

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

“Arise ! Awake ! And stop not till the Goal is reached.”

## UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

10 April 1900  
1719 Turk Street  
San Francisco

Dear Joe,

There is a squabble in New York—I see. I got a letter from Abhedananda stating that he was going to leave New York: He thought Mrs Bull and you have written lots against him to me. I wrote him back to be patient and wait—and Mrs Bull and Miss MacLeod write only good things about him.

Well, Joe-Joe, you know my method in all these rows ; to leave all rows alone !! ‘Mother’ sees to all such things. I have finished my work. I am retired, Joe. ‘Mother’ will work now herself. That is all.

Now, as you say—I am going to send all the money I have made here. I could do it today but I am waiting to make it a thousand. I expect to make a thousand in Frisco —by the end of this week. I will buy a draft on New York and send it or ask the Bank the best way to do it.

I have plenty of letters from the Math and Himalaya. This morning came one from Swarupananda. Yesterday one from Mrs Sevier.

I told Mrs Hansborough about the photoes. You tell Mr Leggett from me to do what is best about the Vedanta Society matter.

The only thing I see—is that in every country we have to follow its own method. As such if I were you, I will convene a meeting of all the members and sympathizers and ask them what sort of organization they want, if any, etc. But Lordy do it on your own hook. I am quits. Only if you think my presence would be of any help I can come in fifteen days. I have finished my work here, only out of San Francisco Stockton is a little city, I want to work a few days ; then I go East. I think I should rest now—although I can

have \$100 a week average in this city, all along. This time I want to let upon New York the charge of the light brigade.

With all love,  
Ever yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda

P.S. If the workers are all averse to organizing, do you think there is any benefit in it? You know best. Do what you think best. I have a letter from Margot from Chicago. She asks some questions—I am going to reply. V.

17 Feb. 1901  
The Math

Dear Joe,

Just now received your nice long letter—I am so glad you met and approve Miss Cornelia Sorabji. I knew her father at Poona—also a younger sister who was in America. Perhaps her mother will remember me as the *sannyasi* who used to live with the Thakoor Sahib of Limdi at Poona.

I hope you will go to Baroda and see the Maharanee.

I am much better and hope to continue so for some time. I have just now a beautiful letter from Mrs Sevier in which she writes a whole lot of beautiful things about you.

I am so glad you saw Mr Tata and find him so strong and good.

I will of course accept an invitation if I am strong enough to go to Bombay.

Do wire the name of the steamer you leave by for Colombo.

With all love,  
Yours affectionately,  
Vivekananda

The Math  
Belur, Howrah  
Bengal, India

Joe Dear,

I can't even in imagination pay the immense debt of gratitude I owe you. Wherever you are you never forget my welfare—and there you are the only one that bears all my burdens, all my brutal outbursts.

Your Japanese friend has been very kind, but my health is so poor that I am rather afraid I have not much time to spare for Japan. I will drag myself through the Bombay presidency even if only to say how do you do to all kind friends.

Then two months will be consumed in coming and going and only one month to stay, that is not much of a chance of work, is it?

So kindly pay the money your Japanese friend has sent for my passage. I will give it back to you when you come to India in November.

I have had a terrible collapse in Assam from which I am slowly recovering—the Bombay people have waited and waited till they are sick—must see them this time.

If in spite of all this you wish me to come I will start the minute you write.

I had a letter from Mrs Leggett from London asking whether the £300 have reached me safe—they have and I had written a week or so before to her the acknowledgment, c/o Monroe & Co., Paris, as per her previous instructions.



Her last letter came to me with the envelope ripped up in a most bare-faced manner! The post office in India don't even try to do the opening of my mail decently!!

Ever yours with love  
Vivekananda

The Math  
Belur, Howrah  
15 May 1902

Dear Joe,

I send you the letter to Madam Calve.

...

I am rather better—but of course far from what I expected—a great idea of quiet has come upon me—I am going to retire for good—no more work for me. If possible I will revert to my old days of begging.

All blessings attend you Joe—you have been a good angel to me.

With everlasting love

Vivekananda

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## CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI SIVANANDA

DEOGHAR, 1926

On the occasion of the foundation of buildings on the new site of the Vidyapith Mahapurush Maharaj came to Deoghar from Belur Math with many *sadhus and brahmacharis*. Thanks to his holy presence the days were passed in great rejoicings. Everybody felt a new spiritual urge in the heart in his holy company. He was also in a very delightful mood in that sacred place. One day, when a large number of the *sadhus and brahmacharis* collected round him, a *sanyasi*, asked, 'Maharaj, please tell us a little about your wandering days. We feel a great desire to hear about them.'

Mahapurushji smilingly replied, 'What is the use of listening to old tales? A lot was done at one time; now the Master has dragged us into this life of activity. It is just necessary for the propagation of the *yuga-dharma*, the Religion of the age, preached by him. That is why the Master is getting a

little of his work done by us even at this old age. We had thought that we would spend our whole life in *tapasya*, and we were in fact doing it. But the Master did not allow it to happen. Look at Swamiji himself, he passed away at such an early age due to overwork. How many times did he not go to the Himalayas for practising *tapasya*; but someone dragged him down, as it were, from the lap of the Himalayas. After that he began to tour in many places like Rajputana; he had to do his work through so many rajas and maharajas. In the course of his travels he came to Porbandar. There was no king in the State at the time, and mismanagement of all kinds prevailed. For that reason the Government appointed Harishankar Rao as the administrator. Harishankar Rao was a very learned, intelligent, experienced, and honest person. He had travelled in many places in Europe and had gained a fair

knowledge of French, German, and other languages. He had a very big library in his house, and he himself used to study much. Swamiji was very much attracted by his library. When he expressed his admiration in the course of conversation, Harishankar Rao became very glad and said, "You can stay here and utilize the library as long as you like." Thereafter Swamiji stayed there for some time. Harishankar babu knew Sanskrit well. One day he said to Swamiji, "Swamiji, when I first read the *shastras* (scriptures), I thought that there was no truth in them and that they were merely the fancies of their authors who had written down whatever they liked. But after seeing you and talking to you, that notion of mine has changed; it now appears to me that all our religious books etc. are right. I have seen in the West that the thoughtful people there are especially eager to know about our Hindu scriptures and *darshana* (metaphysics). But they have not as yet found anybody who can rightly interpret these scriptures to them. If you go to the West and interpret our vedic tradition to them you will be doing a great work." Just see how His work gets started. Hearing that Swamiji replied, "It is all right. I am a *sanyasin*, what is East or West for me? I shall go if it becomes necessary." Then Harishankar babu said, "It is necessary to learn French if one is to mix in high societies in the West. Learn French, I shall teach you French." Then he learned French quite well. I was at that time at the Alambazar Math. There was no news of Swamiji for about two years. Nobody knew where he was; he had left us even before the *math* was shifted to Alambazar. One day suddenly a long four-page letter reached us. We could not make out by any means the language in which it was written. Soshi Maharaj and Sarada Maharaj knew a little French. After examining it for a long time they declared, "This looks like a letter from Naren—written in French." We took the letter to Aghorenath Chatterjee in

Calcutta. He was the principal of the Hyderabad State College and had a very good knowledge of French. He read the letter and explained it to us in Bengali. That gave us news about the whereabouts of Swamiji, and further it became known that he had learnt French....

Yes, I was saying that Swamiji wanted to pass his life in meditation, *japa* and *tapasya* etc. But the Great Power which had descended on the earth as Ramakrishna did not permit him to do as he willed, but employed him in the work of preaching the *yugadharma*, the Religion of the age, for the salvation of mankind. He was a prince of yogis, and could, if he wanted, have remained immersed in *samadhi*, but the Master dragged him into intense activity. He has also engaged you all as helpers for the establishment of His *yugadharma*. 'Blessed is he whom He has thus chosen.'

*A sanyasin*: *Tapasya* and spiritual practices also are necessary. You have done so much of them.

*Mahapurushji*: Yes, spiritual practices are very necessary, so also is *tapasya*. The only way to keep the flow of life directed towards God is spiritual practice. But spiritual practices and *tapasya* are not all of the same kind. That you are doing the Lord's work, bearing so much hardship and battling against so many adverse conditions—this also is a kind of *tapasya*. You should ever keep this feeling awake in the heart that whatever work you are doing is all His work. It is His service—nothing at all is yours. This is also a kind of *sadhana*. He had mercifully made you instruments of His work. Your lives have become blessed thanks to it. Know this for certain that His work for the establishment of the *yugadharma* is not held up for want of a particular individual. He alone who is fortunate can do His work. I have seen many people endowed with good qualities, but the Master does



not accept them. Again some appear outwardly to be worthless and good for nothing ; yet the Master gets so much of His work done by them in an astonishing way. He who gets the opportunity to do His work becomes blessed. That's why Swamiji used to say that He can create a lakh of Vivekanandas by mere wish. We should always have this feeling in the mind that our lives have been blessed and fulfilled by doing His work. Know it for certain that the workers are bound to have love and faith by degrees by continuing to do His work. What you are doing is not in any way less than the *tapasya* of those who are doing spiritual practices, roaming about in hills and forests, and living by begging alms from house to house. '*Atmano mokshartham jagaddhitaya*' (For one's own salvation and for the good of the world) is the *yugadharmā*.

*A sanyasin* : Pride and egoism sometimes appear while one is engaged in work.

*Mahapurushji* : Egoism etc. cannot arise so

long as you have the conviction that you are doing God's work. If the feeling is pure, there is no fear. You must keep up regular practice of meditation and *japa* along with work ; it helps to maintain a proper balance. Even if a little pride or egoism arise, they cannot do much harm. He will iron them all out again by putting you in appropriate situations. And as regards this pride or egoism of which you speak, they also who devote themselves to *tapasya* may come to have the egoistic feeling that they have become great *tapasvis* (doers of *tapasya*). What really matters is that the feeling must be pure. If there be 'theft in the chamber of your heart' there will be neither real *tapasya*, nor true work. If you work, or do *tapasya*, by making your words tally with your thoughts, egoism or pride can never arise in any state. You should always fix your gaze on the ideal, so that you may never forget the aim of life.

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## THE WESTERN QUESTION (I)

BY THE EDITOR

The most important and urgent task that faces us today as a people is that of organizing our collective life on a sound basis. In other words it is the task of building up a united Indian nation. But we hesitated to use a term coloured with such a strong political dye. And if we have used it, though reluctantly, it is because the term nation will be a convenient one to start with and also because we shall be able as we proceed to put into it the meaning that we really intend by it. What is going to be the key conception round which Indian national integration will take place? This is a basic and immediate issue. If it is not settled aright and now, we

shall fail to achieve our aims of social and economic progress and of elevating the masses to higher levels of thought and feeling. We need a rallying point. And we should take care to see that the light by which we choose to live will not be put out by storms that may blow.

Our past has an answer to this question, and in recent years the answer has been given anew, backed by that inward spiritual force necessary to realize it. The spiritual power we refer to will gradually work itself out in the course of centuries in creative forms on all the planes of life. Of this we feel no doubt. But because the forces that make



history are impalpable and imponderable and are deeper and slower than things that lie on the surface of the stream of life, they do not make good headlines. And in our estimation the things that make good headlines are the things that matter most. But time has the least respect for things that make headlines in their day. When Christ taught and was crucified, the events created little impression among the vast masses of his contemporaries. But the Caesars and proconsuls who held the gaze of the men of their time have vanished from popular memory and lie buried under the debris of history. Therefore, though the answer to our question is there, it is not widely available. And even in cases where this is not so, it is far from clear.

Instead of coming to the answer directly and straightway it will be better if we do so in easy transition by first looking at the question in the wider perspective of history. In that case the answer, though it may not appear in the full panoply of all historical and logical arguments, may yet come with a force sufficient for our purpose.

The most serious question which has confronted us for the last three centuries and which confronts us still is the 'Western Question'. Around the turn of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Western nations on the seaboard of the Atlantic broke out from the narrow tip of Europe and pushed their way all around the globe. The West cast its net wide and drew into it all the peoples and races of mankind. The net holds us still. Of course politically speaking we, like a few others, have just succeeded in emancipating ourselves from it, but this political liberation may mean nothing significant and may even spell our doom in the long run, if we cannot liberate ourselves from its more invisible meshes. Politically we no longer lie flat on the ground. We are on our feet again. And it is just possible that in this hour of freedom we may choose to do what we refused to do in our

bondage, namely, to follow the West in toto. We may make ourselves mere replicas of the West and thus join the band of proletarian nations of the world without a heritage of our own and consequently without a future, for the future lies with a people that is creative and not merely mimetic.

So far as politics is concerned the old days have gone and with them also the old notions. In the modern world the conception of the sovereign national state which until recent years came to be regarded as the greatest new event in history has become dated. The world is ripe for political unity, and we believe this will be achieved in a not far distant future. The facts of world-wide operations of the modern industrial system and consequent economic inter-dependence of peoples are bound to emerge, sooner or later, in some form of world-government. In fact the totalitarian efforts in the last two world wars were unconscious attempts in this direction—in the direction, namely, of translating the existing economic facts into their equivalent political terms. Economic unity of the world demands a corresponding political framework. Totalitarianism failed to achieve, and fortunately so, this unconscious historic aim according to its own conceptions. But though totalitarian attempts have miscarried, unity is bound to come in other ways more in consonance with the secret aim of civilization and the profound and as yet obscure aspirations of humanity.

The conception of the sovereign national state has become anachronistic, but that does not mean that the national idea has lost all force or meaning. The need still remains and will remain, as far as we can see, for the peoples of the world to be organized locally, though upon a new conception, before they can successfully federate in a future world-government. What then should be the conception around which we are to build up our collective life? If we can reconstruct our collective life in accordance with the intention



of history and not in opposition to the dynamic forces of civilization, then we shall not only achieve what we want to achieve but also create a pattern upon which others also may model themselves.

There are only two ways open to us. If we study the history of civilizations we shall find that civilized societies in the past as well as in the present have attempted to integrate themselves round one or other of two conceptions. These conceptions are antithetical in nature and relate to the nature of man and the meaning of progress. One conception views progress as a social event meaning thereby an ever-broadening stream of scientific knowledge and technical aptitude. According to this idea the most important thing in human life is not the spiritual development of souls but the social development of communities. Society and not the individual becomes the end. Individuals are required to immolate themselves before this civic idol. What is of supreme consequence is intellectual development and the 'know how' of the manufacture of gadgets and articles of comfort. Where this conception rules man progressively loses dignity and a sense of inner worth, and he attains his highest fulfilment and becomes fully social by turning into an 'ant-like Spartan or a bee-like communist.' It has become evident that democratic liberty cannot be preserved apart from its spiritual context. The conception of progress as a social event in terms of science and technique is a negation of human personality as a spiritual agent, for a spiritual agent can attain its highest development only in terms of spiritual activity and in spiritual relationship with other spiritual agents and in realizing an Ideal that lies beyond society.

This mundane idea of progress, however, forms the basis of all secular ideologies which aim at creating an earthly paradise by securing a command over non-human nature. Nature and reason are the two gods of such societies.

But in fact real worship is paid to lust and money, for pleasure is the sole aim. The Graeco-Roman civilization of the pre- and post-Christian centuries and the modern 'scientific' civilization of the West (with its replicas in Russia, Egypt, Turkey, Japan and other countries) offer two most impressive and brilliant instances of a secular civilization of this kind. The Dark Ages when a Christian conception of society struggled to be born, in vain alas, forms a kind of interregnum between the two. The barbarians made a travesty of Christianity and then put it away as an hindrance to their development. The modern West born at the time of renaissance is a child of Greece and Rome and has repudiated the Christian conception of life.

The Graeco-Roman civilization, however, went to pieces, not because it lacked intellectual power or military resources, but because it decayed from within. Its mistaken conception of human personality and, consequently, of good life, created a spiritual vacuum even in the midst of a material plenum. Caesar not only ruled over mundane earth but claimed dominion over men's souls. The Emperor became also the *pontifex maximus*. But spirit will not pay allegiance to matter. No wonder Christianity arose to fill the vacuum. It challenged the worship of the civic idol and humbled the soulless Leviathan to dust.

Today history is repeating itself before our eyes. The secular West is near the brink. The secular conception of society means the organization of a people on a political basis. Politics always turns into power politics unless it can be curbed by a conception that transcends politics. Christendom broke up into national states organized for the pursuit of power and aggrandizement. Uptil now the West has been living upon its inherited moral and spiritual capital, at least in domestic fields. But practice divorced from belief becomes a meaningless gesture and cannot endure. Without faith and a spiritual con-



ception of life man gradually returns to the primitive gestures dictated by glandular secretions. The secular ideology has again created a spiritual vacuum. And unless this is filled with the right sort of stuff, the West will repeat the last chapter of Graeco-Roman civilization. The Western half of Europe feels dismayed by Russia as Rome felt dismayed by the barbarian. But Russia is no more barbarian than those who hate and fear her. And she is only shooting back at the West the final product of its own secular ideology. Marxism is a Western conception. The Nazi and the fascist states of Germany and Italy only worked out the conceptions of power politics and of the brigand nation to their logical extremes. But this time the fury caught the Western peoples also instead of only the colonial peoples who have been steadily trampled upon by the 'democracies' for centuries out of the sight of the common man in the West. However, the most significant thing in the European situation today is that the spiritual vacuum in the West is swiftly sucking in the deadly brew of communism—a brew of which the formula is contained in the secular pharmacopeia of the West, but which has been compounded by the Russian apothecary. Communism is Vedanta turned upside down and emptied of its spiritual content. But when the soul is desperately thirsty it will not wait, but will always try to allay its pangs by drinking any liquid, however foul that may be. Heresy thrives where true faith is absent. We do not live without beliefs, and the choice always lies between a good belief and a bad belief.

The secular conception of life, the worship of society and sensation, is going to pull down the structure of Western civilization, unless it can be replaced in time by a just conception of the human person and progress.

In opposition to the above conception there is the other conception of the nature of man and of progress, which forms the core

of the vedic tradition. According to this idea man is a spiritual agent, and progress means the spiritual evolution of souls, that is to say, the progress of individuals. Civilization does not mean social progress conceived in terms of material achievements and physical well-being. Society is never an end, but a means. Civilization means the progression of a spiritual idea in depth as well in extension. Civilization is not a state but a movement. The sum-total of material achievements at a point of time, which are the consequences of man's intelligence, represents only the static, external, and insignificant forms of civilization. Civilization in its material aspects rises and falls and moves in cycles of birth, death, and birth. But one thing runs continuously and develops through them all. It is the consistent march of a spiritual idea. True civilization is the result of factors that pull in different ways—one that tries to take us back to primitive impulsive living and the other which attempts to lift us out of the animal plane to newer and wider levels of consciousness and feeling.

Our ancient seers regarded social history as a reflection on a wider scale of the struggle between good and evil, between the *deva* and the *asura*, which goes on without respite in the deep recesses of the human soul. Have not they said that the real *kurukshetra* where the forces of good and evil are ever locked in deadly combat lies in every heart and that the outer *kurukshetra* is only a symbol and a social reflection of the inner? This is the true story of civilization, which is the outcome of the conflict between man's ancestral memories and his moral and spiritual aspirations. Civilization is therefore conceived in terms of movement and of evolution, but it is evolution not on the plane of matter or of life but on the plane of spirit.

Material achievements and intellectual development may help or retard progress, they do not make it. Progress is achieved by man's conscious fight against evil that does



not really lie outside, but is within him. Evil is not overcome by the blind march of history. Man never becomes good by a mechanical movement, for history is never redemptive as secular ideologies assume. Evil can be overcome only by moral and spiritual force. Further, evil is only an apparent factor of our true personality, the larger part of which, like an iceberg, lies submerged beneath the plane of perception. At bottom man is perfect, and progress means becoming more and more aware of this innate truth. In a word it is the gradual liberation of consciousness from the bondage of matter and of the limited personality. It is a movement towards a unity that is at bottom spiritual.

While civilizations in the material sense come and go, the spiritual idea that forms its soul and dynamic principle marches on. It gains in depth and extension as history unfurls itself. This view must of course be regarded as true within the limits of a complete historical cycle from the *kaliyuga* to the *satyayuga*.

Here we should make a point clear, lest the traditional conception be misunderstood. We have referred to progression in depth as well as in extension. This may cause misunderstanding, if the meaning is not made more explicit. When we talk of progression in depth and in extension the phrase must be taken to apply to masses of men only. For, according to the vedic conception, ethical and spiritual researches have already touched the bottom in the experiences of the great teachers of mankind. Revelation has come in all its fulness to individuals, for one cannot go beyond unity where all differences resolve themselves. There are no more new realms to be discovered. There may, of course, be an analytic and intellectual development of the idea in the terms and accents of a developing concrete situation. Perfection is not a far-off event of history. It is trans-historical, though a perfect individual can be

in history. Perfection is already here and now and has only to be known and not produced by action. But this point cannot be further pursued here, for in that case we shall run into metaphysical tides that will carry us away from our present issue.

Perfection has already been achieved individually, but not collectively. It has not reached mankind as a whole. It has not even come even in a very small measure to the vast majority of men. So progression in depth and extension has reference to these individuals. The spiritual realization of the seers must extend gradually to all men so that it may multiply chances of individual progression in depth. This is progress in the collective and social sense. Social organization and material achievement are necessary for the development of humanity. But once we grasp this idea of progress it is clear that we shall bend our efforts to organizing society and utilizing our achievements in a way that will make spiritual progress possible for all the members of a society, wherever they may stand. Social aim becomes, therefore, the creation of conditions and opportunities for the maximum development of human dignity and personality. Progress in the social sense will mean exactly this, namely, the development in depth and extension of the spiritual idea among the members of a society.

Finally, it is envisaged that the entire humanity will, in future, come into possession of this truth when all institutional devices which hold society together now will fall into desuetude, for love alone will be the sole motive of human action. All our reactions will be governed by the clear light of the supreme Intelligence (*agrya buddhi*) and we shall all act with an inner sense of freedom and poise (*yogabuddhi*) which nothing will be able to disturb. Only such a society, a commonwealth of free individuals realizing the highest potentialities of their spiritual nature and acting as free spiritual agents, will be a truly civilized society. This idea forms



the true content of the phrase, *satya-yuga*, which is not a past idyllic state of nature as imagined by romanticists, but a future state of a perfected humanity. The idea finds an echo in the Christian conception of the

Kingdom of Heaven. But while *civitas dei* is not of this world, the *satya-yuga* is an arc of a complete historical cycle.

(To be continued)

## KALI AND SIVA

BY AKSHAYA KUMAR BANERJEA

India is a worshipper of Mother Kali. Kali is represented as eternally marching onward on the breast of Siva. In her onward march She leaves behind Her death and destruction, fear and despair, weakness and wickedness, sorrow and depression, discord and hostility, darkness and ignorance, with skilful movements of Her left hands, and always looks for and advances towards life and light, hope and fearlessness, strength and purity, joy and peace, love and unity, truth and bliss, which Her right hands point to and work for. Though looking ahead and moving forward constitutes Her essential nature, she never loses her foothold on the changeless and tranquil breast of the infinite eternal Supreme Spirit, Siva, that is, the transcendent support and inspirer of all her movements.

To the Hindu mind Kali represents Life-Temporal and Siva represents Life-Eternal, and Life-Temporal is the multiform phenomenal self-expression of Life-Eternal. Life in the universe, Life in the spatio-temporal order, originates from, is sustained by, and is always in touch with the Supreme Spirit, Life beyond the universe, Life above the spatio-temporal order. 'Time is the moving image of Eternity;' 'Kali is the moving image of Siva.' It is in and through Kali that Siva manifests the transcendent glory of His supra-cosmic, self-existent, non-dual life in countless forms of living existences in the temporal cosmic order. In this ever-moving, ever-changing phenomenal order, Life is conceived by the

Hindu mind as truly real; and whatever darkens or veils or overshadows Life, whatever stands in the way of the self-expression and self-fulfilment of life, whatever seeks to devour Life or turn Life into lifeless inert matter or expressionless dark void, the Hindu mind thinks of as illusory appearance, through the conquest and illumination of which Life in the world should progressively realize and fulfil itself. The Indian mind, enlightened by the vedantic view of Reality, looks upon the cosmic order as the triumphant march of Life in and through all the illusory forces of death and destruction, which appear in its way only to be left in the background or transformed into materials of its self-realization. It never recognizes Death as the end of Life; but rather it looks upon Life as the Death of Death, the slayer of the Demon of Death and all its auxiliary forces. The end of Life is not Death, but the perfect self-fulfilment of Life, as eternally realized in the Supreme Spirit, Siva.

The spiritual culture of India teaches us that we, as living beings on earth, should always be worshippers of Mother Kali,—worshippers of the great Life-Power triumphantly marching onward in this cosmic order towards the Perfection of Life, by overpowering, piercing through and destroying all the dark forces of Death, which illusorily prevail in this world and stand in the way of the evolution of life. We are taught to worship Kali even on the cremation ground



and to demonstrate thereby our faith in Life and our defiance of Death. We are exhorted to plant the tree of life and to erect the temple of Siva (eternally perfect Life) on the funeral pyre of the dead. We are instructed to put ourselves in touch with this indestructible Life-Power, whenever we find ourselves encircled by the forces of Death, such as epidemic diseases, countrywide famines, foreign invasions, internal feuds, general depressions, bewildering political, social, and economic problems, and so on. We are taught to feel encouraged with the idea that we are living children of the cosmic Life-Power and that we must never submit to the forces of Death.

The living culture of India is based on the faith that Life is more real than Death, that Life must never submit to and can never be crushed by the apparently powerful forces of Death. It is this faith which has given immortality to the culture of India. Whatever objects of experience appear in time and disappear in time are to the Indian mind relatively unsubstantial, and attachment to such objects virtually means courting death. The human life, which has, in the cosmic design, attained the prerogative of consciously and voluntarily directing its activities, should not deliberately stick to such perishable objects or make even the most splendid among them the objects of its ambition and the ends of its endeavours. Life is its own end. It has to perfect itself in and through its activities in this world.

For its own self-perfection, the human life has to cultivate Knowledge, it has to cultivate Power, it has to cultivate Love, it has to cultivate Purity and Goodness, it has to cultivate Beauty and Harmony, it has to cultivate Peace and Unity, it has to cultivate the consciousness of the essential Identity of all life (in whatever diverse forms it may be embodied), it has to cultivate the consciousness of the inner identity of the individual life with the cosmic Life. For the cultivation of these virtues, the human life has to manifest

its intellectual and creative powers in the suitable organization of the family, society, community, State, etc. and in the invention of various instruments and contrivances for the efficient development of human life in and through these organizations. These organizations must never be regarded as ends in themselves. Societies, communities, nations, all these, however powerful and magnificent for the time being, are perishable things, creations of the human intellect, and cannot be worthy objects of exclusive worship to the human life, which has got a taste of its own intrinsic glories. They are good in so far as they furnish the human life with various facilities for its self-development, self-realization, self-perfection. But when they themselves become objects of worship and make the worshippers forget the true ideal of Life, they are converted into demons or forces of Death.

When nations, communities, societies teach men to hate and fear their fellow-men, when they demand falsehood, hypocrisy, narrowness, bigotry, censoriousness, vindictiveness, violence, cruelty, etc. from their members, when they widen the consciousness of difference and create a sense of hostility between individuals and individuals, communities and communities, nations and nations, they become terrible satanic forces for goading human life gradually into the jaws of Death. The self-conscious and self-determining Life in man must judge them by reference to the ultimate standard of value, viz. their conduciveness to the development, expansion, beautification, unification, perfection, and self-realization of Life. All human organizations and institutions are to be regarded as truly serving the purposes for which they are created, when they help in the regulation of the life of each individual and each section of the human race in such a way that the life of each may realize its unity with the collective life of mankind, that peace, harmony, unity, love, and friendship may reign everywhere in the human world, and that the life as embodied in every



individual and every section may be ennobled, beautified, spiritualized, and consciously put in tune with the Supreme Life of the universe. Every individual, every nation, every community must make use of all their fortunes, all their powers and achievements, for becoming self-conscious and free participators in the onward march of the Life-Power of the cosmic order with the Supreme Spirit in view. This is what the worship of Mother Kali truly signifies.

India in her outer life passed through many cycles of light and darkness, peace and disorder, growth and decline, prosperity and adversity, freedom and bondage, hope and despondency. Off and on she suffered terribly from foreign inroads and internal revolutions, from natural catastrophes and human atrocities, from racial animosities, political feuds, economic hostilities and social rivalries. In the long journey of her life she witnessed on many occasions the awful prevalence of the forces of Death. But in her inner national consciousness India never lost faith in her Kali and Siva,—never lost faith in the eventual triumph of Life over Death,—never lost faith in the Spiritual Basis on which the cosmic order stands and the Spiritual Ideal towards which the cosmic order is moving. India has always in her heart of hearts believed that Death is nothing but a phenomenal shadow of Life, and that this shadow can and perhaps must pursue Life until and unless Life is perfectly illumined by the light of its own innermost nature, i.e. until and unless it realizes its identity with Siva, the Supreme Spirit, the eternal conqueror of Death (*Mrityunjaya*). She has, therefore, never been frightened at the sight of the temporary, apparent predominance of the shadow over the Reality. She has never been either disheartened or tempted by the arrogant splendours of the forces of Death, now and then brandishing their multi-coloured banners in this or that part of the human world.

The Indian culture has accordingly never

accepted the finite and transitory materialistic ideals of life and has never recognized the superiority of those classes or those nations which, pursuing those materialistic ideals, sought to demonstrate their superiority by force of arms or by the show of the outward grandeur of their worldly achievements. The saints and sages of India have, in all ages, taught the people to measure the values of the powers, fortunes, and worldly splendours achieved by individuals or classes or nations, by testing how far they contribute to the refinement and ennoblement and enlightenment of the lives of those who achieve them and those upon whom they exercise their influence, how far they materially help in the establishment of peace, harmony, unity, and cordial relationship in the human society, how far they are conducive to the awakenment of the consciousness of Siva in every individual and in every section of mankind. The real progress of individual and collective life is to be measured, not by reference to temporary materialistic successes, but by reference to its moral and spiritual attainments, which lead life onward and onward towards the progressive realization of the perfection which remains hidden in it. This is according to the Indian point of view what constitutes true civilization.

The progressive militarization and mechanization of the human powers and resources, the growing rivalry and hostility amongst nations and communities, the employment of the knowledge of the scientists and the wisdom of the philosophers in the invention of newer and newer destructive weapons and newer and newer ways of organizing the people in the path of hatred and malice, and violence and death, can by no means be accepted by sane human minds as true signs of *civilization*. As the human nature becomes more and more civilized, and the human institutions and organizations grow with the ideal of true civilization in view, the brutal or military elements of the human nature must gradually disappear, the forces of death



must gradually yield to the forces of Life; peace, harmony, unity, beauty, love, and goodness must prominently reign in the inner character and outer conduct of men in their private as well as public life, Siva should be reflected on the modes of the operations of all organizations and institutions. Individual or collective life, in which these essential characteristics of truly civilized life are absent, must be condemned as uncivilized.

The materialistic ideals of life do not tend to make men progressively civil. With such ideals civility becomes only a matter of prudence and has to be practised only in outer conduct within narrow spheres of human relations for the sake of the material advantages it gives. Civility or refinement of life for its own sake demands higher moral and spiritual ideals, to which materialistic self-interests have to be subordinated and sacrificed. With the progressive civilization of human life, the forces of love and non-violence, of truth and goodness, of peace and harmony, of beauty and gentleness, of sympathy and fellow-feeling, should become more powerful and predominant among all sections of the human race, and the forces of hatred and violence, of falsehood and vice, of conflict and disorder, of wildness and arrogance, of apathy and antipathy—which are all forces of Death—should bow down to those forces of Life, hide their own faces in shame, and vanish. This is what the true onward march of Life demands, this is what the worship of the Divine Mother Kali demands. This is the ideal, which is immanent in Indian culture and civilization, and which has been regulating its course through many ups and downs for thousands of years.

The Indian people, having emancipated themselves from foreign domination, have regained the opportunity to pursue consciously, deliberately, and energetically the ideal of life immanent in the immortal soul of India and to present it gloriously before all the

struggling nations of the world. It will be the mission of India to show the path of immortal life to those modern nations which, infatuated by the apparent splendours of their temporary materialistic achievements, are unconsciously, but surely, advancing in the path of death. While practical necessity compels India to accommodate herself prudently in the association of the war-minded, death-worshipping powerful nations, by which she is encircled, she must never forget that the Presiding Deity of her national existence is Kali, eternally marching onward with Her feet planted firmly on the breast of Siva. Her politics and economics, her internal and external policies, her industrial and commercial enterprises, her social and educational organizations—all these ought to be shaped in consonance with this ideal. She has to develop all the aspects of her national life and to march forward along with the other nations of the present world, but with the ultimate object of realizing Siva in and through all her self-expressions and self-assertions in the material world. In our private as well as public life, in our domestic, communal, national, and international relations, in all our dealings with the forces and phenomena of the world, we must march forward from death to immortality, from bondage to liberty, from falsehood to truth, from disharmony and hostility to harmony and peace, from hatred and violence to love and non-violence, from fear and depression to fearlessness and courage, from impurity and corruption to purity and goodness, from attachment to finite transitory mundane fortunes to devotion to the infinite eternal spiritual perfection of life. We should consciously participate in the eternal, well-ordered onward march of the cosmic Life-Power for giving diversified and harmonized expression to the transcendent, beautiful character of the non-dual Supreme Spirit, and in and through such participation realize the Supreme Spirit within ourselves.



# A NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

BY TURIYACHAITANYA

The question of the national language for India has given rise to a vast amount of acute controversy in the country. The selection of the national language cannot be done in a hurry, but should be based on an unprejudiced and mature consideration of several factors. We shall consider here dispassionately the claims of the different languages which have been put forward in this connection.

In India there are two groups of languages : (1) The Indo-Aryan and (2) The Dravidian. The first group consists of Hindi (including its different varieties to which Hindustani and Urdu are akin), Bengali, Assamese, Oriya, Gujarati, Marathi, Punjabi, Kashmiri, Sindhi, and Pashto. These have evolved from Sanskrit by stages, and though they have developed particular literary styles and their peculiarities as regional languages, in structure and vocabulary they retain their derivative character from Sanskrit. The second group, consisting of Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam languages confined to South India, are structurally different, but they too have developed by drawing upon Sanskrit freely, so much so that at present they contain nearly 50% to 75% Sanskrit words.

In addition to this Sanskrit origin of, and influence upon, the Indian languages, Persian, which became in the middle ages the court language of the Muslim rulers in large parts of this country, came in later times to influence to a certain extent the North Indian vernaculars. This influence has been especially confined to words relating to law, administration, and accounts, but has not changed the structure of the languages at all. Again, the spoken languages of the masses even in these areas have not been so much influenced as the written. As a consequence of this the original Hindi language has branched off in

two different styles, namely, the Hindustani, which is greatly influenced by Persian, and Hindi which is not. But the literary form of Hindustani, with Persian script (Urdu), became progressively Persianized and lost touch with the masses. In recent times this has been deliberately done. The literary Hindi with Nagari script has lately become progressively Sanskritic, and for this reason it has lost close touch with the masses, but not to the same extent as Urdu, for the three following reasons : (1) Sanskrit is a living cultural language and though not spoken is used in all religious observances of the Hindus ; (2) it is derived from Sanskrit and from the very early times has been drawing upon it in common with the other provincial languages ; and (3) most of the literature in Hindi is religious. Of course every literary language is removed from the uneducated masses. Therefore that alone is no reason for disqualifying a language from being a national language, for it is not merely for ordinary speech that we use it but for various other purposes.

The claim of a particular language to be selected as the national language must depend upon the following factors : (1) The number of persons who speak it ; (2) its popularity ; (3) its capacity to meet the growing needs of India in the literary, scientific, and cultural fields ; and (4) its ability to be easily fitted into the pattern of the various provincial languages. In the light of the above we shall examine the claims of Urdu, Sanskrit, Hindustani, and Hindi, respectively, to occupy the status of the national language of India.

## 1. Urdu

It is recognized on all hands that literary Urdu though it is well-developed, cannot be the national language 'as it leans on foreign elements' (*Harijan*, 28-11-48 *To The Members*



of *The Constituent Assembly*). Though structurally same as Hindi, its vocabulary is Persianized and Arabicized, and it is spoken and understood by very few people. It is pre-eminently a language used by the Muslim writers. 'There will be at the highest four crores of Muslims in India or about 12 per cent. Of them not more than a few lakhs speak high Urdu; not more than 1 per cent. at the highest. No doubt Urdu was claimed as their mother tongue by Muslims all over the country, even though most of them could not talk even the most indifferent bazaar Hindustani. . . . In fact, the bulk of Muslims in any province speak the same language which the Hindus of the province speak. Whoever heard till of late that the Bengali or Gujarati Muslims did not know Bengali or Gujarati?' (K. M. Munshi—'Our National Language' in *Social Welfare*, 26-12-47).

Of course this does not preclude Urdu from being encouraged and developed as one of the languages in India.

## 2. Sanskrit

Though the chance of selection of Sanskrit as the national language is remote, yet, since many influential and learned scholars have advanced its claim in this regard, we shall briefly examine the subject here.

It has already been observed that all the Indian languages are either derived from Sanskrit or they have been and are being highly influenced by it. It is a matter of common knowledge that Sanskrit is a very old language and has been moulded almost to perfection over several thousands of years, and that Sanskrit literature has grown to immense proportions covering numerous branches of human knowledge. Before the advent of English, it was the all-India cultural language enabling people from all over India to come together and exchange their thoughts and ideas in a common medium. All the important works were written in that

language, and some of them remain unequalled in any literature of the world. There are numerous works of poetry, prose, drama, grammar, prosody, phonetics, various types of arts—music, painting, dancing, architecture and sculpture, mining, metallurgy, physics, chemistry, mathematics (including algebra, geometry, and trigonometry), astronomy, medicine and surgery, politics and economics, science of war, administration, law, ethics, and, over and above all, a monumental literature on religion and philosophy, besides many other subjects too numerous to mention. In short it embodies the culture of India all through her history from most ancient times. It can easily be imagined what an immense and rich vocabulary this language contains. Another great advantage of Sanskrit is that it has a flexible system of roots from which any number of words can easily be coined by adding prefixes and suffixes to yield different meanings with different shades to suit various needs.

And though Sanskrit has ceased to be a spoken language, it is in no sense a dead language as it is used every day in all Hindu religious observances and also on other occasions. Even now there are many people who can fluently speak in Sanskrit, while books and magazines continue to be produced in it (*vide* reviews in the *Sunday Hindu*, Madras) not infrequently. On various ceremonial and public occasions Sanskrit poems and hymns are still composed and sung, and addresses presented. It enshrines and represents the living culture of India, and the language is being studied more and more, and deeply, by both Indian and Western scholars as well as by learned men in other parts of the world. In many of the European and other foreign countries chairs have been created for Sanskrit. Even the 'Afghanistan Government has replaced Persian by their native Pashto as the State language, and for developing Pashto has made Sanskrit a compulsory language in the Arts Faculty of Kabul



University (*vide* Letter to Editor, the *Hindustan Times*, 26-11-48).<sup>1</sup>

Sanskrit still occupies a position of great importance among the languages of the world. It has close affinity with many European languages, which is the reason for the use of the term Indo-European languages. Sir William Jones observed as long ago as 1784; 'The Sanskrit language, whatever be its antiquity, is of a wonderful structure; more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either: yet bearing to both of them a stronger affinity, both in the roots of verbs, and in the forms of grammar, than could possibly have been produced by accident; so strong indeed, that no philologer could examine them all without believing them to have sprung from *some common source* which perhaps no longer exists ...' (Quoted by Jawaharlal Nehru in *The Discovery of India*, p. 182). Such being the case, technical terms drawn from Sanskrit will be akin to those derived from Greek and Latin, from which the European languages are constantly drawing for the developing needs of science. Even the Persian language belongs to the Indo-European group and, in its older forms, has great resemblance to Sanskrit.

Apart from this, Indian culture spread in the past in various countries of Asia with the result that Sanskrit influenced the local languages—to a considerable extent, in many cases.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru has brought out many other points in *The Discovery of India*. While we can only quote briefly from it we

<sup>1</sup> Sardar Ghulam Mohammed Khan, *Charge d'Affaires* for Afghanistan in Delhi, in a letter to Mr. Ghanshyam Singh Gupta, Speaker of the Central Provinces Assembly, who made an inquiry in this connection, says: 'Persian and Pashto are direct descendants of Sanskrit and still maintain a large vocabulary derived from Sanskrit. The idea of the introduction of Sanskrit as a compulsory subject in the University is to make Pashto a more scientific language and to develop it to a better standard.'

would recommend the readers to go through it fully (*The Vitality and Persistence of Sanskrit*):

'A language is something infinitely greater than grammar and philology. It is the poetic testament of the genius of a race and a culture, and the living embodiment of the thoughts and fancies that have moulded them.' (A national language should reflect these.) 'Sanskrit, like other classical languages, is full of words which have not only poetic beauty but a deep significance, a host of associated ideas, which cannot be translated into a language foreign in spirit and outlook.' 'Our modern languages in India are children of Sanskrit and to it owe most of their vocabulary and their forms of expression. Many rich and significant words in Sanskrit poetry and philosophy, untranslatable in foreign languages, are still living parts of our popular languages. And Sanskrit itself, though long dead as a language of the people, has still an astonishing vitality.'

'For how long Sanskrit has been a dead language, in the sense of not being popularly spoken, I do not know. Even in the days of Kalidasa it was not the people's language, though it was the language of educated people throughout India. So it continued for centuries and even spread to the Indian colonies in South-East Asia and Central Asia. There are records of regular Sanskrit recitations, and possibly plays also, in Cambodia in the seventh century A.C. Sanskrit is still used for some ceremonial purposes in Thailand (Siam). In India the vitality of Sanskrit has been amazing. When the Afghan rulers had established themselves on the throne of Delhi, about the beginning of the thirteenth century, Persian became the court language over the greater part of India and, gradually many educated people took to it in preference to Sanskrit. The popular languages also grew and developed literary forms. Yet in spite of all this Sanskrit continued, though it declined in quality. Speaking at the Oriental



Conference held in 1937 at Trivandrum, over which he presided, Dr. F. W. Thomas pointed out what a great unifying force Sanskrit has been in India and how widespread its use still was. He actually suggested that a simple form of Sanskrit, a kind of Basic Sanskrit, should be encouraged as a common all-India language today ! He quoted, agreeing with him, what Max Muller had said previously: "Such is the marvellous continuity between the past and the present in India, that in spite of repeated social convulsions, religious reforms, and foreign invasions, Sanskrit may be said to be still the only language spoken over the whole extent of that vast country . . . . Even at the present moment, after a century of English rule and English teaching, I believe that Sanskrit is more widely understood in India than Latin was in Europe at the time of Dante."

'I have no idea of the number of people who understood Latin in the Europe of Dante's time; nor do I know how many understand Sanskrit in India today. But the number of these latter is still large, especially in the South. Simple spoken Sanskrit is not very difficult to follow for those who know well any of the present-day Indo-Aryan languages—Hindi, Bengali, Marathi, Gujarati, etc. Even present-day Urdu, itself wholly an Indo-Aryan language, probably contains 80% (?) words derived from Sanskrit. It is often difficult to say whether a word has come from Persian or Sanskrit, as the root words in both of these languages are alike. Curiously enough the Dravidian languages of the South, though entirely different in origin, have borrowed and adopted such masses of words from Sanskrit that nearly half their vocabulary is very nearly allied to Sanskrit.

'Books in Sanskrit on a variety of subjects, including dramatic works, continued to be written throughout the medieval period and right up to modern times. Indeed such books still appear from time to time, and so do Sanskrit magazines. The standard is not

high and they do not add anything of value to Sanskrit literature. But the surprising thing is that this hold of Sanskrit should continue in this way throughout this long period. Sometimes public gatherings are still addressed in Sanskrit, though naturally the audiences are more or less select.

'It is interesting to note that in modern Thailand when the need arose for new technical, scientific and governmental terms, many of these were adapted from Sanskrit.

'The language of Ceylon is Singhalese. This is also an Indo-Aryan language derived directly from Sanskrit. . . . Sanskrit, it is now well recognized, is allied to the European, classical and modern languages. Even the Slavonic languages have many common forms and roots with Sanskrit. The nearest approach to Sanskrit in Europe is made by the Lithuanian language.'

Sanskrit is a unifying factor not only of the languages of India but also as between the North and the South. It maintains the cultural continuity and homogeneity of India and provides a strong link among the various provinces in respect of ideas and a common moral and spiritual outlook.

We may also note in this connection what Swami Vivekananda said in regard to Sanskrit. He declared that in India Sanskrit and prestige go together. It imparts culture—not mere knowledge—which alone provides—and has provided as history shows—an enduring basis of unity for the different peoples of India. He held the neglect of Sanskrit by the masses, or its denial to them, to be one of the important causes of their degradation. He, therefore, insisted that Sanskrit learning must be acquired by the masses so that they may share the common heritage of Indian culture. He emphasized that the study of Sanskrit is the chief means to level up the culture of the masses to that of the upper classes.

These considerations certainly make a strong case for Sanskrit to be adopted as the



national language of India. If one-fourth of the propaganda that is being made in favour of Hindi or Hindustani is devoted to Sanskrit, it will not be surprising if the country votes Sanskrit for this place of honour. But its only and chief drawback seems to be that it is not a spoken language, and, therefore, we have to fall back upon Hindi or Hindustani. But it is clear that the above arguments in favour of Sanskrit should be taken account of in the selection of a national language, for they point out the necessity of keeping the selected national language of India as close to Sanskrit as possible. The national language should be in the closest harmony with the provincial languages so that the greatest common measure can be achieved between the interprovincial languages on the one hand and between the provincial languages and the national language on the other. It goes without saying that this will mitigate the evil of provincialism, which rests mainly upon a linguistic basis.

### 3. Hindi or Hindustani ?

The field is now left only for Hindi and Hindustani. As we have already observed the literature in Hindi-Hindustani takes either the form of Persianized Urdu or Sanskritized Hindi. Hence there is not considerable literature in Hindustani, and whenever people want to express ideas beyond the ordinary subjects of talk they have necessarily to take recourse to Persian or Sanskrit. Between spoken Hindi and Hindustani, Hindi is understood by a larger number of people (and the proportion has leaped up after the partition), for all the Indian languages, as we have pointed out before, are highly Sanskritic, and for this reason Hindi is more popular than Hindustani. Hindi has already been making attempts to express modern ideas, for the last 40 years, with the help of Sanskrit vocabulary, with considerable success.

Another point of importance is to be noted. Even granting that spoken Hindi and Hindu-

stani are not much different, as it is claimed by some, any one of them can form only the basis of the national language, as they are still undeveloped for scientific, philosophic, and cultural purposes. The question arises, What language are they going to draw upon for their development and to meet the needs of the country? When we consider that there are already developed provincial languages derived from Sanskrit, or highly influenced by it, that they are drawing upon Sanskrit for their further development, and that they will be the medium of instruction and administration in the areas and provinces they are spoken, it is natural that it will be primarily from Sanskrit that the words will be drawn for various technical and other purposes, for Sanskrit is the common mother or foster-mother to all of them. The West Bengal Government has already done so. The Bengal Government Home (Political) Department has issued a pamphlet containing the first instalment of *Terminology to be used in the Public Services*. In the course of the introduction to the pamphlet the compilers point out that they cannot but depend upon and draw from Sanskrit, and support their contention with cogent reasons. So, whether we adopt Hindi or Hindustani, it is certainly going to be Sanskritized—the time process and sociological and other factors will certainly render it so. Then why fight shy of adopting Hindi straight away as the basis? It satisfies all these conditions, and it has already a lead, and has been adopted as the provincial language even in the U.P, where Hindustani has the strongest hold and the largest following. Certainly this national language should adopt appropriate words freely, when necessary, from other sources too, just as the English language has done and grown. Persian and other foreign words which have already come into currency among the masses and in administration all over India need not be discarded illogically, or changed or dispensed with save for practical reasons. The adop-



tion of Hindustani will be only in name and will only succeed in confusing issues. What exactly is Hindustani is difficult to know; and it would appear that a lot of useless controversy might have been avoided if we knew the precise meaning of terms. If the national language selected can satisfy the several points raised here, it will matter little whether the basic language is called Hindi or Hindustani. It may as well be called Bharati which is being suggested as an alternative name for Hindi, and this will have a great psychological value also, as toning down violent provincial reactions to Hindi.

#### 4. The Script

Allied to the question of the national language is the question of its script. If, as has been pointed out, the national language is inevitably going to take a Sanskritic turn, the most suited script for this is the Nagari only. The adoption of Persian script as a secondary one (as the Harijan of 28-11-48 suggests) is both unnecessary and unsuited. All the provincial languages are using their own scripts, among which the Persian script finds no place (except for Urdu in case of minorities in certain areas using Urdu). U.P. has adapted Hindi with Nagari script as the provincial language, and East Punjab has also discarded the Persian script. The Muslims (for whom the Persian script is meant) in U.P., C.P., Bihar, Bengal, Saurashtra, Rajasthan, the East Punjab, and Maharashtra, will be learning the Nagari script, or scripts that are very near to it. Then what is the necessity for a secondary script at the centre for the national language? It is quite useless and will be against all reason.

Apart from this, the Persian script is unsuited to represent Sanskrit or any other Indo-Aryan (except Persian and its dependent Urdu) or Indo-European languages. Those who know Sindhi and Punjabi realize how Sanskrit and English words are murdered due to the adoption of that script. It is to be

noted that in Turkey the Roman script was adopted in place of the age-old Arabic script (and Arabic words were removed to purify the Turkish language), and in the Indian Army Roman script was adopted for Urdu. And yet Nagari is more perfect than the Roman script as regards sound and arrangement of the alphabet. With slight variations of accents and shades of sounds it can represent, even in its present form, all the languages of the world. Add to this the difficulty of Persian script for printing, teleprinting, and typing. Based as it is on a different principle, for telegraphic and other communications, where symbols are to be used for alphabets, the two systems cannot be used except with the greatest disadvantage. The law-court proceedings and judgments, inter-provincial communications and governmental publications, university and other all-India institutions' publications, books of all-India importance and other material which are to be published in the national language—will all these be published in both the scripts? It is all only an impossible and fanciful proposition. There will certainly be numerous other difficulties, not yet visualized, which may crop up during the course of such an attempt. It is unprecedented for any country to adopt two scripts for a national language, and it is all the more difficult for a country of India's size and population. Its adoption will entail an unnecessary wastage of time, labour, money, and material, which can be saved by a few lakhs of people learning the Nagari script—after all about 45 letters—which at the most may take a month.

Sentiment and political considerations apart, even for Pakistan where more than 60% of its population speak and write the highly Sanskritic Bengali with a script akin to Nagari, and where in no province Urdu is the spoken language of the masses, from the various considerations referred to during the course of this article, Hindi in Nagari script would have been a suitable state language.



If this be the case with Pakistan, how much more suited then is it to India? If reason is to be thrown overboard and if the progress of the country is to be made difficult and delayed, then we can do no better than adopt Hindustani with two scripts as the national language.

In conclusion we would like to say that it is only the exclusive attachment of the Indian Muslim minority to an extra-territorial culture that vitiates the dispassionate consideration of the whole issue. It is a regrettable thing that, whereas Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, and other Muslim countries are taking pride in the ancient cultures of their lands and are trying to discover their roots therein, the Indian Muslims should be looking for inspiration outside, while they are heirs to a rich and hoary culture to which

thinking people from all parts of the world are looking for the solution of world problems and the reconstruction of humanity. It must be remembered that Indian culture has at no time suppressed even the smallest of religious minorities, if not positively helped them, in respect of their religion or culture, to which the Parsis, the Jews, and the Syrian Christians, who have lived and prospered here for nearly 2000 years, bear ample testimony. If the Indian Muslims do not awake in time, they will have to regret later on like Aurangzeb who admonished his teacher of the days of his youth for having wasted his time in teaching him Arabic instead of imparting to him a knowledge of the country and the people of his domicile, etc. (Quoted by Will Durant in *The Story of Civilization—Vol. I—The Orient*).

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## INDIA AND FRANCE

BY LOUIS RENOU

From the end of antiquity until modern times, France, like the whole of Europe, lived on certain ideas of India handed down by Greek and Roman writers. Gradually these ideas had resulted in a somewhat fanciful picture of India as the country of marvels, the originator of which had been Ctesias, Artaxerxes' Greek physician.

There was hardly any direct contact of importance until the sixteenth century. A French missionary of the thirteenth century, Jourdain de Severac, may be mentioned. In the seventeenth century we find less shadowy personalities, such as Tavernier, who paid five visits to India, Bernier, who studied customs and habits attentively, and others. Their profuse accounts do not lack references to the civilization and ancient monuments of the country, but none of them made any real contact with what, following the Greeks, we

call 'the wisdom of India'; none of them was in a position to see, even without reading them, religious or profane writings. In the Middle Ages, the Indian fables of the *Panchatantra* were extraordinarily widely known; in oral or written form they found their way into most Western literatures, but they were transmitted first of all in a Pahlavi and, later, in Arabic and Persian versions. The Sanskrit original was still unknown and when, in the seventeenth century, La Fontaine, our greatest fabulist, said that he had drawn many of his fables from those of the Indian sage Bidpai or Pilpay (possibly meaning Vidyapati?), it was in fact an Arabic intermediary, the *Book of Kalilah and Dimnah*, which provided his material; he could have had no suspicion of the existence of a Sanskrit collection.

In the eighteenth century, the mystery



of ancient India came very nearly to being pierced, and the good fortune of the discovery might well have fallen to a Frenchman. In France, the atmosphere was favourable for oriental research. Grouped around the *Encyclopaedia*, an active band of writers and philosophers had resolved to attack the Church's pretensions; they wanted to prove that other peoples had had 'revelations' (*shruti*, as you would say), like the Hebrew-Christian people and at an earlier date; and that those peoples had had religious experience at least as valid as that in which Christians claim a monopoly. The Church on its side sought to defend itself with the same weapons: it wished to prove that the oriental religions were not ancient and that, in any case, they were tainted with idolatry. In short, on both sides, India was, first and foremost, a pretext for religious controversy. Fortunately, the zealous missionaries from Europe sent to southern India were often occupied with more disinterested aims and took a more objective view of matters than that prompted by the general instructions given them. For instance, several French Jesuits of the so-called Maduran Mission in the eighteenth century had a fairly exact knowledge of Sanskrit. Father Pons wrote a Sanskrit grammar in Latin, translated the *Amarakosha*, and sent a considerable consignment of manuscripts to Paris; that was the first collection of Sanskrit writings established in a Western library. Father Coeurdoux was one of the first to recognize the kinship of Sanskrit with our classical languages. The discoveries of these obscure precursors, however, remained unpublished or lost in little-known publications; only a faint echo of them reached Europe; minds were not yet ready to receive the lessons of the East.

Chance, too, favoured a few travellers. The astronomer, Le Gentil, who visited Pondicherry, gained useful information about Indian astronomy from meeting a Tamil scholar, Maridas Poulle. This same scholar,

who had translated into French the *Bagavadam*, a Tamil adaptation of the *Bhagavata Purana*, was also in touch with an historian of Central Asia, De Guignes. Thanks to the passages in the *Bhagavata* dealing with the historical dynasties, the *surya-vamsa* and *soma-vamsa*, De Guignes was able to outline, for the first time, a picture of the ancient history of India. Admittedly, his picture was not free from serious mistakes, but it was difficult to do better with the only available resources. As my friend, Jean Filliozat, has shown, an important discovery, with which William Jones is generally credited, was due to De Guignes. As early as 1772, he recognized in the name of Chandragupta Maurya, (which the Tamil text reproduced in the form of Sandragouten), the Sandrakottos mentioned by the Greek historians, the man who had freed India from the dominion of Alexander's successors. As you know, that identification is the keystone of Indian chronology in the earliest periods.

Another traveller, Anquetil-Duperron, set out for India in 1754, at the age of twenty, alone and without an official mission. His object was to rediscover the *Vedas* and the sacred writings of ancient Persia. A firmer and more courageous determination than his has seldom been encountered, but he succeeded in only half of his task; he could not extract from the Brahmins the sacred language, the secret of which they guarded jealously; he could find no means of learning Sanskrit. Failing the *Vedas*, he was able to obtain the Persian translation of the *Upanishads*, of which, fifty years later, he was to publish a Latin version. For long, until the time of Deussen, that version was the fullest, if not the most accurate; as you know, it was through that translation that Schopenhauer came into contact with Indian thought, which decisively influenced his life and work. By that time, however, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, the study of Indian language and civilization had already had its



official beginning with the work of Wilkins and Jones.

In France, however, Anquetil's discoveries were overlooked or challenged. 'A prophet is without honour in his own country' as we say. The text of the *Zend-Avesta*, which he had brought back from the Parsee communities in Bombay, was considered to be a forgery. Furthermore, although the authentic manuscripts of the *Veda* had been deposited in the Royal Library (the present *Bibliothèque Nationale*) since 1731, the *Veda* had remained a dead letter in France as everywhere else in the West. Our great writer of the time, Voltaire, who was keenly interested in Indian religion and philosophy, doubted the existence of the *Veda* and was easily duped by a missionary of the time, the author of a fake entitled the *Ezour-Veidam*. He still believed that Sanskrit (*Sanskretan* or *Sanskroutan*, as it was then called by French writers) was a document.

At the time when the study of India began in Europe with Wilkins and Jones and, shortly afterwards, with Colebrooke, it was England which was to derive most advantage from the excellent work of these pioneers, particularly as France, following the unfortunate wars of the eighteenth century, lost almost all her political possessions in India. Nevertheless, from 1800 on, France tended to become the centre for Oriental study. The preparation of an inventory of the Indian manuscripts which were being accumulated in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* was begun. The *Asiatick Researches*, published in Calcutta, were immediately translated into French, as were the works of Wilkins and Jones. The Germans, Klaproth, Lassen (the founder of Indian studies in Germany), the Schlegel brothers, both in different ways students of India, and lastly Bopp, who was to originate the study of comparative grammar, all came to Paris. The *Asiatic Society* of Paris was to be the first established in Europe, some years before London's. The

The first chair of Sanskrit instituted in the West was that at the *College de France*; it was first held by Chezy, who learned Sanskrit by himself, evolving a grammar and a dictionary for his own use, and who was to be the first to translate and publish *Shakuntala* in France. The moving account, in the preface to his book, of his difficulties and his reward when he was at last able to decipher the glorious lyrical stanzas of the Indian drama, should be read. In spite of his merits, however, Chezy was only an amateur. A great philologist was needed to establish the study of Sanskrit on a firm footing. Such a philologist was found in Eugene Burnouf, who succeeded Chezy in 1832.

Burnouf's name is less known in France and the world at large than that of Champollion. The interpretation of the writings of ancient India is not so spectacular as the deciphering of hieroglyphics or cuneiform; it is not so definitely the speciality of one man or a small group of men. On reflection, however, it demands still wider and more varied gifts. Burnouf, who was also the true founder of Avestic philology, must be acknowledged as the originator of the scientific study of Buddhism. At the age of only twentytwo, in his *Essai sur le Pali*, written in collaboration with Lassen, he showed that Pali was a language derived from Sanskrit by a strict process of evolution. His *Introduction a l'histoire du buddhisme indien* is even more important; it may be said to have opened up for us the whole literature of the *Mahayana*; it is still useful for consultation today.

However, Burnouf did not entirely fulfil his destiny. He died at the age of fifty and left behind an extraordinary accumulation of unpublished writings as evidence of the fruitful fields into which his research and teaching were leading him. His classes on the *Veda* had gathered around his Chair the vital forces of contemporary Indian study—from France,



Regnier, who was to be the earliest editor of *Pratishakhyas*; and Barthelemy Saint Hilaire, who in 1855, was to describe the *Sankhya* in detail for the first time. Among Germans, it is enough to mention the names of Roth, Goldstucker, and Max Muller. If Burnouf had lived longer, and had not, from excessive modesty, stood aside in favour of certain of his colleagues or pupils, he would have had the distinction of publishing the *Rigveda*, and possibly of translating it, and would certainly have done it better than the worthy Langlois was able to do. His scrupulously careful philology did not prevent him from appreciating the human grandeur of his mission. In his inaugural lecture, he said: 'It is India, with her philosophy and myths, literature and laws which we shall study in her language. It is more than India, it is a page from the story of the origins of the world, of the primitive history of the human mind, which we shall try to decipher together.' The excellent *Histoire de la litterature hindoustanie* by Garcin de Tassy, also appeared about the same time as Burnouf's works; it is another book which marks an epoch in the literary history of India and, in many respects, is still unsurpassed.

It is difficult today, in our drab world, to imagine the atmosphere of enthusiasm and youthful ardour in which the development of Indian studies proceeded. The scientific interest in India coincided with the Romantic movement and was imbued with the enthusiasm as well as the naivety and excesses of that period. It is not enough to say that it coincided with Romanticism; it was an aspect of it. After the rediscovery of antiquity in the sixteenth century, there followed, as it were, a second Renaissance, the rediscovery of the East. It was thought that the mysterious beginnings of mankind had at last been reached; it was believed that the first halting utterances of the primitive mind were revealed in the earliest writings and earliest speculations. M. Raymond Schwab

rendered a real service to learning in our country in a work, combining charm and erudition, in which he outlines the early stages of Indian studies and the deep influence which they had on French writers in the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century.

It is often thought that oriental studies began in Germany, because it was there, we are told, that the ground was best prepared for them. Certainly, it is undeniable that the mystical and sentimental foundation of oriental studies and, in particular, of Indian studies, is more obvious in Germany than elsewhere. It was in Germany that the work of the English scholars immediately found the widest audience, in the first place with Herder and Goethe and later with the Schlegels, Humboldt, Schopenhauer and many others. Romanticism with an Indian bias or romantic Indian studies, as you prefer, awoke memorable echoes there. Although *Shakuntala* was translated into English by William Jones, the reputation of the drama in the West was possibly established less by that translation than by the famous lyric in which Goethe spoke of it; *Willst du die Blüthe des frühen, die Früchte des späteren Jahres....* But it is too much to hold, like Winternitz and others, on such a basis, that there is a permanent, inherent affinity between the Indians and the Germanic peoples. The well-known orientalist, Von Schroeder, wrote: 'The Indians are the romanticists of antiquity, the Germans are the romanticists of modern times.' And, as common features, he quoted pantheism, *Weltschmerz*, and the love of nature. But those are features found in all the countries touched by the Romantic movement, in France or Italy just as much as in Germany.

There are not a few writers in France, and often writers of considerable importance, who have expressed sentiments concerning India which reflect that spiritual communion to which the Germans lay claim. What must be admitted is that such French evidence is



usually rather later than that of the Germans, just as the Romantic movement in France developed later than in Germany. The testimony is none the less instructive. The three principal French poets of that period, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, and Alfred de Vigny, were interested in different aspects of Indian thought and disturbed by the unknown world that was opening up before them. In all three, the idea of an individual soul informing the universe, the aspiration towards an indefinable divinity, the urge to expression sometimes in the form of a hymn, and sometimes in the epic, are all features connecting them by instinct with ancient India. Hence their wonder when they made acquaintance with the great Sanskrit writings in translation. Several times Vigny describes his emotion, in his *Journal d'un poete* and in his *Letters*. In his *Cours familier de litterature*, Lamartine acknowledges *Shakuntala* as 'a masterpiece of both epic and dramatic poetry, combining in one work the essence of the pastoral charm of the Bible, of the pathos of Aeschylus and tenderness of Racine.' There is justification for the view that Lamartine's poems represented a sort of intuition of the vedic hymns, with which he could not then have been familiar—an exact comparison drawn by Jules Lemaitre, a critic of the end of the century. As for Victor Hugo, he is often full of respect, an even *Panic* respect, before the literary monuments of India, that race of gods and those vast epics, in which he sensed a universe fashioned in his proportions, or rather to his disproportionate immensity. One of the poems of the *Legend of the Ages*, called *Supremacy*, is a free development of the narrative portion of the *Kena Upanishad*. In it we see the gods urging their own best Vayu, Agni, and Indra, to learn the nature of the mysterious power of the *Brahma*. They try, and the *Brahma* tests each in turn, showing them a blade of grass and challenging them to destroy it. The following is the passage relating to Agni in the simple terms

of the Sanskrit original: *tad abhyadravat/tam/abhyavadatko 'sity/agnir va aham asmity abravit/jataveda va aham asmiti/tasmims tvayi kim viryam ity/apidam sarvam daheyam yad idam prithivyam iti/tasmai trinam nidadhau/etad daheti/tad upapreyaya sarvajavena/tan na shashaka dagdhum...* This is what the passage becomes in Hugo's colourful and somewhat grandiloquent version: Le dieu rouge, Agni, que l'eau redoute, Et devant qui medite a genoux le bouddha, Alla vers la clarte sereine et demanda:—Qu'es-tu clarte?—Qu'es-tu toi-meme? lue ditelle. —Le dieu du Feu. —Quelle est ta puissance? —Elle est telle Que, si je veus, je puis bruler le noirci Les mondes, les soleils et tout. —Brule ceci, Dit la clarte, montrant au dieu le brin de paille. Alors, comme un belier defence une muraille Agni, frappant du pied, fit jaillir de partout La flamme formidable, et, fauve, ardent, debout, Crachant des jet de lave entre ses dents de braise, fit sur l'humble crouler une fournaise; Un soufflement de forge emplit le firmament;<sup>1</sup>

The great historian of the Romantic period, Michelet, no less poetical than these poets, in 1863 came upon the *Ramayana* in Fauche's mediocre translation. In this connexion he wrote, in his fine book *La Bible de l'humanite*: 'That year will always remain a dear and cherished memory; it was the first time I had the opportunity to read the great sacred poem of India, the divine *Ramayana*. If

<sup>1</sup> The red god Agni, the dreaded of water, before whom Buddha, kneeling, meditates, approached the serene radiance and asked 'What art thou, radiance?' 'What art thou?' was the reply. 'The God of Fire.' 'What power is thine?' 'It is such that, if I will, I can burn the sky to blackness, burn worlds, and suns, burn all.' 'Burn this' said the radiance, showing the god a wisp of straw. Then, as a ram will batter down a wall, Agni beat his foot and all around struck forth the dreadful flame; he stood in glowing tawny light, spewing through burning teeth great lava streams, and poured a furnace flame upon the puny straw; the heavens were filled with a great forge's roar.



anyone has lost the freshness of emotion, let him revive it in the *Ramayana*, let him drink a long draught of life and youth from that deep chalice.' Again, in his book on *La femme*, with all its brilliant immaturities, Michelet advises a young woman who has just learned the joys of love to have *Shakuntala* read to her (there is no doubt that that play was held in high esteem). 'I leave her fortunate lover the delight of reciting *Shakuntala* to her in some flowery bower' he says, and he thinks it possible to sum up the essence of Indian thought, the *satyasya satyam*, in a short phrase, an *upanishad*: 'The Veda of Vedas, the secret of India is this—man is the eldest of the gods; the word created the world.'

Blzac, the great novelist of the same period, introducing one of his favourite characters, Louis Lambert, in the novel of the same name, makes him say this: 'It is impossible to call in doubt the fact that the Asiatic scriptures were anterior to our Holy Scriptures. Anthropogony drawn from the Bible is only the genealogy of one swarm from the human hive which found a resting place between the mountains of the Himalayas and those of the Caucasus. The sight of the swift regeneration of the earth, the miraculous power of the sun, first witnessed by the Hindus, suggested to them the gracious conceptions of happy love, fire worship, and the infinite personifications of reproductive forces. Those magnificent images are not found in the writings of the Hebrews.' Victor Cousin, a philosopher who was widely celebrated at the time, made it his duty to assist the dissemination of Indian philosophy so far as he could; and the famous physicist, Ampere, wrote to Hugo: 'Indian philosophy will occupy the attention of our century and those following, as much as Greek philosophy occupied the sixteenth century.'

This enthusiasm, which naturally was not free from misunderstandings and ingenuousness, was to endure for most of the nineteenth

century, taking the most varied forms. At the beginning of the century it was mystical with Ballanche, who, in his *Essai sur les institutions sociales*, demanded that Latin should be replaced in primary education by the oriental languages. In his *Genie des religions* Edgar Quinet, half-historian half-mystic, wrote: 'When human revolutions first began, India stood more expressly than any other country for what may be called a declaration of the Rights of the Being. That divine Individuality, and its community with infinity, is obviously the foundation and the source of all life and all history.' In his *Discours sur les revolutions de la surface du globe*, the naturalist, Cuvier, uses more scientific terms in his attempt to demonstrate the support found in the ancient writings of India for hypotheses regarding the nature of primitive man and the antiquity of human habits. Later on, Gobineau made a scientific claim when, in his *Essai sur l'inegalite des races humaines*, he attempted to restore the concept of a pure Aryan race, for which purpose he naturally employed the testimony of the Indians of the vedic age. We know only too well what tragic impetus Gobineau's doctrines gave to German racialism.

To understand the causes of that enthusiasm, it is first of all necessary to remember that in a short space of time, scarcely more than a few decades, a series of most important Sanskrit works were introduced into France in translations: firstly, there was the complete *Rigveda* translated by Langlois (completed only very shortly after the beginning of Wilson's translation); the *Ramayana* translated by Fauche; most of the *Mahabharata*, also translated by Fauche, who was likewise responsible for the whole of the *Kalidasa* and several other literary texts; the *Laws of Manu* translated by Loiseleur-Deslongchamps, not to mention the *Saddharmapundarika* and the *Bhagavata Purana* translated by Burnouf. With the exception of the three last mentioned, these translations are very indifferent; they



are what used to be called, like certain ladies, 'pretty but unfaithful'. With all their faults, however, they had a stimulating influence and, taken together, they form a much more substantial body than the contributions added by later generations.

At that time there was constant contact between writers, artists, and men of science. Learning had not yet assumed that sometimes frightening aspect which today too often discourages the non-specialist. Any cultivated reader could profitably follow the work of scientists. The Duc d'Orleans, Louis Philippe, later to be king of France, was the President of the *Societe Asiatique* and gave lectures on the value of oriental studies. In the literary salons the best brains met; we may mention Mme Cuvier's salon, frequented by Burnouf, and that of Mary Clarke, the wife of Jules Mohl, who, for years, was to be the Secretary of the *Societe Asiatique*. Rammohun Roy's visit to Paris, in 1832, roused intense sympathetic curiosity.

Gradually, however, excitement subsided. The advances of science made the public distrustful. France's growing disquiet at the German threat unjustly created a certain distaste for the Orient, of which Germany had been the herald.

However, the decline in enthusiasm was offset by a truer understanding. Towards the end of the century, the religious historian, Renan, reviewed calmly and justly the progress made over a long period. He defended the primacy of the Bible and affirmed that oriental literature could be appreciated only by scholars; he criticized the alleged resemblances between the legend of Buddha and the life of Jesus. In another passage, however (perhaps a remnant of Romanticism), recalling Burnouf's teaching—for Renan too had been one of his pupils—he said of the writings of ancient India: 'There is not one of those works in which I have not found more philosophic elements than in all the

writings of Descartes and his school.'

One poet carries on from another. Lecomte de Lisle, a belated Romantic, was to compose a vedic prayer for the dead and a poem to Surya. It was a survival of Lamartine, inspired not so much by deep feeling as by a taste for the exotic. Exoticism, continually nourished by travellers' tales and popular literature, now tended to take the place in writers of the concern with spiritual things which had inspired the Romantics. Mallarme, a poet of the end of the century, and highly reputed, wrote Indian fables in which he adapted in his own way stories which had already been translated from Sanskrit into French; for instance, he gave an abbreviated version of the story of *Nala and Damayanti*, adorned with precious conceits and embellishments of style to give it what he believed to be an oriental atmosphere.

Pierre Loti, another descendant of Romanticism, was to write travel books on India under the title of *L'Inde sans les Anglais*. There is a fair proportion of the morbidly picturesque in that work, but there is also, here and there, a note which may be sincere, as when he says: 'It is to India, the cradle of human thought and prayer, that I go to ask peace from the guardians of Aryan thought; I beg them to give me belief in an indefinite survival of the soul.' Another poet Jean Lahor, who was steeped in Indian pessimism and, as it were, intoxicated by the idea of *nirvana* wrote an *Histoire de la litterature hindoue* with, it must be admitted, more lyrical feeling than competence. More recently, another poet, Maurice Magre, like many others, has fallen under the spell of Buddhism spiced with an admixture of theosophy. More impressive is the admiration inspired in Rodin by the discovery of the temples of pre-Muslim India.\*

(To be continued)

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# SHELLEY AND VEDANTA

BY P. K. ANANTANARAYAN

The very title of this essay is likely to cause a shock of surprise to the mind of the general reader. But to the student of English literature, and especially to those few who take a special interest in Shelley's poetry, which is indissolubly linked up with his life and character, the subject offers a tempting and fertile field of study and investigation, yielding both pleasure and profit. And as the fruit of my long and devoted labours, it shall be my endeavour to show that there is remarkable resemblance between Vedanta and the philosophy which underlies the poetry of Shelley.

There is a common belief among Englishmen, and even among some continental writers, that Shelley was an atheist. The fact that he wrote and distributed a pamphlet on *The Necessity of Atheism* during his student life, for which he was expelled from the University, lends colour to such a notion. It is also true his religious faith passed through three progressive stages, from materialism to nihilism and finally to Platonism. He had a bitter hatred of superstition and a gloomy religion, which had been used as an instrument of oppression by kings and priests for many centuries in Europe and America. We can definitely state that Shelley believed in a creed, which seemed to have no God because it was all God; and he might be called an agnostic only in the sense that 'he proclaimed the impossibility of solving the insoluble and knowing the unknowable.'

It is a fact that he was not a believer in conventional Christianity, as it is preached and practised by its adherents. He was convinced of the need for a religion of humanity, i.e. a religion which will elevate and ennoble humanity, and which, unlike Christianity, should permeate and regulate the whole

organization of man's life. Realizing that organized religion has tended to become a source of tyranny, because it insists upon unquestioning belief in certain set doctrines and dogmas, he states, 'A truly divine religion might yet be established, if charity were really made the principle, instead of faith.' In spite of his lack of faith in Christianity, he had a sincere admiration for the person and character of Jesus and appreciated the true significance of his high ethical teachings. As Leigh Hunt remarks, 'His want of faith in the letter, and his exceeding faith in the spirit of Christianity, formed a comment one on the other'.

Shelley's life and character equally reveal that he was a truly spiritual soul. All through his life felt an insatiable craving after the highest ideals, moral and spiritual. His soul was compact of human faith and love, and pure and intense aspiration marks the first note of his authentic poetry. He was essentially a child at heart and retained the simplicity and innocence of childhood to the last, even while his genius expanded and matured. With him, genuine poet that he was, a religion of Beauty was a passion and a power. Though his poetry may not sing directly of God or religion, it gives glory to God by singing of Love, Beauty, and Truth.

Another fact about Shelley is that he was a rebel and a revolutionary in his behaviour and actions. The French Revolution shook his mind and soul to its very depths. His ethical principles were fundamentally different from those of contemporary society. He waged an incessant fight with governments, priests, and religion, for he felt convinced that the tyranny exercised by the State, Church, and society was mainly responsible for keeping man from growth into perfect happiness, and



he paid a severe penalty for it. Expelled from the University, turned out of an unsympathetic home, ostracized and persecuted by the society, Shelley, like the fiery Byron, had to flee from England and spend the last years of his too brief life as an exile in Italy. Being a violent reformer, he challenged the old order and sought to overthrow established institutions and traditions and build up a new world of universal happiness, which was his goal. Like his *Skylark*, he soared from society into a heaven far remote, the ideal realm of his fancy and imagination.

'Shelley is a unique personality, a poet of poets, a supreme idealist, a child of dreams, a lover of nature and an enthusiast of humanity.' Idealism is the key to his character and furnishes an explanation of his revolutionary spirit and the secret of his life and inspiration of his poetic genius. His imagination loved to hover in an ethereal sphere, in a world of dreams, yet it was not without actual contact with life. His moral nature was highly developed and his perception of right and wrong was very acute. A man passionate for truth, seized with a kind of divine madness, he was obedient to the right as he conceived it and was ready to sacrifice everything to maintain it. Love was the root and basis of his nature, which became an all-embracing devotion to his fellowmen. Two fixed principles moulded his life and actions: a strong, irrepressible love of liberty and an equally ardent love of toleration of all opinions, especially religious opinions. 'In fact he was the greatest, purest, bravest, and most spiritual being, and most lovable of men.' And it is highly tragic to reflect that while his genius was becoming gradually riper, wiser, and truer to his highest instincts, his 'miracle of thirty years' should have been cut off by a cruel fate.

Just as Shelley's character and ideals find full expression in his poems, so also there is perfect fusion of poetry and philosophy in his works. He is a born poet-philosopher, and

philosophy is more inextricably blended with his poetry than in the case of Wordsworth, Browning, or Tennyson. He gave himself up to inspiration and emotion so that his poetry might be the language of his soul. Though there may be no reasoned system on the theory of human life and its problems, his metaphysic is not only a clear expression of his intense poetic vision but supplements the principles of his democratic creed. The Poet Shelley was a true preacher of the religion of Heavenly Beauty, and 'he discovered through the Lamp of Beauty the Light of God.' The permanent interest and increasing influence of his poetry is mainly due to the philosophy interwoven into it. Shelley's wide intellectual interest and metaphysical interpretations of Love and Beauty, living and working in the universe, make a strong appeal to serious and reflective minds and to lovers of great poetry.

Shelley was by nature of a speculative bent of mind, and his keen philosophic grasp was stimulated by the study of Plato and Spinoza. We learn from his biography that he was not a theoretical armchair philosopher but that his soul was impelled by a burning impulse to realize the Infinite, and that his realization of truth in moods of ecstasy took him out of the bounds of the flesh into the regions of the Beyond. His speculations and intuitions somehow led him in the same direction as the oriental mystics. In his view, 'Religion is the perception of the relations in which we stand to the Principle of the Universe.' His religion was transcendental rather than positive, and he had abiding faith in the reality of a world of spirit behind the world of sense. Again, according to Shelley, 'Poets are not only legislators and inventors of the arts of life but teachers who bring men into close touch with truths expressed in religion, and poetry redeems from decay the visitations of Divinity in Man.' Is it any wonder, then, that Shelley, holding such revolutionary views on poetry and religion, should become the medium through whom



the spirit of the East manifested itself to the materialistic West in the early years of the 19th century? In this article I shall attempt to show, chiefly by means of quotations from Shelley's poetry, how there is a striking similarity between the teachings of Vedanta, especially as expounded by the Advaitic school, and the moral and spiritual ideas and reflections which inspired this young poet and prophet.

### I. A PICTURE OF THE UNIVERSE

The human race, from primitive man to the most civilized and advanced peoples, has always been struck by the grandeur and mystery of the universe. The external world, with its boundless expanse in space, is beautiful and grand, sublime and awe-inspiring. What are we? What is this Universe and how does it work? Such questions have been asked by mankind from its very infancy.

The limitless range and the immense proportions of the Universe, presided over by the Supreme Being, is described by Shelley in these lines:

'Look on that which cannot change—  
the One,  
The unborn and the undying; Earth  
and Ocean,  
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem  
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,  
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos  
With all its cressets of immortal fire' etc.  
—(*Hellas*)

And again,

'Spirit of Nature! here  
In this interminable wilderness  
Of worlds, at whose immensity  
Even soaring fancy staggers,  
Here is thy fitting temple!'—(*Daemon I*)

### II. THE CONCEPTION OF GOD

It has already been remarked that Shelley was not an atheist. In the note to one of his poems he clearly states, 'The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being is spoken against, and not the Supreme Being itself.' Though the

word 'God' is very rarely used by him in his poems, we often meet with expressions like 'Universal Soul' and 'Universal Mind' 'Spirit of Nature,' and 'Unseen Power,' and 'Awful Loveliness.' Believing in the moral efficacy of true faith, he speaks of 'the rites of a religion sweet whose God was in her heart and brain.'

Shelley's conception of God approximates to the vedantic ideal, especially of the Advaitic doctrine of *Brahman*, e.g. in *Adonais*, he refers to the eternal and unchanging nature of the Supreme Being as contrasted with the fleeting and evanescent character of material objects in the following manner:

'The One remains, the many change  
and pass,  
Heaven's light for ever shines, Earth's  
shadows fly.'

The immanence and omnipresence of God in Nature is brought out in this statement:

'Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel  
everywhere,  
From Heaven and Earth, and all that in  
them are,  
Veiled art thou, like a... star.'

—(*Zucca III. 8*).

Again, in another context, which relates to the intimate relation that subsists between the omnipotent nature of God and the perishable material universe, in which it moves and works, he speaks of:

'That Power

Which wields the world with never-  
wearied love,  
Sustains it from beneath and kindles  
it above.'

The divine nature of the soul of man, and its being a manifestation of the Supreme Being, is referred to in the statement:

'That Power which is the glass  
Wherein man his nature sees.'

In addition to his faith in the Absolute, both transcendent and immanent, he speaks also of the 'Mother of this unfathomable world', the Mother Spirit which works in the



world to protect and guide and elevate the mind for its own regeneration. This attitude is quite alien to the spirit of the Christian religion, which believes only in the Fatherhood of God. The idea that God is Eternal, that nature and the souls become manifested and change, but God remains the same unchangeable Being, often occurs in his poems. In fact, we repeatedly hear the echo of the truth that God is the cause, the universe is the effect, or it is God Himself.

### III. THE LIFE OF NATURE

Compared with other English poets, who are also great lovers of Nature, Shelley is the only one who regarded external Nature as permeated and interpenetrated by a spiritual life which animated all things, and natural objects as symbols of divine truth. According to the vedantic doctrine, the various forms of cosmic energy, like matter and force, thought and intelligence, are all projection or manifestation of the Cosmic Intelligence or Supreme Lord.

It was a cardinal point of Shelley's faith that, vast and wonderful as the material universe is, it borrows its greatness and glory from what is spiritual. The unity underlying Nature is expressed in his address, 'Earth, Ocean, Air, beloved brotherhood.' In one poem he speaks of the earth as a Mother, every pore of her granite mass is interpenetrated with love. The idea that the Spirit of God permeates and vitalizes all varieties of natural objects finds glowing expression in *Zucca V*.

'In winds, and trees, and streams, and  
all things common,  
In music and the sweet unconscious tone  
Of animals, and voices which are human. . .

I the most  
Adore Thee present or lament Thee lost.'  
In another picturesque stanza Shelley boldly declares his belief in a world-soul in a manner which might shock the average Western reader, but which is in perfect consonance with the vedantic teaching, regarding Brahman :

'Yet not the lightest leaf  
That quivers to the passing breeze  
Is less instinct with Thee,—  
Yet not the meanest worm,  
That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead  
Less shares Thy eternal breath.'

—(*Daemon I. 182*)

It was a part of his innate faith that in the lowest worm as well as the highest human beings the same divine nature is present, that the same divinity animates everything. Western critics might call it pantheism, but it is part and parcel of the teachings of Vedanta. In his immortal elegy *Adonais*, which mourns the premature death of his brother poet Keats, he further elaborates the idea of how the Universal Intelligence, in its various aspects, moulds the active life of all beings and manifests itself in different degrees through them :

'That Light whose smile kindles the  
Universe,  
That Beauty in which all things work  
and move,  
That Benediction which the eclipsing curse  
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining  
Love,  
Which through the web of being blindly  
wove  
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,  
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of  
The fire for which all thirst.'

According to vedantic cosmology, 'nothing can be created out of nothing, everything exists through eternity; the whole evolution beginning with the lowest manifestation of life reaching up to the highest, the most perfect man, must have been the involution of something else; that Universal Intelligence must be the Lord of Creation.' Shelley, too, believed in a similar Theory of Evolution, in which the One Spirit, in the exercise of its formative and animating function, constitutes the life of Nature from the lowest to the highest form and gradually leads to their progress and the working out of their destiny :







'One Mind.' The same idea of the Unity of Man in his spiritual essence is brought out in the lines:

'Man, one harmonious Soul of many a soul,  
Whose nature is its own divine control,  
Where all things flow to all, as rivers to  
the sea.'—(*Prometheus IV*)

Having considered the nature of the Soul, we shall now devote some thought to its relation to God, as understood by Shelley and propounded in some passages in *Adonais*. He believed in a Universal Soul, in which and from which all individual souls are born, and to which they are gathered up at death. The Soul is the sustainer of the Universe visiting all things with refreshment and joy, being itself the principle of life in all things. Two vedantic similes are commonly employed to illustrate this relationship. Just as the waves of the sea, which are of the same substance as the ocean, rise from the surface and after a brief existence, merge in the sea again; and just as the sparks coming out of the fire shine for a moment and vanish out of sight; so also the individual *Atman* emerges from the *Paramatman*, and after a brief mundane existence, goes back to the original Fountain of Life.

In *Adonais*, while speaking of the soul of Keats after his death, we are told that:

'The pure spirit shall flow  
Back to burning fountain whence it came;'

and

'His presence is felt wherever that Power  
may move  
Which has withdrawn his being to its own.'

Another important doctrine, about which Shelley held very strong views, is the Immortality of the Soul. That the soul is immortal, having neither beginning nor end is emphatically stated in the *Bhagavad Gita*; 'Never did I not exist, nor you, nor will any of us cease to be.' In one of his ethical essays the poet argues that 'the inextinguishable thirst for immortality is itself a stronger argument that eternity is the inheritance of

every thinking being.' He believed that a human soul is a portion of the Universal Soul, though it is subjected during its connection with the body to all the illusions and dreams of sense. 'But the Nature of *Brahman* is as little changed by these limitations as is the clearness of the crystal by the colours which it reflects, or as is the sun by the moving reflections of itself in the water.' After the death of the body, it continues to be a portion of the Universal Soul, liberated from those illusions, and subsisting in some condition, either of personal consciousness or of absorption. We have already referred to the immortality of Keats' spirit as a vital immaterial essence surviving the death of the body. In this respect Shelley seems to waver between two standpoints, in one of which the spirit is said, 'to flow back to the burning fountain whence it came.' In another stanza we are told that when the soul of Keats goes to heaven, it is warmly welcomed by the spirits of some other young poets, 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown!' This shows that the departed soul is regarded as still a living spiritual personality sharing the heavenly life with the other illustrious dead. Thus we conclude that according to Shelley's firm faith, the human soul, being eternal, is in its very nature perfect and man has to regain that original purity. Though its lustre may be somewhat dimmed during its passage through earthly life, its pristine purity is to be regained by the knowledge of God, i.e. finally realizing in his soul that he is God Himself.

#### V. THE QUESTION OF LIFE AND DEATH

The question of Life and Death has intrigued the mind of man ever since the dawn of civilization, and our vedic sages and the *rishis* of the *Upanishads* have devoted their best thoughts to probe this secret and unravel this mystery. Like those inquiring souls, Shelley also had in an unequalled measure the insatiable craving after the highest truth. Many of the statements made by him on



different occasions clearly demonstrate that this problem also agitated his mind. In answer to the query. 'What will befall this inestimable spirit when we appear to die?' he answered, 'I am content to see no farther than Plato and Bacon. My mind is tranquil; I have no fears and some hopes. In our present gross material state our faculties are clouded; when Death removes our clay coverings, the mystery will be solved.' The idea of 'death as a revealer' was constantly present before his mind. His remark on another occasion: 'We know nothing; we have no evidence; we cannot express our inmost thoughts; they are incomprehensible even to ourselves,' emphasizes not only the innate difficulty of the problem but his humility and realization of the shortcomings of our intellect.

In stating that 'he has awakened from the dream of life,' he explicitly hints that life is no more than a dream, and when a man dies, he is awakened from the dream, and he is no longer asleep but really awake. In another context he speaks of life as a 'painted veil', thereby bringing out the unreality of earthly existence, which obscures and disguises the immortal spirit; and it is only when the veil is lifted at death we are left face to face with the real scene. Man has a spirit within him that is at enmity with nothingness and dissolution. Though the body may perish, 'for Love, Beauty and delight, there is no death nor change.' With the Platonists Shelley held the view that death is merely the separation of soul and body; the body hinders thought, and the mind attains to truth only by retiring into itself, and overcoming worldly desires. We should therefore welcome the release of the soul.

What is Shelley's idea of Death? Did

he believe in the survival of the soul after death? We have already referred to the poet's firm faith in the immortality of the soul. To bring out the comparison that he institutes between the states of death and sleep, here are a few quotations:

'How wonderful is Death,  
Death and his brother Sleep!'

—(*Daemon I.*)

Again,

'Death is the veil which those who live  
call life,  
They sleep, and it is lifted.'

—(*Prometheus III*)

In answer to the question, 'Cease they to love and move, and breathe and speak, who die?' in the concluding portion of *The Sensitive Plant*, we read:

'It is a modest creed, and yet  
Pleasant if one considers it,  
To own that death itself must be,  
Like all the rest a mockery.'

The passages quoted establish the fact that for Shelley the soul is not material, having neither form nor shape, and it is omnipresent. The mind is limited and cannot go beyond it. What we know as Time, Space, and Causation are in the mind; and as the soul is beyond these three factors, it is free and infinite. There is no question of birth and death as regards the soul. In a well-known passage in *Adonais*, he compares human life to the prismatic hues thrown on a pavement from a dome of stained glass until it is broken up into fragments by death. At the same time, he asserts that the pristine purity and divinity of the soul is dimmed only temporarily during its connection with the physical frame and that it will regain its 'white radiance' on its deliverance from the bondage of the flesh.

(*To be continued*)



# NOTES AND COMMENTS

## TO OUR READERS

This issue begins with more *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* written to Miss Josephine MacLeod. . . .

The Editorial entitled *The Western Question* is the first of a series on the subject dealing with the problem of national integration in the wide perspective of our past as well as that of the human situation in general.

## REFLECTIONS ON THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE QUESTION

In his address at the special convocation of the Osmania University of Hyderabad on 26 December 1948, Pandit Nehru, our Prime Minister, is reported by the *Hindustan Times* of 28 December 1948 to have referred to the national language controversy in the country in the following way :

'People who know nothing about the language' he observed, 'are exciting controversy over this issue. People talk about it as if a national language can be laid down by the State. In the political arena, it is impossible to consider the question dispassionately. Those who are advocating the use of unalloyed Hindi or Urdu words are doing so out of sheer ignorance. A language must be vigorous, and must grow. It must absorb as many words as it can take. For a language to become rich, its door must be kept wide open.

'The national language should be the language spoken by the masses. Court language or the language in high society had beauty but no vigour of life. We must have the language spoken by the largest number of people.'

Pandit Nehru instanced the case of English and said the way that language grew was worthy of notice. English today was one of the most powerful languages of the world. It might not be as graceful as many other languages, but, it had some vigour. The reason for this vigour was that there had been progressive assimilation by the language which was now becoming more and more American. Americanism or Australianism or Canadianism put a great deal of vigour in the English language.

Pandit Nehru believed that several thousands of new words were being added to English every year, many of them technical. Therefore to argue about Urdu and Hindi and think in terms of static condition was not correct. Any language that shut its doors and refused assimilation was indicating a sure sign of deterioration.

The mind of India, Pandit Nehru said, must be open, if the country desired to remain a great nation and anybody who wanted to limit the language was only trying to kill it.

'A language becomes an attractive vehicle of thought when it combines crudities of the common man which make it more dynamic in expression ; Kamal Pasha gave Turkey a language after incorporating in it 10,000 words culled from Turkish villages. The national language will emerge from the masses and not from classes.'

The above report sets up in our mind a train of thoughts, part of which we are putting into print, for the language question is of vital importance and requires to be considered, above all, in a perspective wider than the political. We shall touch on points which are cognate and which will help to put the question in such a perspective.

Politics, in fact, is a question of balancing conflicting social forces ; it is an expression of a struggle for power of different groups or peoples in a society. It generally works by a series of compromises. And for this reason as Panditji says, politics is no arena where the language question can be justly solved. Nor for the matter of that is politics competent to deal with any question of culture. Panditji has set right limits to politics, and it will be well if politicians remember this. However. . . .

We are not aware of any important person who has pleaded for the adoption of a national language that is stabilized and fixed for eternity. On the contrary it is obvious to all who have given any thought to the matter that the proposed language will be no more than a tender sapling which will proliferate by drawing nourishment freely and abundantly from all possible sources. It is also clearly and widely recognized that the language must be clear and simple, yet precise and dignified, and one that can be easily learnt by the vast masses of the Indian people. The start, therefore, has to be made with a language that is most widely spoken and



understood and which reflects the common mentality of our people and the universal spirit of our culture. In short it must be our own and be closest to all the provincial languages. The cultural background of India extending for thousands of years and giving unity to our people cannot be shaken off by political dusters.

It is further a truism to say that languages have their own laws of growth and do not obey the fiat of political powers. Politics does not create a language, nor can sustain one in the long run against the real forces of culture and truth. Yet, there are occasions when the State feels compelled to lay down a language for its purposes. For example, the English language was imposed upon India by the British. We took it up. Of its benefits there is no doubt; the Western science and technique and intellectual attainments have come to us *via* English, though this was hardly the object of its introduction. But the drawbacks and disasters which such a course has inevitably entailed are not so apparent. Science and technique could have come quicker and to a wider people through an Indian language. This course was pleaded in Bengal when decision for the medium of higher instruction in the country was taken. But it was then turned down, for many regarded the idea as preposterous. But the Bengali language developed in spite of it and gained world-wide recognition through Tagore.

Similarly Persian was thrust upon parts of India under Muslim rule. The people had to accept it. In fact they came to wield it better than the ruling class and added fresh beauty, dignity, and depth to an alien tongue from their own spiritual resources. Panditji himself states in the end that Kamal Pasha, backed by military and political power, laid down the language of New Turkey. And what the Dictator did is significant. He threw overboard the antiquated and complicated Arabic alphabet and Arabic words—

the latter as much as possible. The Ataturk liberated the Turks from what he considered the bondage of an alien culture. He felt that the Turks would not grow into a nation in the Western political, or if you like, modern, sense of the term unless his people completely broke away from the religious and cultural tradition of Islam. The example of Kamal cited by Panditji suggests to us conclusions which are perhaps antithetical to those intended by him. If the Turks, inspired by nationalism, gave up a thing that did not originally belong to them as a people, but which they themselves had continued to accept and revere for centuries (in fact the Turks for hundreds of years formed the vanguard of militant Islam battering down the ramparts of other civilizations in distant corners of Asia and Europe), why cannot others, similarly and with far more weighty reasons, jettison everything that does not really belong to their soil but has been imposed upon them by naked force? Yet, nobody has even suggested this.

The root idea of Kamal was national. Imposition is not assimilation, nor is imitation creative. We have to stand on our legs before we can open our arms wide to all whom we want to abandon themselves to our embrace. It will be the blackest of shames for Indians who have enough in their soil and air to give nourishment to the plant of Indian national language to cling to redundant alien elements. We need, however, brave politics—politics that will base itself on the essential and true factors of life and boldly challenge prejudice and superstition from whatever quarters they may raise their heads.

Or take the very case of Hyderabad. Here, in a country where nearly the entire population speaks Telugu, Kanarese, Marathi, and Tamil, the State thrust upon educational and governmental institutions a bombastic *Urdu* which is as unfamiliar to the people as English. We do not know if the point was seen or consciously intended, or that it went



home to those responsible for this enormity.

We cannot write at great length on the subject here; nor is it necessary, for we believe abundant reasons are already available for making the only rational decision. Still certain things require to be brought to the fore. Very soon the existing political authority will be required to make a decision, for the matter cannot brook delay. The State requires a language of its own. The decision has to be made in accordance with the desires of the people and the needs of the country, and it must also be in consonance with the real dynamic factors of history and culture. Political considerations of an ephemeral nature must not be thrown into the scale. Politics is a flotsam on the eddying surface of the stream of life. It does not make a nation. It is the reflection of the deeper and slower and impalpable and imponderable tides that make history. A politics which cuts itself adrift from its cultural soil becomes self-sufficient and destructive of society. Politics must always look to a conception superior to it in order that it may not degenerate into a pursuit of power or self-aggrandizement. A world in which politics dictates attitude towards life, a world where *danda* lays down *dharma*, has indeed sunk low and seems near its end.....

We can again make a fetish of simplicity. The national language will be a State language and will not replace the provincial tongues or literatures. The State language will be required—in the first instance for administrative, legal, and technical needs. Precision will be a great consideration, and this cannot often be found in popular words. We shall have to introduce thousands of new words with definite and unambiguous meanings to answer the technical needs of the State language. At first, obviously enough, they will be unfamiliar to nearly all of us. But in a short time they will become well known and will be suitably shaped and changed by the dynamic factors of development. We cannot

have, right from the start a State language that will be level with the understanding of the common man. It may even be a little unfamiliar to fairly educated persons also. It cannot be helped. To ask for anything else is to ask for the impossible.

The State language will replace English gradually. How many Indians are there who can speak and write in English with ease? How widely is it known? But the State language, if it be Sanskritic, will be, even at its start, better understood by more Indians. And they will use it to far better effect. But we must also say that it will be extremely harmful to give up English altogether and at once for sentimental reasons alone, as far as we can see English will require to be studied by many in order to keep the windows of our mind open to fresh ideas from the West.

We shall have a better understanding of the problem if we look at it in another light. The example of Bengali is full of meaning. Bengali, as every educated person may know, is the most elegant, developed, and vigorous of all the provincial languages of India. It has been gradually fashioned into the picturesque and graceful, yet popular, medium of expression that it is today by an illustrious line of writers who drew almost exclusively from Sanskrit. The writers knew both Sanskrit and English, for the language in its present shape began its career after the coming of the British. They found that they could express any idea, eastern or western, in Bengali with the help of words drawn from Sanskrit. This link with Sanskrit has made the Bengali language great, and it further has been one of the main reasons why the national idea in our time first found vigorous expression through Bengali. In spite of political disadvantages it has grown naturally into a simple language from what might have been regarded then as an artificial and pedantic form. Its influence on the other provincial languages of India is deep and has to be traced to its connection with Sanskrit. This



fact made it easy for the other Indian writers to understand its style or be influenced by it. They found in it a cultural climate suitable for the growth of their own literature. Bengali has shown the way. It has proved beyond all doubt and disputation that Sanskrit can easily be shaped into one of the most elegant, dynamic, and expressive languages of the world. If this fact has been demonstrated under adverse political and economic conditions, in spite of agitation, poverty, and malnutrition, can we have any doubt as to the future of Sanskritic languages in a free and prosperous India? To judge the language question aright a perspective is essential.

Consider again this matter. The two national songs of India have been given by Bengal. Why? Because Bengal got her ideas and words from Sanskrit. And it is this reason why *Vande Mataram* and *Janagana* find responses in Indian hearts in East or West, South or North. The words touch the deep chords of our life which remain and will remain unstruck otherwise. They touch off something in your blood which begins forthwith to rush madly through your veins. Can you say the same thing about the song that sings of *Jehan, bulbul, and gulistan*? They are alien and take you to a very different atmosphere—may be pleasant but light and without strength or vigour. They touch other chords that lie on the surface of life. Compared to what these Sanskrit songs give us, it is superficial. They are as different from one another as the majestic and sonorous drum-beat is from the tinkling of brass cymbals. We do not say, however, that brass cymbals have no place in the national music.

In a democracy we have to humour the masses, and precisely by doing this we can do them incalculable mischief. When we talk of popular things, do we really mean that everything should be made level with present understanding and feeling of the masses—art, literature, religion etc.? This is not help but a sop. Our efforts should be to evoke

gradually and by stages, by means of plain and simple expressions, the deep beauties and refinements of thought and feeling which now sleep in their hearts. We never put into other people's heads anything that is not there. We simply rouse by suggestion the sleeping powers and beauties of the Self. That is our aim and not to drag down everything to a low level. The salacious literature and art of today are undoing the results of the civilizing process of millennia. No wonder the masses of today are ruled by furious and uncontrollable passions. It is not merely hunger.

The development of the modern Indian languages, particularly in the North, whose beginnings go back to the preachings and writings of saints in the middle ages was interrupted by political factors, first under Muslim reactionary rule and later under the British. We are not oblivious of the services rendered to the popular languages under a few nationalized and enlightened Muslim rulers in certain areas or by the Christian missionaries. But the difficulties that came to be put in the way of such development by political factors far outweigh the help rendered. If you read Indian history with care you will discover that our popular languages really arose as a response (one aspect of course, of the total response) to the challenge of alien cultures. Now the time has come when this development can proceed along the line dictated by the objective factors of history and culture. Let no considerations of short-sighted politics interfere with it. To refuse to recognize a legitimate aspiration is to drive it into the arena of blind emotion. The fury will sweep everything away on its tide.

In dealing with the question of the national language one cannot but be aware of a veiled antagonism in certain quarters to Sanskrit and the culture it represents. This is born of sheer ignorance and short-sightedness. It is the result of an exclusive Western education, which is issuing in such thoughtless actions as trying to fence off God and religion from



our public and communal concerns. But those who still think of the material civilization of the West as the greatest and latest event in history seem hardly aware of the fact that secularism has already turned tail there—on the ideological plane we mean. The Western civilization has reached a point where it will stop if it does not go down in a cataclysm of disaster. No view about Sanskrit can be more illfounded. Sanskrit represents a culture that is far from dead. Sanskrit is not Latin or Greek. Nor is Vedanta on a level with other faiths, which are just leaves torn from its book and misunderstood by being read without the context. If the entire past of humanity is capable of throwing any light on the future then we doubt not in the least that the culture represented by Sanskrit will provide the spiritual basis of the superstructure of a new cosmopolitan civilization realizing the broadest and most sublime conceptions of justice and liberty.

There are not a few who think of Indian culture in some such way as follows. If the entire past of Turkey went by the board in order that the Turks might become a modern, secular nation, why can we not in the same way jump clear of all history and heritage? It is easy to cite historical parallels and easier still to miss the point and draw wrong lessons from them. The Turks have attempted to go back to their Turkish past and have repudiated a culture whose resources, material and spiritual, proved inadequate to the challenge thrown out by the West. But what have they done or achieved at all? They have gone another way and made themselves carbon-copies of the West, and the West despises them more than it ever did, precisely for this reason. One should like to know what new values the Turks are creating or contributing to the fund of human civilization? At present it appears that they have only expanded the market for the machine goods of the West. The only possible course for Turkey now seems either to remain in the

embrace of America or go into that of Russia. The Turk has caught a Tartar. It will be interesting to watch the consequence of a situation in which history has reversed a proverb. . . .

Pandit Nehru in his address also complimented the Osmania University for its unique achievement in making Urdu the medium of instruction in the University in all its stages. According to our information the Hyderabad Government has developed by means of its political and economic power what is known as high Urdu, that is to say, a Urdu full of Arabic and Persian words. This has been done in a country where both the Hindus (more than 80% of the population) and the Muslims speak other tongues. And what results have been gained?

No, Hyderabad has only replaced English by another foreign language which, in script and vocabulary, is archaic and inadequate, and more difficult to learn, and less profitable when learnt, than English. It seems politics is increasingly creating a situation in the country in which truth that requires to be spoken cannot be spoken. But there are truths which can be ignored only at our peril.\*

In this connection, though the present note has, in spite of ourselves, become rather long, we want to put before our readers the weighty observations of the foremost linguist in modern India which are very relevant to our present discussion. We give them below under another heading.

#### DR SUNTI KUMAR CHATTERJI ON SANSKRIT AND HINDI

In the course of an interesting article on the last International Linguistic Congress in Paris held from 18th July 1948, Dr Chatterji writes:

\*Hyderabad is, however, gently yielding to the real forces of the situation. The Osmania University has declared that from the next academic term *Hindustani* with *Nagari* script will also be introduced as a medium of University education. We take it as only a step in the right direction.



### APPEAL OF SANSKRIT

After my 'allocation' (speech by Dr Chatterji at the Congress) was over, some of the members who sat near me shook hands with me, and others later expressed their pleasure at my having quoted some Sanskrit for them, and congratulated me on the appropriateness to the occasion of some of my sentiments. I thought I was right in assuming that as speakers of Indo-European languages, Sanskrit will always have its appeal for them. This is a great fact which we frequently lose sight of in India, particularly our political leaders wedded to a peculiar type of ideology. Sanskrit is our greatest and strongest spiritual and intellectual link with the nations of Europe. Sanskrit stands for discipline and correct habits of thinking, for order and precision; and to strengthen the Sanskrit element in our Indian speeches will be not only a strengthening of our intellectual life but will also link us, while maintaining our own special and independent cultural status, much more strongly and closely with the Indo-European-speaking West. It will also make equally strong those ties which bind us through Buddhism and Indian culture with the peoples of the Far East and of South-eastern Asia.

Iran (and Afghanistan) will recognize her own sister in a Sanskrit-using India, while India in this way retains her separate identity and originality. And the Arab world will have proper respect for an India which holds her head high and offers her hand of fellowship in the same quest for the Ultimate Reality, although along the different path of another language; and India will be saved from the humiliation of playing the unenviable role of an indigent 'client' (*mawā'h*) and hanger-on to Arabdom in the sphere of higher thought and culture. The Turks and the Irani people, and even the Afghans (i.e. the intellectuals and thought-leaders among them), are seeking to rehabilitate the bases of their own special culture through a revival of the Turkic or Turanian and Aryan character of it. Indian culture has been enriched in certain ways by its borrowings from Islamic culture and Islamic thought, which for India meant Persian culture and Sufi mysticism. This has become engrafted irrevocably upon our culture and we must give due recognition to it, must study it in its fundamentals and must derive all the spiritual, intellectual, and material benefit that we have received or can receive from it. But we should remember always, irrespective of caste and creed, that the Sanskrit language and the name *Sanskrit* stands as the symbol of all our past achievements as a people—these are the hall-marks of our civilization, they form the passport for an honoured place in the concourse of nations and they also indicate the way in which it has been given to India to be of service to humanity.

I need not describe in detail the six days' sittings and deliberations and social functions relating to the

Congress. There were some eight "Questions" or topics already announced and passed on to as many select scholars, who contributed their views on them; and these were in our hands and there were discussions on them in which those who wished took part. I spoke in four of these - on Universal Categories for all Languages, on Research in Language, on Linguistic Terminology, and on Inter-linguistics with the question of International Language or Languages.

In the course of these discussions I made reference to the nature of linguistic work that is being done in India at the present day (I had already sent in a detailed statement, compiled with the help of colleagues all over India, of the work done in the different branches of Linguistics in India during the last nine years, the years of war from 1939 to 1948, which it is intended to publish along with similar reports for other countries). The necessity of enriching international linguistic terminology from Sanskrit was also stressed by me.

### UNO AND HINDI

The Uno has recognised five languages in its deliberation—English, French, Spanish, Russian and Chinese. In our Congress meetings, four languages were freely used—French, English, Italian, and German. Some Slav members who were quite prominent did not press the matter, but there was a feeling noticeable among some of them in favour of Russian as the greatest of Slav languages and their representative. Every fifth man in the world is an Indian, and 4/5ths of that Indian person has as his most natural pan-Indian speech Hindi, and this Hindi goes to Sanskrit for its culture-words, which it has in common with most of the other Indian languages. So that Sanskritic Hindi may in not a distant future have to be given a place beside its cousin-speeches. French, English, Spanish and Russian, and beside Chinese, as one of the great languages of the world. This last observation of mine evoked some interest among members. From quite unexpected quarters I heard enquiries about Hindi and the linguistic situation in India—from Norway, from Czechoslovakia, from America. (The importance of Arabic is cultural rather than numerical—there are more people in the world speaking Bengali than Arabic, and it will depend upon the place created once again for Arabdom by the Egyptians, the Syrians, the Iraqis, the Saudi Arabs, the Algerians and others, whether their language will obtain once again its old international position. Moreover, through natural change, the old Arabic speech has split up into dialects which are sometimes mutually unintelligible. A common or universal modern Arabic for speaking and writing is a desideratum, and it is to be seen if this can be evolved; or it would mean a revival of classical Arabic in a modified form). . . .



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SWAMI AKHANDANANDA AND HIS MEMOIRS OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA. BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA. Published by the Ramakrishna Vivekananda Centre, Dadar, Bombay. Pp. 69. Price Re. 1/-.

This booklet gives in the first part, in simple words, a brief biography of Swami Akhandananda, one of the sixteen direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna, and his memoirs of his Master in the second half. Swami Akhandananda was an embodiment of selfless service, irrespective of caste or creed. His heart flowed towards the poor and the suffering breaking through all barriers. In the nineties of the last century, even before the great Swami Vivekananda, his brother disciple, preached his gospel of mass uplift, he had started his work among the masses of Rajaputana. He was to be found organizing relief wherever there was suffering due to famine or flood. He started the first famine relief in Bengal as early as 1897, as an extension of which he started an orphanage. That he started and stuck on to the orphanage, where he had both Hindu and Muslim boys, which he started in Sargachhi, a remote village in Bengal, for over 40 years till his death, though he became the supreme head of the Ramakrishna Order, speaks volumes for his utter self-abnegation and loving service of the poor and the suffering. He introduced spinning and weaving and other village handicrafts in his orphanage,

understanding their full significance in the village economy, even before the Swadeshi Movement, which Gandhiji launched later on on a large scale.

His memoirs of Sri Ramakrishna show the utter simplicity and faith of Sri Ramakrishna and his great love for mankind, which characteristic Swami Akhandananda derived from his Master. It throws light on the way in which Sri Ramakrishna used to train his disciples to attain their highest stature without doing violence to their nature.

The booklet inspires the reader with a spirit of service.

HOMAGE TO MAHATMA GANDHI. *Public Relations Officer, All India Radio, New Delhi.* Pp. 112. Price Re 1.

The death of Gandhiji evoked universal condolence from all parts of the world—especially from all the leaders of India; for as K. Subba Rau says, 'he made heroes out of common clay.'

Here are collected the tributes from the various Indian leaders, broadcast to the nation in memory of the Mahatma, from the All India Radio. Beautifully got-up, with many pictures, it is attractive, though tinged with sadness all over the pages. The AIR has done well in collecting and presenting these tributes to the public as a commemorative volume.

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## NEWS AND REPORTS

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA, PATNA AN APPEAL

The Ramakrishna Mission Ashrama, Patna, was started in the year 1922 and since then it has been functioning as a centre of charitable, educational and religious activities in this capital city of Bihar. Through the hearty co-operation of the public and the devoted services of a valiant band of selfless monastic and lay workers, the Ashrama has developed from humble beginnings into a very useful institution. This centre runs at present a free Upper Primary School for boys of poor backward communities, an outdoor Charitable Dispensary, a Public Library and Reading Room and a Students' Home. It organises also relief works according as occasions arise. Moreover, scripture classes, periodical lectures and discourses on the lives and gospels of great prophets and incarnations are held in and outside the Ashrama to stimulate spiritual culture and develop in all a catholic outlook in the light of the

lofty teachings of Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda.

We need hardly point out that we are to depend entirely on public donations and subscriptions for the upkeep of the Ashrama and the management and expansion of its varied activities. Unfortunately, the humanitarian services of this philanthropic institution are being greatly hampered at present for want of adequate funds. Liberal help in the shape of donations is urgently needed to meet the pressing demands of this centre. We therefore appeal to our generous countrymen to extend their financial support to our noble cause and thus help forward the man-making and nation-building activities we have been carrying on for the benefit of all. Contributions, however small, will be thankfully accepted and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI TEJASANANDA  
*Secretary*

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### SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S BIRTHDAY

The Birthday Anniversary of Sri Ramakrishna falls on the 1st March 1949.