

Karmayoga

WE HAVE spoken of Karmayoga as the application of Vedanta and Yoga to life. To many who take their knowledge of Hinduism secondhand this may seem a doubtful definition. It is ordinarily supposed by “practical” minds that Vedanta as a guide to life and Yoga as a method of spiritual communion are dangerous things which lead men away from action to abstraction. We leave aside those who regard all such beliefs as mysticism, self-delusion or imposture; but even those who reverence and believe in the high things of Hinduism have the impression that one must remove oneself from a full human activity in order to live the spiritual life. Yet the spiritual life finds its most potent expression in the man who lives the ordinary life of men in the strength of the Yoga and under the law of the Vedanta. It is by such a union of the inner life and the outer that mankind will eventually be lifted up and become mighty and divine. It is a delusion to suppose that Vedanta contains no inspiration to life, no rule of conduct, and is purely metaphysical and quietistic. On the contrary, the highest morality of which humanity is capable finds its one perfect basis and justification in the teachings of the Upanishads and the Gita. The characteristic doctrines of the Gita are nothing if they are not a law of life, a *dharmā*, and even the most transcendental aspirations of the Vedanta presuppose a preparation in life, for it is only through life that one can reach to immortality. The opposite opinion is due to certain tendencies which have bulked large in the history and temperament of our race. The ultimate goal of our religion is emancipation from the bondage of material Nature and freedom from individual rebirth, and certain souls, among the highest we have known, have been drawn by the attraction of the final hush and purity to dissociate themselves from life and bodily action in order more swiftly and easily to reach the goal. Standing like