomes the mirror in which it reflects itself. The One become subject and object. It also becomes the relationship between the two. So the One automatically becomes two, and two automatically becomes three (seer, seen, and seeing). The three becomes everything! To give an example: there is one vibration, that vibration creates a ripple, it produces its own dynamics and pretty soon you have thousands of ripples. The vibrations or ripples in the one are the world of name and form (nama-rupa) and individual souls and the world (jiva-jagat). The One has become everything.

So this is quite extraordinary? A working definition of Tantra is that it is "a body of primarily Indic beliefs and practices which hold that the universe we experience is nothing other than the concrete manifestation of divine energy, Shakti. That energy is not different from Shiva, the Godhead. It is the divine energy of the goddess that creates and maintains the universe." This is an extraordinary world view!

In the Ramakrishna tradition and in modern Hinduism we say "God has become everything." This is not the language of classical Vedanta. It is the language of the Tantra, and Tantra and Vedanta have been mysteriously and gloriously

mixed, especially in the tradition of Sri Ramakrishna.

So what is this world view? The whole world we experience is the energy of consciousness, divine energy. And Tantra has practices that respond to this truth. The rituals, meditation techniques, visualizations, mantras, and temple worship of Tantra are ways to channel that energy into creative ways for success in this world, and in emancipatory and salvific ways to transcend the world and be free from the world.

I sometimes think of the practical parts of Tantra as energetic practices meant to transform consciousness, maybe even liberate consciousness, ultimately. But because they are energetic they are potentially a little dangerous and so Tantra has a lot of safeguards. This is one reason that it is considered an esoteric tradition or occult tradition in some of its forms. Tantric practice often requires initiation into a particular lineage.

One beautiful development of most Tantric traditions is that the qualification for initiation or practice or teaching is not caste or gender, as in much of the Vedic-based teachings. It changes the nature of qualification. Qualification for initiation

becomes sincerity, or interest, or natural aptitude, etc.

Sri Ramakrishna himself practiced the sixty-four forms of Tantra of the Kali-Kula division of Tantra practiced in Bengal, Orrisa, and Nepal under his female Tantric Guru, the Brahmani Bhairavi. He did not just practice them, but mastered them. The effect or realization promised as the fruit of each practiced where attained or experienced by him. To master even one of these Tantric practices is very difficult. But Sri Ramakrishna mastered these sixty-four forms of Tantra, some very difficult, some very dangerous, and some very controversial.

But when his own disciples came to him, what did he say? He made spiritual life so easy and beautiful. He made Tantra so easy and beautiful. "Call out to the Divine Mother (the Goddess of the Tantra). Call to Her like a child calling your own loving mother. Her vision destroys all lust, all greed, all suffering. It happens immediately if you consider Her your own mother. She is not your stepmother, She is not a philosophical abstraction, but your own mother. That intimate relationship with divine reality completely transforms your life.



Thoughts influence one another. Through contact with other religions we can all appreciate the practical religious ideal of Zoroastrianism, the living faith in God of Judaism, the burning love of Christ for God and man expressed through the social service of Christianity, the religious fervour and democratic spirit of Mohammed, the ideal of living in harmony with the Cosmic Spirit proclaimed by Lao Tse, the stabilizing and humanizing moral and social ideal of Confucius, the message of righteousness and peace of Buddhism and the ideal of the potential divinity of man and the spirit of unity-in-diversity of Hinduism.

Excerpt from:
The Adventures in Religious Life
By Swami Yatiswarananda



Home of Harmony “Know & Love”: Lecture Series

Baha’i Faith

Shayda Safapour
Chicago Bahá’í Temple

My name is Shayda Safapour and I am delighted to be with you today. I want to express my appreciation to The Home of Harmony and the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago for organizing this wonderful gathering. The title I saw on announcement about this series of interfaith talks is “Know and Love.” Know and Love. How beautiful and heartwarming. I am honored to speak with a group of people who have come together for this common spiritual purpose -- a meeting of intellects and of spirits -- who are committed to interfaith harmony and working toward the establishment of peace and unity in the world. And it is in this spirit, that I hope we can explore together the Bahá’í Faith, the role of religion, and the relevance of the Bahá’í Faith in this era.

These are each rather vast subjects and we have limited time, so I will begin with a summary of the prophet founder, and then share personal reflections on the significance of the Bahá’í revelation. I hope during our question and answer period I can address anything that is of particular interest to you.

Bahá’ís believe that we live in an era of profound spiritual importance and this era was inaugurated by Bahá’u’lláh. We believe that Bahá’u’lláh was a messenger of God; a prophet whose arrival had been foretold by previous divine Teachers. The name Bahá’u’lláh is an Arabic title, which means "The Glory of God."

Bahá’u’lláh was born in 1817 in Iran to a noble family. While still a child, He became known for His exceptional learning, and although He didn’t attend school, He possessed remarkable powers.

Despite the privileges afforded to him, He showed no interest in position or prominence and chose a different path. He devoted his energies to the care of the poor and despairing and sought ways to alleviate their burdens. During a series of historic and mostly tragic events, many turned to Bahá’u’lláh for moral and spiritual guidance. Due to His increasing fame for his extraordinary wisdom and eloquence, He faced fierce opposition and was exiled from Iran to Iraq, with further banishments to Turkey, and then finally the prison city of Akka (Israel), where he passed away in 1892.

I would like to talk briefly about a pivotal moment when Bahá’u’lláh was in Iraq in 1863. It was in 1863, 160 years ago, that He publically announced that he was the latest Messenger of God, sent to humanity, to bring us teachings and principles that would provide society with spiritual advancement. At the heart of Bahá’u’lláh's Message is a call for unity. Bahá’u’lláh taught the purpose of religion was to bring together people of all backgrounds, races, religions, and creeds in a spirit of mutual love and fellowship, recognizing their oneness.

This message has spread throughout the world, to every corner of the world (India, Africa, China, from the smallest most rural areas to urban cities such as Chicago). There are around 8 million followers in the world; around 180K in the U.S.

The Bahá’í Faith was actually first mentioned in the United States in 1893 at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. I understand 1893 is a very special time for your Temple, as well, as this is when Swami Vivekananda arrived in Chicago to represent Hinduism at the Parliament of World Religions. Chicago is indeed a special place. And I’m sure many have also visited the only Bahá’í

House of Worship in North America, which is near us in Wilmette, IL. There are 8 continental Bahá'ís Houses of Worship in the world, including one in New Delhi, India, called the Lotus Temple.

A unique feature of the Bahá'í Faith is that we have no clergy. This is partly because one of the tenants of the Bahá'í Faith is independent investigation for truth. I understand this is also similar to your teachings which asks that we be "bold and sincere in our search for Truth." Since there is no clergy or priesthood, each person is responsible for his or her own relationship with God and spiritual development.

Some of the other teachings in the Bahá'í Faith are: Elimination of prejudice; Racial and social justice; Equality of women and men; Harmony of science and religion; Universal education.

I'd like to shift now to a quote in the Bahá'í Writings to help frame our discussion on how faith and religion – knowledge and love – can move us forward...

According to the Bahá'í Writings: "The greatest bestowal of God in the world of humanity is religion, for assuredly the divine teachings of religion are above all other sources of instruction and development to man. Religion confers upon man eternal life and guides his footsteps in the world of morality. It opens the doors of unending happiness and bestows everlasting honor upon the human kingdom. It has been the basis of all civilization and progress in the history of mankind." As an interfaith group I'm sure we can all appreciate the fact that the crisis engulfing every part of our planet is essentially spiritual. But if the crisis afflicting humanity is spiritual, then no doubt its solution must also be spiritual. I feel, in its proper context, Religion offers insights and the motivating power for addressing the issues facing our world.

For Bahá'ís, the role of religion is, among other things, about realizing our true spiritual reality – our oneness - and to bring about peace through unity. Again I commend the Vedanta Society for

helping to bring about this very kind of unity by providing a forum for inter-faith dialogues.

Let's explore this idea of oneness - Bahá'ís often refer to the "The three Onenesses" are:

1. the oneness of God,
2. the oneness of humanity,
3. the oneness of Religion.

The oneness of Religion -- Bahá'ís often refer to it as Progressive Revelation. Progressive revelation is a core teaching in the Bahá'í Faith, and suggests that religions are inherently one and that truth is revealed by God progressively over time through a series of divine Messengers or Prophets.

The Bahá'í Writings tell us that Religion is Eternal in the Past and Eternal in the future. "God leaves not His children comfortless, but, when the darkness of winter overshadows them, then again He sends His Messengers, the Prophets, with a renewal of the blessed spring..." The Prophets themselves refer to their individual revelations as but partial expositions of truth, limited only by the capacity of humankind in any given age to receive them.

In Christ's words, "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now..."

We can find an echo in the Qur'an which states that divine truth is "sent down...in due and ascertainable measures."

In the Bhagavad Gita the following words are found: "I come, and go, and come. When Righteousness declines, O Bharata! When Wickedness is strong, I rise, from age to age, and take visible shape, and move a man with men, succoring the good, thrusting the evil back, and setting Virtue on her seat again."

Bahá'ís believe each Prophet's revelation is tailored to suit the needs of the time, the place of their appearance, and the capacity of humanity.... And that with the coming of each Manifestation of God, new forces are released that, over time, increasingly permeate human affairs, providing the main impulse for the further development of consciousness and society.

The teachings of the Bahá'í Faith, combined with the authentic teachings of past religions, are embraced and regarded by Bahá'ís as revealed by God. For example, the teachings of: Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Christianity, and Islam.

According to the Bahá'í Writings: "...the world of existence is progressive. It is subject to development and growth...Civilization has unfolded. Nations have developed... inventions and discoveries have increased. All of these show that the world of existence is continuously progressing and developing; and therefore, assuredly, the virtues characterizing the maturity of man must, likewise, expand and grow."

We are truly living in an exciting time, full of opportunities, and yes full of challenges... We are seeing the accelerating movement of populations across borders, youth discontent, and vulnerability to radicalization. Religion, as viewed for the last century, has been questioned by many, and their negative view has been understandably buttressed by the horrors we see perpetrated in the name of religion.

So if religion is to take its rightful place as a powerful force for good, it's vital for us to investigate the question: What kind of religion will be helpful to the needs of the 21st century and beyond?

Here are some concepts to consider: 1- Relevance. That is, a religion's relevance to the problems of the world today. According to Bahá'u'lláh's Writings, every messenger of God who has come, has brought Teachings which were relevant to that particular period of time. Bahá'u'lláh tells us that the Prophets of God (Jesus, Moses, Buddha, Mohammed, Krishna) are like Physicians, they have their finger on the pulse of humanity and they diagnose the disease and prescribe the remedy. The remedy of a Past Age may be different than the remedy of this age. Religion thus needs to be relevant to address our current conditions.

2- Harmony with Science - religion should be in

harmony with Science. Bahá'í writings tell us that when Religion is not in harmony with science it will always end up in superstition and dogmas. Furthermore, any civilization which only relies on science without religion will end up in materialism. Therefore, we must have both and in balance. Only when there is harmony of science and religion will the world progress.

3- Unity - that Religion should be the Cause of Unity. This is the essential thing which Religion must do. If Religion does not cause unity, then it is futile. Not by force, but merely by the knowledge and recognition that all people are one and religions are one, as they all come from God. By analogy, certain individuals share the same DNA and they immediately feel the bond of being part of the same family. The same is true of Religion: if we were to realize that Religions share the same DNA, that there is this fundamental oneness of religion, that knowledge alone would unite us. During the period between 1868 and 1870, while Bahá'u'lláh was in exile and a prisoner, He wrote to the Rulers of the world: The Tsar of Russian, the Pope, The Shah of Persia, Napoleon 3rd, Kaiser of Germany, Sultan of Turkey. He called on them to stop their wars, turn to peace and reduce their armaments. Queen Victoria received a letter from Bahá'u'lláh praising her for abolishing the slave trade. In a Tablet to the Queen, He wrote: "That which the Lord Hath Ordained as the Sovereign Remedy and the Highest Instruments for the Healing of the world is the union of all its people in one universal Cause."

Bahá'u'lláh tells us the first step essential for the peace and progress of humankind is its unification: "The well-being of mankind, its peace and security, are unattainable unless and until its unity is firmly established."

4- Another concept is that of Action – putting words and beliefs into real action

Bahá'u'lláh says "It is incumbent on every man of insight to translate what has been written into action." He also states: "Let deeds, not words, be your adorning."

‘Abdu'l-Bahá, the son of Bahá'u'lláh, said there are 3 kinds of faith: 1- One kind is from tradition and birth; this the inherited kind, which we get from our parents and ancestors.

2- One kind of faith comes from knowledge and is the faith of understanding. He says this is good, but there is something better... 3- The third kind – a faith of practice. We are doing and not only understanding. This is real faith.

The above are only a few observations on the role of the Bahá'í Faith in particular in modern society. We believe followers of every religion have awaited the revelation of a fuller measure of God's guidance to the world. Bahá'ís believe those expectations are fulfilled today by the message of Bahá'u'lláh.

The world can no longer endure the pain inflicted by wars and by a culture of manmade divisions such as Nationalism, Sexism, Racism, and Fanaticism. Religion can play a role in infusing spirituality and hope into a despairing world.

As I understand it, Vendanta is dedicated to helping people realize their spiritual potential and making them aware of their inner divinity. As Bahá'ís, we too believe in the nobility of each human being, and feel religion can have a role to play in the evolution of our spirit.

When we realize our true nature, our spiritual reality - that we are one - and when we are exposed to spiritual teachings, this will, in turn, give us a sense of world citizenship, and instill in us a love - an urge - to serve humankind.

Let us break down the manmade barriers and prejudices which have historically separated the various peoples of the world, and let us establish peace through spiritual unity. This is certainly in our power, and our presence here today is a testament to our commitment to that.

The Bahá'í Writings tell us: "This is a new cycle of human power. All horizons of the world are luminous, and the world will become indeed as a garden and a paradise..."

Thank you!



Spiritual life is a constant struggle, an indispensable part of which is the overcoming of moral obstacles. The illumined ones and the scriptures point out the way. Thus the Buddha says: "When men speak evil of you, thus must ye train yourselves: Our heart shall be unwavering. No evil word shall we send forth. But we will abide compassionate of others' welfare, kindly of heart, without resentment.' And that man who thus speaks, we will suffuse with thoughts accompanied by love ; and so abide."

Christ declares: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you ; do good to them: bat hate you ; pray for them who despitefully use you."

In the ancient Hindu Scripture, the Mahabharata,, we find; " Anger must be conquered by forgiveness ; and the wicked must be conquered by honesty. The miser must be conquered by liberality; and falsehood must be conquered by truth."

Excerpt from:
The Adventures in Religious Life
By Swami Yatiswarananda

BHAGAVATA (13): Son's Advice To His Mother **Swami Ishatmananda**

After the Rishi, Kardama left, Mother Devahuti requested her son, Kapila, to enlighten her so that she could get liberation from the bondage of this world. In the 3rd book, 25th chapter, verses 7-11, she expressed her prayer, "O Great Lord (Bhumana Prabhu)! I have been in the darkness of gross infatuation (Andham Tama) and utter helplessness owing to the pull of the senses (Asat Indriya Tashmat). By your grace I will reach the end of this darkness. I have got in you a great guide.

I seek shelter in Thee because you are the best teacher (Paragam). You are like an axe (Kutharam) that cuts the trees of Samsara for Thy servants. I salute Thee (aham namami), the greatest among knowers (Sat Dharma-vidam varishtham) and pray to you to enlighten me about matter and spirit."

Seeing the strong desire of his mother to get liberation, Sage Kapila became very happy. In 15 verses (3rd book, 25th chapter, verses 13-27) Kapila taught his mother how to realize the truth.

Kapila began by praising the benefit of spiritual concentration—concentrating the mind on a high spiritual object that is Atman.

For liberation (Nishreyasa), sincere effort to control the senses (yoga) is the best for the human in my opinion.

The human is a psycho-physical being—the body is inert, the feeling of bondage or liberation is the mind's work.

Sage Kapila continued, "It is the view of the wise that the mind, indeed, is the cause of both the bondage and the liberation of beings. If the mind is attached to the gunas of prakriti, it becomes bound, but if the same mind is put on the Supreme God, it becomes the cause of liberation. The same mind put in the world, Bound, put in God, Mukti."

What happens? Freed from lust and greed, etc., the impurities generated by the sense of 'I' and 'Mine' become pure and rest, without duality, in

equanimity.

Then what? The Jiva, the individual self, endowed with Knowledge (Knowledge of One), Renunciation (Detachment from anything that is temporary) and Devotion (Mind focused on the Truth—Consciousness) experiences the Supreme Spirit, transcending Nature (Prakriti)—Kevala (untouched by anything), Eternal, Self-effulgent, Subtle, Indivisible and unconcerned. He also sees the Prakriti, which has lost its binding force.

Easy to say, difficult to do! Kapila knew that, so he said, "Try two systems:

1) One-pointed devotion to that all-pervading Atman present in all beings—This is the best way.

2) Kapila gave another suggestion, "The wise say that intense attachment to the objects of the world is the cause of bondage for the soul. The same attachment, if directed towards holy persons, opens the gate of liberation (Moksha Dwaram Apabritam).

Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna also said, "Turn the flow of thought from the world to God. It is better to utilize our emotions for the realization of God instead of trying to subjugate them.

Kapila advised us to have the company of holy people—but how to recognize them? In verses 13-20, he taught how to recognize a holy person. In verses 21-27, Kapila explained the qualities of a true holy person and the benefit of holy company.

Patient, kind hearted, friendly to all, no enmity with anyone, peaceful; the holy person is endowed with all good qualities.

Kapila also said, "Who is a good person? He who has a deep-rooted love for Me—who abandons relatives and clansmen and works solely for Me—is a holy person."

Guru Vasishtha also described to Sri Rama the qualities of a holy person— "Whose greed, delusion and anger becomes less and less every day and who lives according to the injunctions of

the scriptures is a holy person. According to Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna: "A holy person's body-mind-soul have been dedicated to God."

The great Shankaracharya raised the question, "Who is a holy person?" Then he, himself, gave the answer, "One who is free from desire, who is free from delusion, and who is devoted to truth."

A holy person has the habit of hearing and speaking about Me, the God. Thereby, he is not affected by any troubles. (3/25/23)

Such persons are completely free from any attachment. (Sarba-Sanga-ViVarjita) (3/25/24)

The company of such holy persons helps to develop faith (Shradha), delight in God (Rati), and devotion (Bhakti). (3/25/25)

He who can withdraw the mind from the creation and keep that mind on God through constant remembrance of God is a Holy Person.

(3/25/26)

The holy person and God are the same because through yoga, when someone gets united with the Atman, which is residing in every being, he too becomes Atman. (3/25/27)

You should long for Holy Company. A holy person has no desire, no anger, and is always satisfied.

Whatever a holy person wishes or says becomes true. What is hell? Association with selfish people.

What is heaven? Association with holy people.

Unholy people say but don't do. Holy people do, but never mention.

Holy Company is always beneficial. Ramcharitmanas says, without holy company there is no discussion of God. Without that, delusion does not go. Without the removal of delusion, there cannot be true devotion.

BHAGAVATA (14): PURUSA AND PRAKRITI

Mother Devahuti asked her son, "What is the nature of true devotion?"

In reply Kapila said, "When all the powers of man's senses, which generally go away through external objects, are purified through the practices prescribed in scriptures and get naturally concentrated on Iswara without any motivation, that state of mind is called Bhakti — the highest form of devotion to the Lord." Then Kapila added, "That devotion is superior even to Mukti (Sa Siddh)." Further, he said, "It (devotion) burns up the covering of ignorance by burning the subtle body."

In the Bible (Eph. 3.19) we find a wonderful statement, "Know the love of Christ, which passeth Knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God."

In describing true devotion, Sri Ramakrishna said, "This 'love' for God makes one forget the world, even the body, which is so dear, they also forget, who develop true devotion."

The true devotee loves God for love's sake.

Sri Ramakrishna also said, "Longing is like the rosy dawn. After the dawn, out comes the sun.

Longing is followed by the vision of God."

In the Bhagavat (3/25/34), Kapila stated, "Some endowed with such Bhakti do not aspire for Moksha or even Oneness with My Being."

In the 3rd Book, 25th Chapter, Verse 43, the great sage, Kapila, narrated the ultimate result of devotion, "True devotion clubbed with Knowledge & renunciation ends up at the Divine Feet of Me, the Supreme Being."

Devahuti, Kapila's mother, requested more information so that she and ordinary people like her could reach the Supreme Goal.

Kapila advised her to give up the ego—the combination of 'Me' and 'Mine' because from ego comes 'Lust' & 'Greed' —the impurities of the mind.

Kapila suggested that she develop Knowledge, Renunciation and Devotion so that she could experience the Supreme Spirit. He also told her to direct the mind with its desires to the words of Holy Persons—the same attachment will help to open the gate of Liberation (Moksha-Dwaram Apabritam).

Kapila concluded by saying, "The highest spiritual goal of a human life is to reach Me, the

Supreme Being, through one-pointed devotion (Tibrena Bhakti-yogena).”

In brief, we can say that a devotee can reach God through extreme devotion.

Naturally, the question comes up about the identity of Jnata (the knower), the devotee and also its relation (jnana) with God.

To answer, Kapila put forward a theory — Satkarya-vada, the theory of causation.

This explanation of Kapila is very famous as Samkhya Philosophy.

It is a very old system. Ideas of Samkhya are reflected in ancient Indian Literature, like Sruti, Smriti, and the Puranas.

Kapila expressed his philosophy briefly in his first book, Sankhya-Sutra, then he elaborated that in the book, Sankhya-Pravacana-Sutra.

The 3rd Book, 26th chapter of the Bhagavata gives the definitions and works of God and Its divine power, Nature — famous in the philosophical world as Purusha & Prakriti.

Kapila said, “Now I shall tell you the characteristics of all categories separately. By knowing this, the Spirit (Purusha) becomes free from Universal Nature (Prakriti).

Kapila then explained about the Purusha or the Self.

This Self or Purusha is:

1. Beginningless (Anadi)
2. Without any attributes (Nirguna)
3. Distinct from Nature (Prakriti-Para)
4. All-pervading (Pratyag-Dhama)
5. Self-revealing (Swayam-Jyoti)
6. Brought the forces of evolution

together and set them in motion—that Supreme Self is Purusha.

Sankhya admits Ultimate Reality as the Self.

All the schools of philosophy accept ‘Self’, but their views vary.

1. Carvakas (materialists) — Self is the gross body.

2. Buddhists — Self is the Stream of Consciousness

3. Naya and Vaiseshikas — Self is an unconscious substance, sometimes under certain conditions, it appears like consciousness

4. Mimamsaka — Self is a conscious entity, sometimes, because of ignorance it appears as imperfect.

5. Advaita Vedanta — Self is Pure Eternal Consciousness, which is also a blissful existence (Chidananda-Swarupa), ever free, Self-Shining.

6. Sankhya— The Self is a conscious Spirit, always the subject and never the object of any knowledge. Self is Pure Consciousness above all change and activity. It is an uncaused, eternal, all-pervading reality.

Unlike Advaita, Sankhya does not accept Self as a Blissful Consciousness — to Sankhya Self is Pure Consciousness.

If the Self (Purusha in Kapila’s terminology) is above all change and activity, from all attachment and unaffected by anything, then, “What is this world? How did these phenomena come into existence?”

Sage Kapila answered this question with one word, Prakriti.

Mother Devahuti then asked her son, Kapila, to explain the characteristics of Purusha and Prakriti, since they are the ultimate source of all that exists, manifest and unmanifest.

Kapila answered, “That which is having qualities, imperceptible, Eternal, both Existence and also non-existence and without any distinction, yet all distinctions are potential within it is Prakriti, also known as Pradhana.

Almost like the ‘Maya’ of Advaita, but Sankhya’s Prakriti is very different than ‘Maya’.

Sankhya’s theory of causation is famous as Satkarya-vada.

It tries to prove that the Effect exists in the material cause even before it is produced, i.e., Sugar is sweet not salt.

Satkarya-vada is Real Transformation (not like Maya’s reflection or imagination).

If Purusha or the Self does not do anything, then what is the cause of the world?

Introduction to the Cover Page: Frequency, Wave, Tsunami & Beyond

Brahmacharini Jagaddhatri
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The cover image is composed of waves – solid waves of mountains, liquid waves of water, vapor waves of clouds. Winds often make wave irregular, though sometimes waves follow in sequence in perfect rhythm. Waves are created by a vibrations. In other words waves are nothing but a disturbance or a vibration that travels and carries energy from one point to another. Waves are associated with the transfer of energy. This travel may be from one space to another, from past to future to come and so on. Listening, seeing, thinking etc. that are all functions of our mind and are associated with a set of words -- vibration, frequency and waves.

Ordinary human beings are capable of hearing only a certain frequency range of sound waves. Lower frequency range that is the infrasound zone is perceivable by the animals like Rhinos, hippos, elephants, whales, octopus, pigeons etc. while the higher or ultrasound frequency though audible by some infants, children and some adult women of particularly acute hearing ability but it is mainly perceived by Bats, Insects, dolphins, dogs, frogs, etc..

Thought waves are of utmost importance. A typical definition of thought wave is: A supposed undulatory movement in a hypothetical medium by which thoughts are transferred is called a thought wave. All thoughts remain in vibration form. A person of matching frequency catches them. Swami Vivekananda says: *Time, space, and causation are the three conditions through which mind perceives. Time is the condition for the transmission of thought, and space for the vibration of grosser matter. Causation is the sequence in which vibrations come. Mind can only cognise through these. Anything therefore, beyond mind must be beyond time, space, and*

causation.

That which we call matter and mind are one and the same substance. The only difference is in the degree of vibration. Mind at a very low rate of vibration is what is known as matter. Matter at a high rate of vibration is what is known as mind. Both are the same substance; and therefore, as matter is bound by time and space and causation, mind which is matter at a high rate of vibration is bound by the same law.... Mind becomes matter, and matter in its turn becomes mind, it is simply a question of vibration.

It is vibration alone that adds many layers in this priceless sentence of the Rg Veda: *Ekam sat, viprā bahudhā vadanti*, Truth is One; the wise express it in many ways. Each sage, *vipra* – a wise, God-intoxicated seer “saw” reality from a unique perspective and spoke an inimitable truth. The proclamation of the Vedic rishis needs to be listened to carefully through the natural world -- hear each living species, every inimitable plant and animal, and in deep silence.

Therefore, let us begin with sound or to be precise – words -- the primary medium of communication. The intention of communication is the driving force of this creation, as the Chandogya Upanishad says. A wave of thought arose in Brahman, *Ekoham Bahusyām Prajāyeya* – I am One would be manifested as many. The manifestation of one thought as many is possible through words.

In the Taittiriya Upanishad the prayer for unwavering awareness begins with the vow '*Ritam Vadishyāmi, Satyam Vadishyāmi*', which expresses our determination: I shall speak Absolute Truth (cosmic truth and order); I shall speak Divine Truth (relative or worldly or human truth, righteousness). The Absolute is declared to be manifested as: *Tvam chatvāri vāk pādāni* (Thou art

the very syllables of the four varieties of speech). According to the Vedas, there are four degrees of human speech: *vaikharī*, *madhyamā*, *pashyanti*, and *parā*. Each level manifests the same reality differently.

Vaikharī is ordinary verbal speech, the kind we all hear and use daily. It is an expression of *kriyā shakti*, the power of action. During *jāgrat* (waking-time consciousness) *vaikharī* acts in our conscious mind. *Vaikharī*, the speech of *mayā*, is physical speech, the outward, audible manifestation of phonemes that refer to and are directed toward physical, external sense objects.

Vaikharī comes out easily. It is both talking and writing. Apparently, all of the communication stands on *vaikharī* only. When a nation's right to its own dialect is denied, even though that vernacular is imperfect, the experience of generations of "breathing from ancient times"; the direct connections with the inspirations of those past wise men and women, gets erased.

Madhyamā is mental speech, verbalized but unspoken, the internal monologue and dialogue; it expresses *jnāna shakti*, the power of knowledge and wisdom. At this level the mind and intellect measure, evaluate, question both rationally and emotionally to formulate the intentions that precipitate into words. *Madhyamā* is particularly directed to mental objects, the objects of the inner senses. It straddles the gulf between the noiseless conviction that is *pashyanti* and the spoken word that is *vaikharī*. The subconscious mind uses *madhyamā* in *svapna* (dreaming consciousness).

Pashyanti is perceptible but not particularized single-minded speech. It comes out by our *iccha shakti* or the power of desire. At the *pashyanti* level we are sure of our message and intentions (selfish or altruistic). Perceptible but not yet particularized, it covers the middle ground between *parā*'s pure intention and *madhyamā*'s verbalized but as yet unspoken mental speech. *Pashyanti* does not distinguish between subject and object. *Pashyanti* represents *sushupti* (the dreamless sleep that

occurs when the unconscious mind takes over).

Parā is pure intention -- unadulterated by any personal preference. It falls under the realm of *ambikā shakti*, the supreme Mother Goddess, the cosmic creator. According to Abhinavagupta (author of the *Vedanta Paribhāshā*) *parā* is the form of speech that displays absolutely no thought of this, thus, here, or now. *Parā* literally means "beyond". It is beyond all objects, of any sort, motionless, and so subtle that it is commonly perceptible only to the highly evolved souls.

By uniting the conscious, unconscious and subconscious minds one creates the super-conscious mind, which allows one to go beyond the three common states of consciousness to reach *turiya*, the fourth state. Seamless connections of *vaikharī* with *madhyamā* and *pashyanti* helps us to access to *parā*, which is the higher states of consciousness.

Madhyamā requires one to think; heart and head must work together for it to flow, while with *pashyanti*, one must also be focused. The word *pashyanti* derives from a Sanskrit root *pashya*, "to see", which in turn is related to our *darshana*, and covers both what our physical eyes see and our philosophy, that is, our inner eyes perceive. Once we become aligned with reality that very seeing becomes believing. One can look out on the world and "see," discerning reality clearly without intervening rationality and sentiment and that is how the *pashyanti*-speaking ability develops. By going beyond even the personal need to see what we are saying, we can reach *parā*.

It is impossible to lie at *parā* level. To lie in *pashyanti* is difficult too as the speaker's true intentions will usually be behind those transmissions gets revealed through the eye-contact but lying starts to become easier from *madhyamā* as at this level all we need is a credible rationalization for what we want to say, and out it will come. At *vaikharī*, lies come easiest. Sri Ramakrishna says, "Truthfulness alone is the spiritual discipline in the Kaliyuga."

Vaikharī is all about particularization, about dissecting out differences. Politics requires that truth be “polished” to make it attractive to the largest number of people; spirituality requires that people be polished, to become fit receptacles for truth. The two cannot meet.

Confusion in the *vaikharī* mind about cryptic Vedic utterances would have begun early on, but for many centuries the rishis were able to minimize distortion by guarding their wisdom carefully, communicating and sharing it only among those who could “see.”

The ancient sages transferred the Vedic knowledge to their disciples through ages with the use of all these four types of communication medium. Robert Svoboda wrote in his article “4 Degrees of Human Speech”: *To sing Vedic hymns rightly you must master the pronunciation, inflection, and melody of the words (vaikharī), sing those words with all the erudition and passion that your heart can master (madhyamā), concentrate all the prāna (life-force) at your disposal into a single-minded vision of your message (pashyanti), and surrender wholly to reality as you speak, so that truth is all you convey (parā).*

Full-spectrum truth must be fully “conveyed,” transmitted from all the speaker’s many mouths to each of the listener’s several ears. From the perspective of the physiological head, vaikharī is that speech that operates in the mouth alone, via the physical tongue; madhyamā emerges into the world through the nose, via the breath; pashyanti is spoken with the eyes; parā is telepathic, materializing directly from the faculty of awareness.”

Apparently, *vaikharī* is related to *annamaya* (gross body) and *prānamaya* (vital energy) while *madhyamā* and *pashyanti* covers *manomaya* and *vijnānamaya* sheaths. *Parā* belongs to *ānandamaya kosha* where ends the manifested realm of *shakti*. We do japa at *vaikharī* and *madhyamā*; in *pashyanti* mind goes to meditation; the bliss of *samādhi* can be felt at *parā*. When this *samādhi* goes deeper to *mahasamādhi* or great *samādhi* one merges into Brahman consciousness. The very first plane of the seven stages of realization is *shubhecchā* that comes

with *vaikharī*, while the final level *turiya* is beyond the play of *shakti* – one becomes Brahman there.

In the Chandi the Divine Mother is praised as *tridhā-mātrātmikā-sthitā* as well as *ardha-mātrā-sthitā nityā yānuccharya viseshatah* meaning: She is the manifestation of three states of existence as well as the embodiment of *ardha-mātrā* the half syllable, eternal, and that which cannot be expressed through any specific utterance. The three states of existence, as the Upanishads says, are waking (*Vishva*), dreaming (*Taijasa*), and dreamless sleep (*prājna*). Beyond these three – A, U, and M -- in the half-syllable state, Mother is manifested as a *bindu* or just an unpronounceable sound. According to geometry, the one which has existence but no expansion, is called a *bindu* or a dot or a point. That *bindu* represent without quality, formless power of Brahman. The extended part is nothing but the Divine Mother or the power of Brahman with quality and form.

Overusing, misusing, or abusing any sense organ, especially voice, robs the energy that we need to speak deeply as says the old proverb, “Speech is energy.”

Yogis can hear sound from faraway places. Surely it is not a physical sound at *vaikharī* level but being evolved souls they are capable of communicating through *madhyamā*, *pashyanti*, or even *parā*.

āshcharya vakta, kushalasya labdhā -- The Adept receiver of wondrous speaker – says the Kathopanishad. For the efficient transfer of knowledge the match in frequency is especially of utmost importance in spiritual life.

Let us consider the story of failed communication between Vāṣkali and Vārdhva : *Having been asked by Vāṣkali, the guru Vārdhva described Brahman through silence alone. This is the way it has been described in the Upanishad: Vāṣkali asked guru Vārdhva, ‘O Lord! Please instruct me about Brahman.’ Vārdhva remained silent. When the student asked the same question for the second, and again for the third time, guru Vārdhva replied, “I am ceaselessly instructing you, all the time, but you are not capable to*

comprehend it. *Ātman, the Self, in its essential nature, is absolute stillness.*" [Yoga Vasishtha Sara by Swami Dhireshananda]

On the other hand, when both the speaker and listeners are leveled in the same way the communication becomes the best. Let us see picture from Dakshināmurti Stotram composed by Adi Shankarācharya.

*citram vata-taror-moole vrddhāh shishyā gurur-yuvā,
guros-tu maunam vyākhyānam shishyās-tu chinna-
samshayāh.*

A picture (to behold): Under a Banyan tree aged disciples are sitting in front of a young Guru. The silence of the Guru's exposition (of the Highest Knowledge) is severing the doubts from the minds of the disciples.

Another classic Guru-Disciple communication can be found from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. The incident took place on March 01, 1885. *After a few minutes silence he said to Narendra tenderly, "My child, you will not attain God without renouncing 'woman and gold'." As he said this, great emotion welled up in his heart. Fixing on Narendra an earnest and tender look, he sang:*

We are afraid to speak, and yet we are afraid to keep still; our minds, Radha, half believe that we are about to lose you!

We tell you the secret that we know-The secret whereby we ourselves, and others, with our help, have passed through many a time of peril; now it all depends on you.

Sri Ramakrishna seemed to be afraid lest Narendra should leave him. Narendra looked at the Master with tears in his eyes.

A visitor who was there for the first time heard and saw all this. He said to the Master, "Sir, if one must renounce 'woman and gold', and then what shall a householder do?"

MASTER: "You may enjoy 'woman and gold'. What has passed between us is no concern of yours."

When one's mind is ready, he can perceive the message even if his guru is not some one like Shankaracharya or Sri Ramakrishna. Let us take

the example of Lala Babu. He was a landlord around 1800 AD near Belur. This rich man one day was enjoying sunset and a laundry lady asked her daughter, "Day is gone. When are you going to set fire in 'vāsnā'?" In earlier days to wash cloths special ashes prepared by burning banana leaves was used as detergent. *Vāsnā* sounded to him as *vāsanā* meaning desires. He thought really, I am becoming old, when I shall set fire in my all desires? He left his home and hath and spent rest of his life in Vrindavan taking the name of Lord Krishna. Here the laundry lady communicated with her daughter just at *vaikharī* level but Lala Babu heard it with his heart in *madhyamā* attaining the second step the power of analysis after the first step of *shubhecchā* (auspicious intention) the seven stages of realization in Vedanta.

If the mind is not ready, this *vaikharī* is dangerous as Adi Shankaracharya said in the Vivekachudamani (58):

*vāgvaikharī śabdajharī sāstravyākhyānakauśalam,
vaiduṣyaṃ viduṣāṃ tadvadbhuktaye na tu muktaye.*
Swami Madhavananda translated it as: *Loud speech consisting of a shower of words, the skill in expounding the Scriptures, and likewise erudition - these merely bring on a little personal enjoyment to the scholar, but are no good for Liberation.*

The finer the level of receiving capacity the more the joy will be. Swami Adbhutananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, once went to attend a lecture at Calcutta University. The Swami was illiterate in traditional sense but was a man, who realized God. Such a person wanted to attend that lecture on the Upanishads to be delivered by a scholar. The speaker was a mere philosophy professor and nothing more than that. The Swami was accompanied by another monk. As soon as he heard a few lines of the Upanishadic verses, he started to shout in joy, "This rascal said it rightly!" The other monk felt embarrassed but the Swami's joy knew no bound. Simple *vaikharī* took him to *parā*.

At the levels of *madhyamā*, *panshyanti* and *parā*

our thought waves are formed. According to a research led by Jordan Poppenk, from the Department of Psychology, Queen's University in Canada that was published in Nature Communications in 2020 says, the average person will typically have more than 6,000 thoughts in a single day. If the numbers of thought can be reduced the energy and time can be saved, better focus can be gained, and most importantly inner peace, calmness and happiness could be enjoyed.

Swami Vivekananda shared: *If you can simply get to that subtle vibration, you will see and feel that the whole universe is composed of subtle vibrations. He reminded the story of Sir Humphrey Davy, when the laughing gas overpowered him ... For, the time being, as it were, the gross vibrations had ceased, and only the subtle vibrations which he called ideas, were present to him. He could only see the subtle vibrations round him; everything had become thought; the whole universe was an ocean of thought, he and everyone else had become little thought whirlpools.*

Thus, even in the universe of thought we find unity, and at last, when we get to the Self, we know that that Self can only be One. Beyond the vibrations of matter in its gross and subtle aspects, beyond motion there is but One. Even in manifested motion there is only unity. These facts can no more be denied.

The gigantic will-powers of the world, the world-movers, can bring their Prana into a high state of vibration, and it is so great and powerful that it catches others in a moment, and thousands are drawn towards them, and half the world think as they do.

Swamiji himself was the proof of his words. Christina Albers wrote in her "Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda": *I met Swami Vivekananda in San Francisco in California. It was at a lecture in the year 1900. ... Unknown and ignored, he entered the lecture hall of the great metropolis of Chicago in 1893. He left that hall an adored hero. He spoke. It was enough. The depth of his great soul had sounded forth, and the world felt the vibration. One single man changed the current of thought of half the globe — that was his work.*

This Universe is in a constant state of vibration.

The Sanskrit word for Universe, *jagat*, is derived from the root, *gam*, which means 'to move, to change, to swing to and fro to vibrate'. What appears to be static is only a low rate of vibration; what appears dynamic is moving at an intense rate of vibration. Swamiji explained, *"In an ocean there are huge waves, like mountains, then smaller waves, and still smaller, down to little bubbles, but back of all these is the infinite ocean. The bubble is connected with the infinite ocean at one end, and the huge wave at the other end. So, one may be a gigantic man, and another a little bubble, but each is connected with that infinite ocean of energy.... Wherever there is life, the storehouse of infinite energy is behind it.*

Sri Ramakrishna is that *infinite energy* and Swami Vivekananda tuned himself to that level where Sri Ramakrishna could transfer His power to Swamiji. Now in this context we shall revisit one of the best matches of vibrations that appeared like a tsunami in the history of humanity covering all the stages communications from *vaikharī* to *parā*.

Some time in 1884, various spiritual talks, interspersed with merriment, were going on in Sri Ramakrishna's room in Dakshineswar. The Master sitting surrounded by devotees. Narendra also was present there. Swami Saradananda recorded in the "Leela-prasanga", in the context of Vaishnava religion, the Master said, *"That doctrine teaches that one should always be careful to observe three things, namely, a taste for God's name, kindness to all beings and the worship of Vaishnavas. ... one should have the conviction in one's heart that the whole universe belongs to Krishna; therefore, compassion for all beings is what one should practise."* No sooner had he uttered the words, "compassion for all beings", than he suddenly went into ecstasy. Regaining partial normal consciousness in a short time, he continued, *"Talk of compassion for beings! Will you, all little animals, bestow compassion on beings? You wretch, who are you to bestow it? No, no; not compassion to Jivas but service to them as Siva."*

All went on listening to those words of the Master spoken in that ecstatic mood; but none could detect and understand their hidden import at that time. It was

Narendranath alone who, coming out of the room at the end of the Master's ecstasy said, "Ah, What a wonderful light have I got today from the Master's words! In synthesizing the Vedantic knowledge, which was generally regarded as dry, austere and even cruel, with sweet devotion to the Lord, what a new mellowed means of experiencing the Truth has he revealed today! In order to attain the non-dual knowledge, we have been told so long, one should have to renounce the world and the company of men altogether and retire to the forest and mercilessly uproot and throw away love, devotion and other soft and tender emotions from the heart. ... But, from what the Master in ecstasy said today, it is gathered that the Vedanta of the forest can be brought to human habitation and that it can be applied in practice to the work-a-day world. Those, with whom he comes in contact every moment of his life, whom he loves, respects and honours, ... and Thus serving the Jivas as Siva, he will have his heart purified and be convinced in a short time that he himself is also a part of God, the eternally pure, awake and free, and bliss Absolute.

"We get a great light on the path of devotion too from these words of the Master. Until he sees God in all beings, the aspirant has not the remotest chance of realizing true transcendental devotion. ... For, as embodied beings can never rest for a moment without doing work, it goes without saying that it is only the work of the service of Jivas as Siva that should be performed, and action done in that spirit will enable them to reach the goal sooner than otherwise. If the divine Lord ever grants me an opportunity, I'll proclaim everywhere in the world this wonderful truth I have heard today. I will preach this truth to the learned and the ignorant, to the rich and the poor, to the Brahmins and the Chandalas."

Swami Saradananda emphasized, "The extraordinary Master always entered the realm of ecstasy in this way and constantly brought wonderful light regarding knowledge, love, Yoga and Karma to illumine the path of human life. But unfortunate as we were, we could not then comprehend the implication of

his words. It was the supremely intelligent Narendranath who understood those divine words as far as it was humanly possible and expressed from time to time their sublime significance to our amazement." And, the result of this excellent understanding manifested as the Ramakrishna Math and Mission.

The main image on the cover is adapted from peakpx.com. However, on the cover there is another image inset. It comes with every issue but its story never gets included. We see there are waves in this image also. So this time a discussion on it can be included. It is the emblem of the Ramakrishna Mission. Swamiji created it and explained it thus: *The wavy waters in the picture are symbolic of Karma; the lotus, of Bhakti; and the rising-sun, of Jnāna. The encircling serpent is indicative of [Raja] Yoga and the awakened Kundalini Shakti, while the swan in the picture stands for Paramatman (Supreme Self). Therefore, the idea of the picture is that by the union of Karma, Jnana, Bhakti and Yoga, the vision of Paramatman is obtained.*

The waves of selfless activities, the control of vibrations of *prāna* and rhythm in the lotus, the light frequency of the knowledge of Sun all the leading us to rise higher and higher and reach that spiritual consciousness which transcends all vibrations. And that is the state of *samādhi*. That is the state of *paramahansa* – the Great Swan in the center. In the *Hymn of Samādhi* Swami Vivekananda describes the state beyond *parā*.

*Lo! The sun is not, nor the comely moon,
All light extinct; in the great void of space
Floats shadow-like the image-universe.
In the void of mind involute, there floats
The fleeting universe, rises and floats,
Sinks again, ceaseless, in the current "I".*

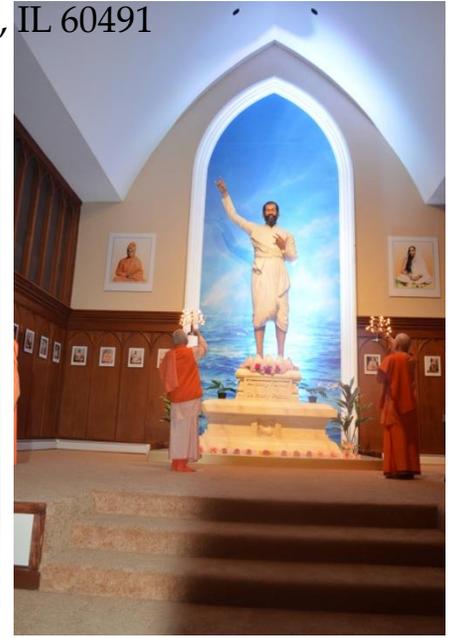
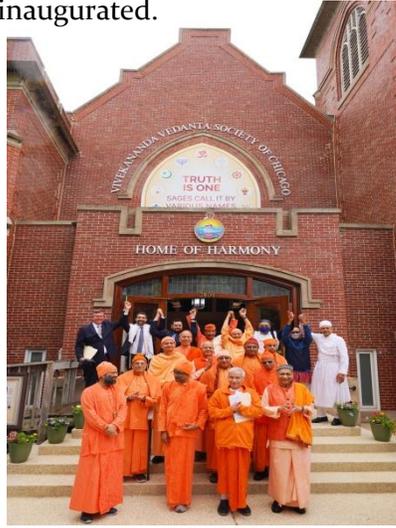
*Slowly, slowly, the shadow-multitude
Entered the primal womb, and flowed ceaseless,
The only current, the "I am", "I am".*

*Lo! 'Tis stopped, ev'n that current flows no more,
Void merged into void — beyond speech and mind!
Whose heart understands, he verily does.*

Inauguration of the *Home of Harmony*, a New Premises of the Vivekananda Vedanta Society of Chicago at 3801 N Keeler Ave, Irving Park, Chicago, IL 60491

On May 21st, 2022 in the northern part of the city of Chicago, a new place for the cultivation of the Interfaith movement was inaugurated.

The ceremony began with a peace walk at 10:30 AM led by a banner that said, “Come, Let Us Make This World A Heaven.”



Vedanta Society Swamis Sarvadevananda, Prapannananda, Varadananda, Ishatmananda, Tyagananda, Kripamayananda, Ishtananda, Yogatmananda, Chandrashekharananda, Prasannatmananda, Tattwamayananda & Sarvapriyananda, along with two Kriya Yoga Swamis accompanied by representatives of the major world religions and numerous devotees and admirers marched together peacefully. After formal ribbon cutting at the new premises, Arati was performed in front of the statue of Sri Ramakrishna, followed by Vedic chanting in the “Hall of Consciousness”, which was almost filled to its 300 seat capacity. Swami Ishatmananda declared the opening of the Home of Harmony by reading the blessing messages from the Most Rev. Swami Smaranananda, President of the Ramakrishna Order. He also read out an inspiring message from the Rev. General Secretary Maharaj of the Order. Swamis and religious representatives discussed the “Message of Harmony” in the Ramakrishna Tradition and according to the traditions of the world’s religions. The famous opera singer, Daniel Hendrick, gave musical offerings. The program was concluded with the show of a documentary, “Swami Vivekananda: A Bridge Between the East and the West”. All attendees were served with lunch in “Naimisharanya Hall”.

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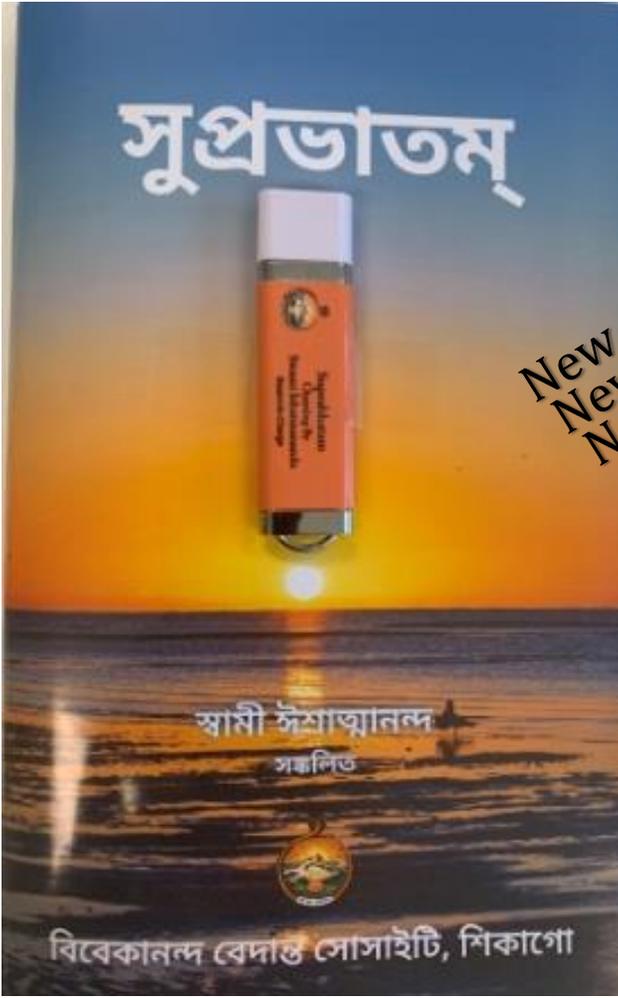
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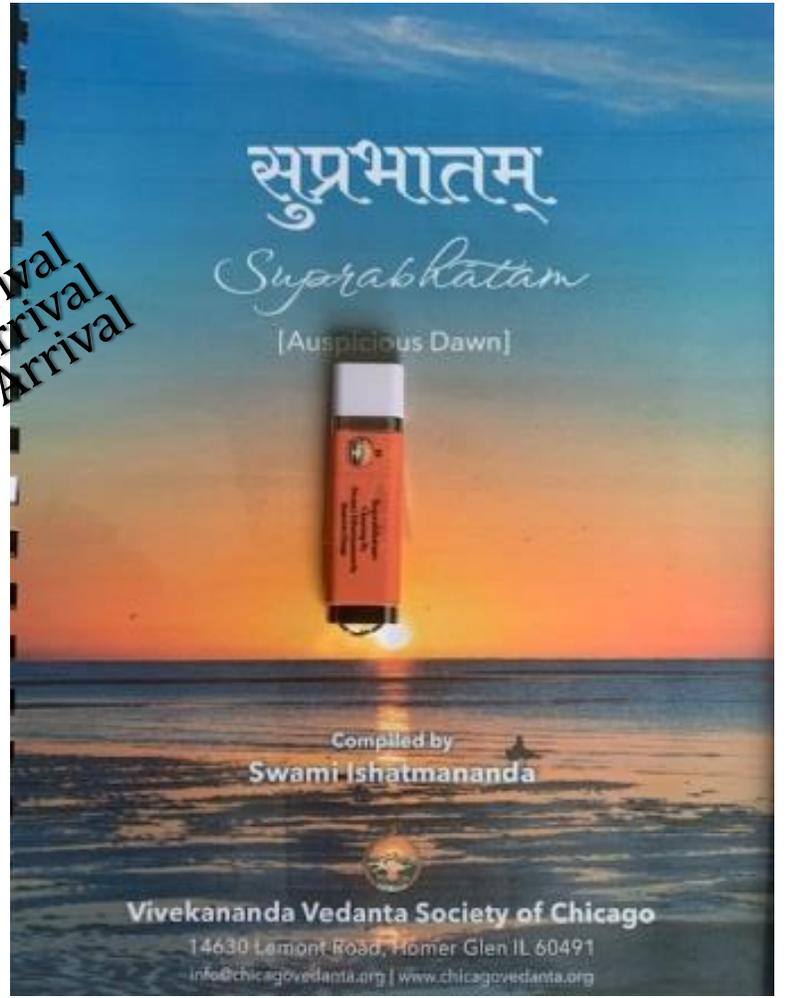
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