

things of his Father (Luke 2:49). So when Christians employ the human image of 'son' and 'father' to express the relationship between Jesus and God they are pointing to the innermost personal identity of being between the man Jesus and his God. This identity of being was not achieved by Jesus himself; it was given to and implanted in him by God from the very beginning of his life. He held on to it in faith, love and obedience through the utmost extremes of temptation.

Of course, this confession of Jesus as the Son of God gave rise to all kind of misunderstandings. Nevertheless, of all the

New Testament pictures it shows most clearly what, according to Jesus' disciples and the Church, constitutes the unique relationship of Jesus to God—a personal, inseparable bond of love between son and father. Through Jesus God brings men and women into the personal fellowship of father and children. In union with Jesus the Christ, therefore, Christianity found the heart of God. And therefore, for Christianity the confession of Jesus the Christ as the Son of God became the foundation of knowledge of God and man, the very source of divine revelation.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA IN SCUTARI*

SANKARI PRASAD BASU

From the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* we learn that Swamiji, after his three months' stay in France, left Paris for the Near East by the luxury train *Orient Express* on 24 October 1900, with some of his Western disciples and friends. Swamiji's companions were Monsieur and Madame Loyson, Monsieur Jules Bois, Madame Calvé and Miss Josephine MacLeod. The party reached Constantinople on the 30th after a break-journey of three days at Vienna. On 31 October 'together with Miss MacLeod, he [Swamiji] went for a trip on the Bosphorus by boat. It was extremely cold and windy; therefore they alighted at the

first station and decided to visit Scutari, which lies across the strip of water that separates Europe from Asia Minor, and see Père Hyacinthe who was staying there on his way to Palestine. . . . There [at Scutari] the Swami visited Père Hyacinthe, with whom he held a long and interesting conversation.¹

In the *Life*, we get no information as to whether Swamiji delivered any lecture at Scutari or not. There is just a hint that 'the Swamiji visited the bazaars in this place and conversed in English with a number of Turkish students.'² There is, however, a mention of his having given some parlour talks at Constantinople. The *Life* reads: 'As Père Hyacinthe was not permitted to speak publicly in Constantinople, the Swami also could not do so.

* After reading Swami Vidyatmananda's article 'Vivekananda in the Near East, 1900' in the March and April 1977 issues of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, Sri Sankari Prasad Basu of Calcutta wrote this article in Bengali with a view to supply some more information about Swamiji's visit to Scutari in Turkey. The article was translated into English by Sri Dulal Chandra Chakravarty of Calcutta at our request.—Ed.

1. Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, III, 1915, (hereafter *Life*), p. 413.

2. *Life*, p. 413.

Several private conversaciones and drawing-room lectures were, however, arranged for him, at which he spoke on the religion of Vedanta to select audiences, who were most interested.³

We do not get any reference regarding Swamiji's lecture at Scutari even in the published reminiscences of those who had accompanied Swamiji on the journey. In Miss MacLeod's reminiscences she simply mentions that 'we started out via Vienna for two days, Constantinople for nine days....'⁴ Jules Bois also did not mention any details. He merely writes: 'We visited Constantinople, Greece and Egypt.'⁵ Even Mme Emma Calvé, the most popular French opera-singer of the time and the host of Swamiji on the journey, did not mention anything in her autobiography (*My Life*) about Swamiji's lecture at Scutari, although she narrated many other events relating to their travel.

We, however, get ample information in the learned article of Swami Vidyatmananda published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of March 1971 under the caption 'Swami Vivekananda and Père Hyacinthe Loyson'.⁶ In this article it is mentioned for the first time that Swamiji spoke at Scutari on 2 November 1900. Swami Vidyatmananda has partly quoted Mary Mills Patrick's *A Bosphorus Adventure* (1934), which tells about Père Hyacinthe and his wife's stay at the American College for Girls at Scutari, and Swamiji's visit to this place. There is, however, no mention of Swamiji's having delivered a lecture there. That we find in

Père Hyacinthe's Diary quoted by Swami Vidyatmananda, which reads :

November 2, 1900:...We came back to Scutari in the company of the Swami, who gave in the chapel a lecture on the religion of the Hindus. Mlle Calvé, actress, M. Jules Bois.⁷

To Swami Vidyatmananda, a keen researcher on Swamiji's life, this information seems to be of importance ; he writes: 'Thus we learn that Swami Vivekananda gave a lecture in the chapel of the American College for Girls at Scutari on Friday, November 2, 1900, his subject having to do with Hinduism.'⁸

As a supplement to Swami Vidyatmananda's valuable finding quoted above, we would like to present here some more facts about the above-mentioned lecture of Swamiji's, and also something about Père Hyacinthe's speech delivered at Scutari. Before that, however, it is necessary to give the proper background.

To the readers of Swamiji's *Life* and works the name of Père Hyacinthe, the famous French preacher, is well known. Swamiji has sketched a beautiful pen-picture of him in his Bengali book *Parivrājak* (*Memoirs of European Travel*).⁹ From this we learn that Swamiji travelled with Père Hyacinthe up to some distance, and had conversations on spiritual subjects. Mme Calvé, who listened to their talks, was deeply impressed by seeing Swamiji's command over Christian theology. In her autobiography she writes :

With the Swami and some of his friends and followers I went upon a most remarkable trip through Turkey, Egypt

3. *Life*, p. 414.

4. Eastern and Western Admirers, *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1964, (hereafter *Reminiscences*), p. 247.

5. Jules Bois, 'A French Critic on the Vedanta Movement', *Prabuddha Bharata*, May 1927, p. 223.

6. See also Swami Vidyatmananda, 'Vivekananda in the Near East, 1900', *Prabuddha Bharata*, March and April 1977.

7. *Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1971, p. 124.

8. *Ibid.*

9. See *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, VII, 1972, pp. 376ff.

and Greece. Our party included the Swami; Father Hyacinthe Loyson; his wife, a Bostonian; Miss MacLeod of Chicago, an ardent Swamist and charming, enthusiastic woman; and myself, the song bird of the troupe.

What a pilgrimage it was! Science, philosophy and history had no secrets from the Swami. I listened with all my ears to the wise and learned discourse that went on around me. I did not attempt to join in their arguments, but I sang on all occasions, as is my custom. The Swami would discuss all sorts of questions with Father Loyson, who was a scholar and a theologian of repute. It was interesting to see that the Swami was able to give the exact text of a document, the date of a Church Council, when Father Loyson himself was not certain.¹⁰

Swami Vidyatmananda's article describes the 'remarkable career' of Père Hyacinthe. He was born in 1827. At first he chose the life of an austere Catholic monk, and became immensely popular for his eloquence while preaching at the Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris. At this time he bitterly criticized the Roman Catholic Church for its misuse of power; and as a result he had a conflict with the Establishment. Meanwhile in 1868, he became acquainted with Mrs. Emilie Meriman, an American widow, and developed deep intimacy with her. Due to the influence of this lady and also due to his own independent ideas, his friction with the Roman Catholic Church intensified and it ultimately resulted in his excommunication. Later in 1872, he married Emilie Meriman, who was to become a 'prophetess' in his life; and in 1873, a son was born to them. Père Hyacinthe became highly renowned as a liberal preacher, although, as expected by his wife, he could not become a 'real force in the renewal of Catholicism' in spite of his untiring efforts. In 1900, when he was seventy-three, he proceeded towards Constantino-

ple and Jerusalem to propagate his spiritual mission; and during this time, he became a companion of Swamiji. In this connection, Swami Vidyatmananda writes:

The Loysons proposed to go only as far as Constantinople at this time, then on to Jerusalem later. This was the second voyage for them to the Near East. The first trip had taken place in 1895-96. On that occasion Père Hyacinthe had preached all through the area, calling for a *rapprochement* of Christians, Jews and Moslems. He had been listened to enthusiastically. Now Mme Loyson was anxious that they should go again. She felt that she had received a divine command to do so. She wanted to found in Jerusalem a school for young women, where Jews and Moslems could learn to live and worship together. She also felt it to be the will of God that 'during the first year of the twentieth century' Père Hyacinthe should proclaim in Jerusalem the coming synthesis of the three Semitic religions.¹¹

Thus we see that Père Hyacinthe was a well-known personality in and around Constantinople and—it must be emphasized—that he took initiative to create a common platform for unification of the three religions—Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Therefore it can be assumed that he used such language and reason as would be convincing to the people of these three religions. From Mary Mills Patrick's book mentioned before, we get an idea of the stir created in this part of Turkey by the advent of Père Hyacinthe. The narration reads:

In the year 1900-1901 we had an inspiring visit from Père Hyacinthe Loyson and his wife. Père Hyacinthe was at that time a figure of world interest... one of the few clericals at that time

10. *Reminiscences*, p. 266.

11. *Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1971, p. 116.

to fraternize consistently with all religious creeds and to become a pioneer in religious freedom.

From the moment of his arrival at the college people from all parts of the city came up the walk of our front entrance in crowds to visit him. The Turks, the Jews, and representatives from all different forms of religion felt that this remarkable man belonged to them....

During their visit, the Swami Vivekananda... called to see our international guests.¹²

With this background, it would be interesting to quote here an eye-witness account of Swamiji's lecture at the American College for Girls in Scutari. It also refers to Père Hyacinthe's lecture and to some extent makes a comparison between the two. The writer is Halide Edib, who later 'became a renowned writer of Turkey and was one of the pioneers in the national movement for freedom... whose life was full of events of suffering and self-sacrifice.'¹³ She writes:

The visits of two interesting and famous speakers to the College and the coming of Salih Zeki Bey into my life as my professor of Mathematics blur the home and college events of 1900 for me entirely.

The first was the coming of Père Hyacinthe and his stay as a guest in the College. He was a famous French priest, who had started a Universal religion which could unite the followers of every other creed, a Christian parallel to Bahaism. His sincerity, intellect, and brilliance of speaking had gained him a considerable number of followers. The Vatican was furious and watched him suspiciously. It was through the representative of the Pope that an irade was issued forbidding his speaking publicly in Turkey.

He spoke only to the students of the College, and it was a privilege to hear

him. Strange to say, I, who in those days could hardly speak freely before even a few persons, already took an immense interest in public speakers and the psychology of their performance. P. H. [Père Hyacinthe] was a short stout person with a round jovial face, small benevolent eyes, and curly white hair, whom one could hardly imagine as an imposing figure in the pulpit. Yet the power of his soul, the sincerity of his thought, the artistic triumph of his language made him a living figure in my memory. Perhaps his mouth too is 'stopped with dust' now like those so many other great speakers, but the echo of his voice will be with me to my grave.

Swami V. [Vivekananda], a celebrated Brahmanist, also visited the College and gave one of his famous speeches, which had the reputation of hypnotizing the audience. The dark slender man was clad in a loose robe, the thin hands moving with a life which seemed distinct from the rest of the body; the expressiveness of his graceful physique, and the mystic charm of Asia's voice, these were evident in him.

I was captivated by his artistic manner, but even at that age I could feel that he had a certain quality of make-up and that he appealed to one's senses rather than to one's head and heart—the opposite of all that was so evident in P. H.'s [Père Hyacinthe's] address.¹⁴

Halide Edib's comment on Swamiji's lecture needs some explanation. That she highly praised Père Hyacinthe's lecture was done for a worthy person no doubt. For elsewhere we have already mentioned about Père Hyacinthe's fame as an orator. Swamiji too spoke of his 'scholarship and extraordinary eloquence'. Moreover, he was already a well-known and sensational personality in France, Italy and the neighbouring areas for years. This was not all; just five years earlier, in 1895-96, he had travelled all over Constantinople, lectured

12. Quoted in *ibid.* p. 122.

13. *Prabasi* (Bengali), Calcutta: Prabasi Press, B.S. 1341.

14. *Memoirs of Halide Edib*, London: John Murray, p. 201.

extensively, and was acclaimed as a great religious preacher. Furthermore, he was trying to establish mutual understanding among the Christians, Jews and Muslims, for which the liberal sections of these religions respected him much.

On the other hand, Swami Vivekananda, in spite of his world-wide fame, was certainly not as familiar in Turkey as Père Hyacinthe. Moreover, till then the Swami had not done anything in particular which could draw the sympathetic attention of the local people, and Swamiji's religious terminology was quite unknown to them. The Semitic religions no doubt have differences amongst them, but they have some resemblances as well, which are totally lacking in Hinduism. To them, the doctrines of Hinduism were not only strange and mysterious but also unpleasant and objectionable. In Swami Vidyatmananda's article we find that a well-known theologian like Père Hyacinthe could not follow Swamiji's Advaita Vedanta even after a long discourse. It is observed that people who nurture only dualistic philosophy cannot generally comprehend the principles of Advaita. From Swamiji's letters we learn how he expressed his despair at the Hale sisters' queer notions about Advaita Philosophy, though he talked constantly to them on this subject. M. Jules Bois, one of Swamiji's companions during this travel and his admirer, later on revolted against his non-dualistic philosophy. This is evident from his article 'A French Critic on the Vedanta Movement' published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of May 1927. In this article he wrote: 'In his [Vivekananda's] company for months I enjoyed the unique privilege of having met in one man something of Marcus Aurelius, Epictetus, and perhaps of Buddha himself.' Although M. Jules Bois wrote this, he considered Swamiji's teaching as the 'first step on the road to dechristianization'. The reason

for making such a comment is certainly his incapability of understanding Vedanta. When a person like Jules Bois made such a mistake, it is no wonder that Swamiji's lecture appealed neither to the 'head' nor to the 'heart' of a college-girl like Halide Edib, who had not even the slightest acquaintance with the subtle Hindu thought. Perhaps she reacted unfavourably because Swamiji did not discuss any dualistic doctrine familiar to her, during the course of his lecture.

It is, however, difficult to guess what Mme Edib meant by 'a certain quality of make-up' in Swamiji. Another ambiguous statement of hers is: 'he appealed to one's senses.' But after a little reflection we can guess what must have actually happened. We learn from eye-witness accounts that Swami Vivekananda was not the same person before and during his lectures. Swamiji, who cut jokes and freely talked like a common man before a lecture, would become possessed by some superhuman power when he stood on the platform, and would appear a completely different man. Perhaps this changed appearance in Mme Edib's estimation was 'a certain quality of make-up'. Moreover, during his lecture Swamiji used to influence his audience more by elevating them to a higher plane of consciousness than by the subject-matter of his lecture. The intense ecstatic feeling which Swamiji must have created during the course of his lecture, must have appeared to Mme Edib as 'appeal to the senses', which as a matter of fact was nothing but elevating the minds of the listeners to a supersensuous plane. Mme Edib actually admitted this fact when she wrote, without comprehending the matter, of 'the thin hands moving with a life which seemed distinct from the rest of the body.'¹⁵

What Mme Edib wrote about Swamiji

15. *Ibid.*

through misunderstanding can be well understood from Miss Müller's account of his speech delivered at Almora in the year 1897. This account, which was published in the *Brahmavadin* of 15 September 1897, reads: 'For sometime it seemed as though the Teacher, his words, his audience, and the Spirit pervading them all, were ONE. No longer there was any consciousness of "I" and "THOU" or "THIS" or "THAT". The different units collected there were for the time being lost and merged into the Spiritual radiance which emanated so powerfully from the Great Teacher, and held all more than spell bound.'¹⁶

The point will be further clarified from the following writing of Mahendranath Datta, in which he beautifully narrates the transformation in Swamiji's personality during the course of his lectures delivered in London. The eye-witness account of the author reads:

While delivering a lecture, especially when speaking on Advaita philosophy, Swamiji used to enter into a state of conscious trance. His gaze, his facial expressions, everything would change; and from his mouth would fall an unbroken flow of wonderful and unheard of thoughts. Because of this, nobody could remember the details and reasonings of his lecture, nor could anyone pay any attention to them . . . On such

occasions, Swamiji's mood, voice and glance used to appear extremely fascinating. . . . At such times Swamiji would invariably declare, 'I am a voice without form. I have attained the Truth and realized It. I am the Truth.' And when he used to say 'I am a voice without form,' it would come as a grave and deeply resounding sound from his throat.'¹⁷

Again:

Swamiji would begin softly by raising a topic, and gradually his mood would change and ideas would rise higher and higher; and his voice, soft countenance and affectionate looks would be transformed and he would appear standing upright like a straight pillar. . . . His meditative mood would deepen further, and a rhythmic and musical voice would go on pouring forth as from some perennial source. . . . It would appear that a vibration was created in the infinite ethereal sphere, and that formed into resounding waves. The sound penetrated into the ears, bones and marrow, as well as the mind and soul of all. Everyone felt as if they were losing their body-consciousness and sense of time and space. Neither were they aware of who was speaking or who was listening.'¹⁸

Thus, Halide Edib's statement can be better understood from what Miss Müller and Mahendranath Datta have written about Swamiji.

16. *Vivekananda in Indian Newspapers: 1893-1902*, ed. Sankari Prasad Basu and Sunil Bihari Ghosh, Calcutta: Basu Bhattacharyya and Co., 1969, p. 576.

17. Sankari Prasad Basu, *Vivekânanda O Samakālin Bhāratavarṣa* (Bengali), Calcutta: Mandal Book House, II, B.S. 1383, p. 112.

18. *Ibid.*