

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ  
حَمْدُهُ وَنُصَلِّي عَلَى رَسُولِهِ الْكَرِيمِ

*In the name of Allah, the Beneficent, the Merciful.*

# THE PROBLEM OF HUMAN EVOLUTION

## THE GOSPEL OF EVOLUTION

BY

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Turn any page of the great Book of Nature and the same story of ever-growing progress we find narrated in bold letters. Every atom in the universe is on its way to progress. It has got some inherent qualities in it which must find their development in due course of nature. A seed sprouts into a plant, then it converts itself into a tree, and fructifies in the long run. Advancement is the order of the day in the realm of Nature. "From a sea-shell to a cathedral, from a blade of grass to an oak.....from the luminosity of a firefly to an electric arc, from the song of a cricket to an oratorio," matter and energy, in different collocation and under special distribution, are always on their way to ever continuous progress. There is no stagnation, no retrogression.

Do not various steps in the evolutionary progress in Nature within scientific ken bring home to us the same truth in strong colours? All these wonderful manifestations of

nature we observe all around, together with what is in store for us to experience, do inherently and potentially exist in every speck of that huge mass called ether which envelop the whole universe. These specks in particular organisations become electrons, and an associated system of electrons gives birth to atoms of matter which constitute the whole inorganic universe. Then comes life which constructs protoplasmic complex. Life—that vivifying principle with its constructive function and with ability to discriminate between the wholesome and the deleterious—may not itself be energy or matter, but its process would have been of no avail without the receptive faculty of the matter and energy. Similarly protoplasmic congeries or cells, or further development produce brain, which acts as womb for the rudiments of Mind. Another development evolves consciousness, which becomes sublimated into ethics, philosophy and religion. Mind, in popular parlance, soul, may be a separate entity, as a dualist would suggest, or it may be another name of the final evolution on the physical plane ; it hardly affects our hypothesis.

But this difference of view hardly affects the hypothesis that every atom in nature is potentially progressive. It may be controlled by external factors, but such influences from without were of no avail without the receptivity of Matter. It is inherently progressive and not retrogressive. All things in creation are so made as to attain gradually to a state of perfection within their sphere of capacity. It points out not only the erroneousness of the doctrine of the "Fall of Man," which upholds that an original state of perfection has given place to degradation, but it also falsifies the Christian doctrine

of salvation. Such beliefs may not be detrimental to further progress, but are contrary to all scientific truths. Nothing in the Universe in its original state is perfect. Perfection comes through gradual development, something potential is to be actualized. Salvation,<sup>1</sup> therefore, is not redemption. Nothing made by the Great Hand inherently possesses any defect. Defect is an acquisition and the gift of unhealthy environment. This is a truism, and everything in Nature bears an eloquent testimony to it. Man, the microcosm of the whole world, the universe epitomized, could not be otherwise. He would be untrue to his very nature and fabric if he doubted his natural greatness and his potentialities for further development. Man has been taken to be the noblest of God's creation, the best specimen of His handiwork. Should he not possess highest imaginable qualities which, when full-fledged, would raise him up next only to God? The premises were too clear to lead us to wrong inference. Yet the world took thousands of years to solve this problem. Religion, if from God, should have enlightened us on this subject, as this ought to be the only object of Divine revelation.

These dark and dull clods of earth, when brought under human intelligence, have been worked into paradise-like garden. Hence science has come forward to our help and to make a millennium of this world in its physical nature. But science creates nothing. Everything was inherent in the universe, which, when worked upon under certain laws, was to fructify. Science came to discover those laws. Could not

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*1. This word "Salvation" does not convey the real idea, viz. attainment of human goal.*

man, the repository of unimaginable forces, work wonders in realms other than physical? He could, if he could receive true guidance and light. To supply it could be the only legitimate function of Divine revelation. Anything short of it would be myth and fable. The Church in the West can hardly boast of better stuff than what the Roman or Indian mythology possesses to humour the child in man. One can hardly understand the advisability of Divine revelation if it has nothing better to enlighten us upon. But unfortunately dogma took the place of religion and led man astray. Working upon his credulity, it benighted human intellect. Superstition had its sway, and nations after nations were led to adopt such beliefs and articles of faith, the acceptance of which not only demanded the mutilation of their intellect, but brought them to their very debasement. The Lord of the Universe became small in His own estimation and the Ruler of Nature fell prey to every atom of it. Under such circumstances what wonder if man, in various early stages of religious evolution, evinced ploytheistic tendencies. From fetishism to manworship various symphonies have been turned out on the gamut of religion, from Central Africa up to civilized Europe. And it could not be otherwise, when man was led to believe that he was born in the slough of sin. Sin was supposed to be innate in his nature, and he was doomed to perdition unless regenerated through his belief in certain events in history concerning the death of some great man. Nothing could be more depressing and enervating. The very idea of "tainted birth" retards all human progress. It mars all our zeal and benumbs enthusiasm.

## BELIEF IN REDEMPTION DEROGATORY TO THE SENSE OF SELF-RESPECT

And what a low view for us to entertain if we believe in a thing like Redemption! It is a slur on humanity. To believe in "regeneration" means first to believe in the debasement of the human nature. If we are above degradation at our birth, we are above redemption. No sin by birth, no regeneration. We are at a loss to understand the psychology of a mind which, accepting man as after the image of God, believes simultaneously in the dogma of sin by birth. Is it not a blasphemy, in addition to its being nothing short of absurdity? What would be our estimation of God if His image or His vicegerent on His earth, as man has been believed to be, was born in sin? There can be no human betterment in the face of such beliefs, and such was the case in the West as long as the Church held its sway on the Occidental mind. Every kind of reform in the West found the Church among its foremost enemies. She did her utmost to strangle all learning and science. She could not bear to see the torch of knowledge going beyond the four walls of the covenants. All scientific discoveries were discouraged and branded as witchcraft. In short, no landmark in the history of European civilization was reached without rousing strong ecclesiastical opposition. But the Church was justified in her own ways. Man fell through Adam, she believed, and was saved through the grace of Blood. "As by the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." (St. Paul—Romans 5, 18). With

such notions redemption could only be in requisition. This is secured through belief in the blood, all such branches of knowledge which could shake these beliefs could not be welcomed.

## WRONG NOTIONS OF RELIGION

### **Dogmas retarding progress**

Thus religion in its dogmatized form in Europe became a hindrance to that human evolution which should have been its only legitimate goal if it came from God. But the object of Divine revelation was not rightly appreciated in other places as well. To know God and to worship Him was taken to be the only human goal, which it was said was conducive to all human progress. It is all truth. But we still grope in darkness unless we understand what the knowledge and worship of God means. If to know God is simply to believe in His existence, and to worship Him is to accept Him in the manifestation of His certain attributes, as most of the religions demand their votaries to do, we fail to understand how such a belief or knowledge can contribute to our betterment. Besides, there can be no choice between one form of religion and the other. Any form of the heathenism or idolatry will be on a par with many a religion of some of the civilized nations.

## MODERN IDOLATRY IN INDIA

AND

## MANWORSHIP IN THE WEST

The present-day idolater bows down before an image; but the image, with him, represents a certain god-in-man who appeared in days bygone in the world and for his then

marvellous feats and spiritual guidance was taken as God. Woden, Thor, Jupiter of the olden days in the West, and Ram and Krishna in India—were only men raised by God in various parts of the world to guide their fellow-beings and to raise humanity. They possessed qualities seemingly superhuman in their own times. Ignorance and credulity invested them with the attributes of Godhead. They began to command human worship. When they died, their images took their place to keep their memory evergreen. Could there be any difference between one who addressess Krishna in his prayer, or invokes his help while keeping that great Hindu god before his mental eye, and the other who does the same thing but, in order to cure distraction of mind and secure concentration of thought, keeps the image of Krishna before his physical eyes? Reason makes no distinction between the two.

### ROMISH CHURCH PREFERABLE

For this reason we have always admired the Romish form of Christianity. If you have to accept Jesus as God, and if you have to address him in your prayers, if you think he can come to your help, and that his picture is always before your mind when you adore him—it will be more useful to keep his idol before you, as it will help contemplation. In fact, there is nothing to differentiate one from the other. If the Roman Catholics with their images of Christ and his Mother are idolaters, so are the Protestants when they worship Christ. However, the question is how does it help human advancement and further our evolution when we bow to Christ either with or without an image of him before our eyes? We may presume that by accepting Krishna or Christ as our deity our craving

to know God was satisfied. But there are other sides to our nature—emotional, ethical, moral, spiritual, etc. How to evolve those? We know, we feel, and we act; how are our actions and thoughts to be affected by our simple belief in some God-in-man as well as in the manifestation of His certain attributes? How will our knowledge be furthered to help our advancement by our worshipping this man or that? In short, to impart merely a rudimentary knowledge of God with some notions of worship could hardly be a laudable object of Divine revelation. All-Sufficient God hardly needs human adoration. Our glorification hardly adds anything to His glory and grandeur.

## HUMAN EDIFICATION

IS

## THE DIVINE GLORIFICATION

His glory consists in the accomplishment of His great design in the creation of man, the highly developed product of His great work. His revelation should be sent to man to help him, rather to enable him to fulfil the object for which he was brought on this globe. Divine glorification means human edification. A religion without having this as its first object is a myth and a mockery. All human institutions are supposed to help our progress, much more should an institution which claimed Divine inspiration for its origin. Does not our nature disclose the highest capabilities for advancement? How then can a scripture be accredited with Divine origin if it fails to contain guidance to the accomplishment of that end? Blessed be the memory of the Prophet Muhammad, to whom this secret was disclosed! The following we find as the conclud-



ing portion of what appears to be the preamble of the Qurán :—

“ And who believes in what hath been revealed to thee (Muhammad), and in what hath been revealed before thee, and full faith have they in what comes hereafter : **These are guided by their Lord and will be evolved**<sup>1</sup> (II : 3, 4).

Thus the Qur-án declares the intent and object of the Divine revelation, whether received by or before Muhammad. The Qur-án in these words no doubt enjoins belief in the past revelation. But human evolution has been announced to be the only test of their genuineness. We believe in the Divine message of all the prophets of the world, but whatever has been left by them to us cannot be accepted by us as authentic unless it contributes to human evolution. Similarly, any tenet or doctrine which the world has fathered upon them cannot be accepted unless it adds to the edification of man. The opening verse of the Qur-án reminds us of Allah who is **Rabbul ‘alamin**, the Lord of the Worlds. The epithet consists of two words *Rabb* and ‘*alamin*. The latter is the plural of ‘*alam* meaning world. But the word *Rabb* is very instructive and suggestive. It conveys not only the idea of fostering, bringing up or nourishing, but also that of regulating, completing, and accomplishing. According to Raghīb, *Rabb* signifies “ The fostering of a thing in such a manner as to make it attain one condition after another until it reaches its goal of completion.” Hence *Rabb* is the Author of all existence, Who has not only

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1. The word used in the Quran is ‘*Muflehun*,’ which has ‘*Falah*’ for its root. ‘*Falah*’ means success, prosperity, and to bring out things hidden and latent.

given to the whole creation its means of nourishment, but has also beforehand ordained for each a sphere of capacity, and within that capacity provided the means by which it continues to attain gradually to its goal of perfection,<sup>1</sup> which means conversion of inherent potentialities into actualities. Thus the Last Book of God at its very commencement teaches us to adore a God, Who helps our evolution.

This epithet of *Rabb-ul-'alamin*, i.e., the Evolver of everything in the universe, opens our eyes to the various components of the universe and to their growth. Every atom in nature not only receives creation and fostering from the Great Hand, but completion also. It shows capacity to evolve. It seems to possess qualities which still wait scientific discovery, but they are tending to development as soon as they are brought under favourable circumstances. Does not all this lead us to think of our own nature and its development ?

### OBJECT OF WORSHIP

Worship of God, some say, is thanksgiving and glorification. It consists of repeating certain formulas and citation of certain Divine attributes with some gesticulations. We shall have a very poor estimation of God, nay, derogatory to Him, if we believe that these citations and gesticulations are His only pleasure. Lip-gratitude and word-glorification, if unattended with actions consistent with our citation, are a farce and a mockery. True worship consists in finding out means to invite manifestation of His attributes. Invocation to God means creating of circumstances which may enable us to move those particular powers of His which we speak of in

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1. (*English Translation of the Qur-an, by Muhammad Ali, M.A.*)

our prayer. We call Him Most Merciful God in our prayers ; but the sole object, taught in the Qur-án, is to remind us that our God is a treasury of Mercy and Compassion, and we should qualify ourselves to deserve His mercy. Simply, if the Muslims open their prayer by calling their Lord “Rabbul-‘alamin,” the Creator, Nourisher, Maintainer, and Evolver of everything in the universe, it is to draw their attention to the great problem of Evolution, to convince them of the unlimited powers they possess, which they have to discover and to find out means to get them developed. They are assured of Divine help in their task, as the very epiphany of this attribute of “Evolver ” promises. Thus the final Book of God came to enlighten us some thirteen hundred years ago, on what became a universal truth in the nineteenth century of the Christian era. It exploded the theory of Redemption, and established that of Evolution, which is the only true gospel to humanity. Redemption, even if secured, would help humanity only after this life, while the gospel of Evolution helps us in rising higher in this very world, while it by no means discourages our aspirations of gaining permanent and eternal edification or bliss in the life to come.

