



VOL. LXVII

SEPTEMBER 1962

# Prabuddha Bharata

OR

AWAKENED INDIA

By Karma, Jnana, Bhakti, and Yoga, by one or more or  
all of these the vision of the Paramatman is obtained.



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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

SEPTEMBER 1962

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# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

Vol. LXVII

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No. 9



उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत

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

—:0:—

## NEW PRESIDENT OF THE RAMAKRISHNA MATH AND MISSION

We announce with the greatest joy the election of Srimat Swami Madhavanandaji as the President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission on 4th August 1962. He succeeds his illustrious predecessor Swami Vishuddhanandaji, who entered *mahāsamādhi* on 16th June 1962.

The Advaita Ashrama of Mayavati and Calcutta, and especially the *Prabuddha Bharata*, feel proud of the Swami, for he was the President of the Ashrama from 1918 to 1927, in which capacity he wrote for the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and started and edited the Hindi magazine *Samanvaya*, now defunct. He has been one of the trustees of the Advaita Ashrama from 1918. The Calcutta branch of the Advaita Ashrama came into existence in 1920, during his regime. He takes keen interest in the Ashramas both at Mayavati and Calcutta, which former place he visited more than once even after relinquishing the presidentship.

Born on 15th December 1888, he left home in the quest of God, and joined the Ramakrishna Math at Belur in January 1910. An initiated disciple of the Holy Mother, he was fortunate in living in close personal contact with almost all the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna. He took orders under Swami Brahmananda in January 1916. He went to the Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati first in 1910, and worked there for two years. Again he was sent there in 1917, and was then elevated to its presidentship in 1918, which post he held till 1927. His next assignment was as the President of the Vedanta Society of San Francisco, U.S.A., where he stayed from May 1927 to June 1929. Returning to India, he became one of the Assistant Secretaries of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission, of which twin organization he has been a trustee

and a member of the Governing Body from 1922. From 1938 to 1961, he was the General Secretary of the two organizations, with only a gap of two years between 1949 and 1951, when he lived in retirement for reasons of health. In March 1962, he became the Vice-President.

The Swami is an erudite scholar with intimate grasp of the inner meanings of Hindu scriptures. His translation into English of many of the Sanskrit scriptures is very lucid, faithful, and authoritative. His translation of Śrī Śaṅkara's commentary on the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is a monumental work. It is difficult to properly estimate his literary achievements and contributions as many of his works have come out anonymously.

We wish him a long and happy period of life and spiritual ministration.

## SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

*Belur Math, April 28, 1932*

A monk who had gone to Uttarkashi for spiritual practices and then fallen ill there had written a letter to Mahapurushji telling him of the various kinds of hardships and inconveniences one had to suffer in that remote Himalayan retreat. Mahapurushji wanted the reply to be written thus: 'Rather than suffer there, come back here immediately. Can there be any hard and fast rule that one will have liberation only at Uttarkashi? Liberation or *samādhi* can be attained anywhere, if it so pleases Him, if such be His dispensation. And you have been at that place long enough to know what it is. Now come back and continue your spiritual practices here itself, just as you had been doing before. The main thing that matters is to acquire devotion to His lotus feet. As to that, one can have it here as well. The climate of those places does not suit many of the monks; either they suffer continuously, and then die prematurely, or they lose their mental balance on account of forced hardships. Well, my son, all depends on His will. Take refuge in Him and continue to be at His feet. Call on Him constantly, pray to Him. Gradually, you will feel His grace in your heart. One cannot have true enlight-

enment without *samādhi*; that *samādhi*, again, is dependent on His grace. The chief aim of life is the realization of God. That does not depend on any particular locality. Why, consider even the life of the Master himself. Did he ever go to Uttarkashi or roam about in the Himalayas for his spiritual struggle? One has to strive by accepting his life as the ideal. Every act of his life is an ideal for the present age. That is the most dependable example.

Impelled by a spirit of renunciation, one *brahmacārin* had gone straightway to the Himalayas for doing spiritual practices. With regard to that, Mahapurushji said: 'Well, my son, it's no good to roam about so much like that. That brings no good result. Not that it is absolutely useless; some result does, of course, accrue. But that is all temporary; it doesn't last long. The fact is that, if one would have a lasting result, one must continue steadily in the monastery of the Master and Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda), and undertake his spiritual practices there itself. That's why Swamiji established this monastery with the very blood of his heart, as it were. And such an association of monks! Where, indeed, can you find such monks? It is difficult to get the companion-

ship of such saintly, pure, dispassionate, learned, and spiritually inspired monks. Besides, you have here knowledge, devotion, selfless service, and *yoga*—in fact, all the spiritual paths. No other place can be comparable to this in its suitability for spiritual exercises. Can those who are possessed of real renunciation afford to roam about from place to place in search of a suitable spot? They quietly sit down somewhere. In the Himalayas, now and then, you can come across only a few really saintly and dispassionate monks, who are engaged in spiritual practices with diligence. They live in very solitary places. As for the rest, they somehow while away their time. That's why Hari Maharaj (Swami Turiyananda) used to say: "As for ourselves, we are as bad as thieves (stealing our time). Can we spend all our time in spiritual efforts? Much of our time is wasted uselessly. In comparison with that, it is much better to undertake a little selfless service and carry on spiritual practices along with that." As for roaming about and undergoing hardships, our experience, too, in that line is not a little. We had enough of that experience in life. Wherever I went in the Himalayas, in hills and forests, I engaged myself fully in *japa* and meditation. I have some experience as to how long the appeal of natural scenery etc. lasts. Not for long, to be sure. When my mind lost contact with external objects and merged in the object of meditation, I had no consciousness of my environment. When the ideas of time and space are eliminated, then all that remains is Bliss alone—Existence-Consciousness-Bliss intensified. Inside you, it is all uniformly like that. What beauty, after all, can there be in the external world? Nothing at all. The mine of all beauty is inside. All that is manifest outside is finite; you can chalk out its limits. But that which is not expressed is infinite. The more the mind enters inside, the more does it get absorbed there. "A quarter of Him constitutes the whole universe; His

three immortal quarters are transcendental." Just imagine how vast He is! It's enough, if the mind gets merged in Him even once only. Then the mind can no longer derive any happiness from things outside. He is, in fact, the mine of all peace. Human life would have been spent in vain unless one sees Him. Nothing matters at all unless one has the vision of God.'

*Belur Math, May 21, 1932*

It was afternoon. A certain disciple, who had become very dejected owing to his failure to fix his mind during his regular spiritual practices, told Mahapurushji: 'I make my best effort, sir, but the mind does not get fixed. Kindly instruct me what am I to do. Should I be denied all success?'

Mahapurushji replied with some firmness: 'Well, my son, you have still one and a half month of your leave in hand. Now, why don't you try to do just as I tell you, and then watch the result. Certainly, it won't do to be dejected so soon like that. You must have faith and patience. You have to be persistently up and doing. What would you gain by your dejection and bemoaning just because you cannot achieve anything by a little effort? I tell you frankly, my son, I know of no artificial trick by which the mind can be fixed or divine bliss can be attained. The only means I know, the one that I learnt from the Master, I have already told you. I warn you further that no speedy result can be expected in this path. One has to go on persevering in the path, day after day, month after month, year after year, with the same determination—one has to make spiritual efforts. The mind that had remained scattered so long has to be gradually gathered together with patience, and then, fixed at the feet of God. Call on the Master, and persevere steadfastly. The mind will become gradually steady and fixed, and you will get happiness. Don't you believe in a Cosmic Power? For you, it is best to think of God as possessed

of qualities and having a form. That will help the mind become concentrated easily. At first, I used to frequent the Brahma Samaj. At last, when I met the Master at Dakshineswar, he asked me: "Do you believe in Śakti (Cosmic Power)?" I replied: "No, sir, I like formlessness better. And yet, it strikes me that some Power pervades everything." Then, he went to the Kālī temple, and I followed him. As he proceeded towards the temple, he was caught up in a divine mood, and when he reached the temple, he prostrated himself before the Mother full of great devotion. I was rather in a fix. I hesitated at first to bow down before the image of Kālī. But, along with that, I thought that Brahman is all-pervasive after all; and if so, He must be in this image as well, and so, I could have no hesitation in bowing down. As soon as this thought arose, I, too, bowed down. Later on, as I began to visit the Master more frequently, my faith in God with form became stronger. It was a great fortune for me that I was vouchsafed such association with the Master, that I could get his grace.'

*Belur Math, May 30, 1932*

The talk was about the progress of science in the West and the consequent increase in physical comfort and enjoyment in various forms, in which respect, the Western people were comparatively much happier than the Indians. In this connection, Mahapurushji said: 'All that happiness is ephemeral, after all. What substance do you find in all that? They can become inebriated by such momentary happiness, just because they have not tasted the bliss of God. I tell you, my son, there is no happiness in lust and lucre, there's not a bit of it, none at all, no matter where you are, in heaven or elsewhere, and whether you are a man of learning or anything else. This is the declaration of God Himself. In the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, also, it is said: "That which is Infinite is Bliss, there is no happiness in the finite, Infinite alone is

Bliss; but this Infinity Itself has to be sought for." True happiness lies in that infinite Reality. That alone should one know. Science has failed to inform people of that Infinity. It is concerned only with the things of this world, with material substances. The enjoyment of worldly things merely sharpens the appetite for more enjoyment. How can one find any contentment there? How can peace result from that? For the seed of trouble lies buried within enjoyment itself: "The desire for pleasurable objects can never be satiated through enjoyment; it increases evermore like a fire wherein clarified butter is poured."'

Then, in connection with attaining peace in life, he said: 'There's no contentment in the non-Self; true contentment comes from the knowledge of the Self. And one has to seek for that contentment within oneself. Peace is within, it is not outside. Knowledge, devotion, love of God—all that lies within. Carry on your spiritual practices, call on God. He will grant you peace within yourself, my son; there's no doubt about that.'

At night, speaking about initiation, he remarked: 'Initiation is of many kinds. There is no such hard and fast rule that all should have some *mantra* for mental repetition. For all do not have the same kind of spiritual mood nor are all equally qualified. It is true, of course, that the ordinary *gurus* cannot make these distinctions. Someone may like God with form, while someone else may stick to God without form. Then, there are degrees of belief both with regard to the Personal God and the Impersonal. Some one likes meditation; he should meditate. Someone else likes *japa*; he should undertake *japa*. Someone, again, may have to undertake both *japa* and meditation. One has to instruct an aspirant after ascertaining the category to which he belongs and the spiritual mood he prefers. If, on the contrary, one huddles them all together and shapes them according to one single mould, the aspirants will only be delayed on their way to the fullest

realization. That's what is bound to be.'

In connection with the habit of roaming about that some monks have, he said: 'Well, it is not good for the devotees of God to roam about too much; that hinders the growth of true devotion. Hence one should sit down at some place after seeing some holy places; and then one should occupy oneself fully with one's spiritual efforts. That helps the development of spiritual intensity and love for God. Too much moving about hither and thither dries up spiritual intensity. But I am not referring to the itinerant monks who take up a vow for such a purpose for a limited time.'

#### *Belur Math, 1932*

Nowadays, Mahapurushji is in a state of unspeakably elevated divine mood. The mood is so intense at times that he spends the whole night without sleep merged in his own spiritual depth. He has no thought of the body. If anyone talks about that, he smiles sweetly like a child, and says: 'Well, "Whom can anybody kill when Kṛṣṇa protects him?" This body will somehow continue so long as the Master wants to preserve it for his own work.' If anyone argued that a prolonged sleeplessness would tell upon his health, he would reply: 'What need for sleep has a *yogin*? When the mind is in *samādhi*, there is no need for sleep. Besides, meditation has such an efficacy of its own as to eliminate the need of sleep; when a particular state of it is reached, it removes all the fatigue of the body. The body seems to be more fresh and vigorous in that state of *samādhi* than even after a deep sleep. And an inexpressible joy fills up the body and mind. As for myself, whenever I feel physically tired, I raise up my mind from the physical state to merge it in *samādhi*; and then, there is bliss alone. We have seen the Master how, often enough, he never used to sleep. Now and then, he might snatch an hour's or half an hour's sleep at the most. Most of the time he would be absorbed in *samādhi*; and the remaining time he would

spend in spiritual moods. These moods became very pronounced at night. He would spend the whole night repeating the name of Mother or of Hari. Whenever we stayed with the Master at Dakshineswar, we were always filled with awe. He had no sleep at all; and whenever we awoke from sleep, we heard him talking with Mother in a state of divine forgetfulness; or we saw him pacing the room up and down, muttering something inaudibly all the while. Sometimes, he would wake us up in the middle of the night itself. "Hullo, my dear boy," he would say, "have you come here to sleep? If you spend the whole night in sleep, when will you call on God?" As soon as we heard his voice, we would sit up in a great hurry and start meditating.'

For some days, Mahapurushji was in an inexplicable mood. He would salute one and all with folded hands and with great respect whenever they came in to pay their respects to him. It did not matter whether the visitor was an old monk of the monastery or a novice, a grown up disciple or a little boy or girl; as soon as the visitor came in view, he would be the first to raise his folded hands and touch his forehead with them as a token of respectful greeting, and then only would he enquire about his health and other affairs. That nonplussed and overwhelmed one and all. Besides, he would not allow anyone to part without taking something to eat; he felt uneasy until the visitor had something. Especially, the little boys and girls had to be fed sumptuously with sweets and fruits.

One night, it was about two o'clock. Nature was absolutely calm and quiet. A green light faintly lighted Mahapurushji's room, and he sat on his bed with his legs folded in. Two attendants at a time used to keep vigil in his room for the whole night by turns; they attended to his needs as required. Two o'clock was the time for change of duties. As one of the attendants for the new turn approached him, Mahapurushji asked in a solemn tone: 'Who's that? As soon as the attendant responded, Mahapurushji saluted



him with folded hands. The attendant was an initiated disciple of his; so he was greatly hurt in being greeted thus by his own *guru*. With tears in his eyes and full of emotion, the disciple said with folded hands: 'Sir, why did you salute me? I am only a servant of yours and I have taken refuge at your feet. This won't augur well for me.' This aggrieved complaint of the attendant moved Mahapurushji very much, and he said in a slow, deep voice: 'Don't you be sorrowing, my son. I assure you that this will do you no harm. Believe me when I say this. I can well realize that you are much upset. But how can I help it? For I see Nārāyaṇa Himself in you. Do you think that I saluted you? I salute God Himself whom I see clearly in you. You may think that I salute you all; but the fact is otherwise. How can I explain to you the various ways the Master is blessing me and diverse visions he is granting me?' With this, he became absolutely silent.

On another occasion, when asked by an attendant about the reason of his saluting one and all, Mahapurushji said: 'As soon as people come in front of me, I get visions of different gods and goddesses; and so I salute those deities. When somebody approaches me, firstly, I see that particular effulgent form of God through which He reveals Himself in that particular personality. The persons themselves appear indistinctly like shadowy beings, while the divine aspect itself appears vivid and living. That's why I make my obeisance. The divine forms disappear after

my salutation, and then only can I see the human figures distinctly and recognize them as well.'

'Sir, you salute each and all as a result of your divine vision, but how can we understand that?' protested the attendant. 'To us it appears as rather a very odd affair. It is but natural that everyone should salute you first; instead, you yourself salute them. That fills the monks and devotees with grief and they begin conjecturing many things.'

'Let them conjecture as they like', said Mahapurushji. 'Do you think that I do all this out of my own accord? I myself often don't understand why I act like that; I am struck with wonder. So how can others understand? There's nothing else but the Master within this frame. I act just as he wants me to, and I speak just as it pleases him. To whom can I explain and who, indeed, can understand the various ways in which the Master is playing through this body? You all are, after all, too immature—mere boys. Had Maharaj, Hari Maharaj, Sharat Maharaj, and others been here now, they would have understood all this; and I, too, would have derived some solace by opening out my heart to them. In any case, it will be just as the Master wills. He can play with his pet animal as he pleases. As my days advance, I now find that the mind becomes more active in proportion as the other activities lessen. He alone knows for how many days more this body will pull on like this.'

## THE STRUGGLE FOR NATIONAL UNITY

'Struggle is God's gift' said Swami Vivekananda. This is a great truth. Life itself is a series of constant struggles against the forces of nature that are trying to keep it down. The entire human civilization is a story of this struggle in some form or other. A life without struggle is not a normal life, it is either superhuman or sub-human. It is in the effort to achieve an end and in the struggle to survive that life gets its real meaning and joy. And that man only is living who has 'progress' as his motto, and 'expansion' as his norm. Struggle and expansion coexist and it is these that have really inspired human civilization to march on and on, through the ages, in numerous fields of activity—spiritual, intellectual, or material. This urge for expansion is yet moving the individuals to vigorous efforts, the nations to greater consolidation of strength, and humanity to higher achievements. Contraction is death and stagnation only precedes it.

India's independence is yet in a process of consolidation, and the evolution of a new national character in this perspective is still going on. As a consequence, the country is experiencing various kinds of struggles in different fields of its national life. It will be worthwhile to examine the nature of this struggle here. Leaving aside the question of individuals, we shall confine our discussion mainly to larger groups and major sectors.

India is a vast country—a sub-continent in every sense of the term. Its different types of climate, its varying kinds of soil, its innumerable species of flora and fauna, its deep seas, its dry deserts, thick jungles, and extensive green plains inhabited by so many kinds of people, having many complexions, many languages, and many more dialects, professing different religious beliefs, and cherishing strange customs and social structures, make this country of ours a veritable world in itself. Then, the ancientness of this land and

the characteristic freedom of thought that prevails here have endowed its people with different outlooks on life. We are, therefore, very often told that this variety has denied India a national character and a consolidated unitary spirit. Though this opinion is not always correct as we shall see later, we cannot fail to see the dangers of disintegration making themselves obvious today. In spite of a well established central political authority over us trying to forge a national unity and a common cause for the country as a whole, we find fissiparous tendencies and desultory group rivalries raising their heads. So long as the country was under foreign rule, in spite of differences, we all were more or less united at least in the pursuit of one object, namely to free ourselves from the foreign yoke. Since we have attained that object, a vacuum has been created in our national life, and unfortunately, it has not yet been so much as filled up by some other common cause. We all wish to take advantage of the opportunities offered by political independence, but only in our small ways. The result is the creation of group loyalties leading to confusion in thought and action.

### II

Where is the confusion? one may ask. If we take a detached view of the present conditions in India, we shall find it almost in every sphere of our national life. Confused struggle, strengthened by narrow outlook and selfish motives confined to the acquisition and perpetuation of vested interests has gathered momentum. Even today, we have communal antagonism. Then there are also some groups trying to cut themselves away, on racial grounds, from the main body of the nation. Besides, there is bitterness in the relations between capital and labour, and also within different capitalist groups and labour organizations themselves. The language contro-

versy is a burning problem of today. The discussion on the suitability or not of the cottage industry ideal as against modern industrialization is even today going on. An unhealthy competition between the private and public sectors of industry has, of late, become acute. There is also the controversy between spirituality and secularism—apart from the long-standing battle between different 'isms' and the Eastern and the Western ideologies of life. In our social institutions also, a similar battle is going on; group affiliations, separatist tendencies, and sectional loyalties are claiming our adherence. Such instances can be multiplied endlessly.

This struggle is, of course, not unnatural, specially in a vast country like ours, and always not harmful even. As we have already said, struggle is the law of life, and perhaps, the sign of it, also. Sometimes, it is even necessary. History is witness to the fact that periods of dramatic and rapid revolutionary growth have mostly been those of struggles. But, just as a tree is known by its fruits, so everything has to be judged by the results it produces. We admit of struggles when they are helpful for growth and progress, but we shall reject them and take precautions against them when they are harmful and ruinous.

We may frankly say that many of the struggles that we find today in India are meaningless and carried on through shortsightedness. It is because of this alone that our leaders have been alarmed, and the question of national integration has assumed great importance and urgency. Various efforts are being made to forge national unity. Leaders of thought, and also, of political parties and sectional groups are meeting together to discuss the ways and means to bring about national unity. Common codes of conduct for different groups and political parties, even for newspapers, are being worked out. Education is sought to be reoriented to instil a sense of national unity in the im-

pressionable minds of our young students; and so on.

### III

As has been said before, our land is a land of varieties. It has ever been so. But, in spite of these varieties and diversities, Indian people have lived in the past in peace and amity. Unity in the midst of diversity has been the principal note of Indian cultural music. The Hindu religion, which is the principal faith of the land, is verily a federation of diverse beliefs and customs. Its different systems of philosophy, its numerous gods and goddesses, its various modes of worship, its innumerable scriptures and treatises—all these have joined together in harmony to give this great religion a wonderful spirit of catholicism and tolerance. To the Hindu, the whole of India has become the object of his adoration. On sacred occasions, all the rivers of the north and the south, of the east and the west are invoked. The fifty-one sacred *pīthas*, associated with the sacred touch of Sati's (Divine Mother's) limbs, are spread over the whole of India, investing it almost with the glory of the Divine Mother Herself. Moreover, the four corners of the land have each been endowed with a sacred shrine of the highest esteem, and that Hindu feels himself greatly blessed who can consummate his pilgrimage by visiting the Himalayan shrine of Śrī Badrīnātha in the North, of Śrī Rāmeśvara in the South, of Śrī Jagannātha in the East, and of Śrī Dvārakādhiś in the West. This encircling of the holy land, whose every mountain, every river, as a matter of fact, every spot is invested with sacredness, naturally, instils into the mind of a Hindu a sense of unity which is unique in itself. This sublime integrated vision of the whole country helped ancient citizens of India to boldly declare that the motherland is superior even to heaven (*svargādapi garīyasi*).

Not only this. Even the alien races, speaking strange languages and owning different

cultures have been influenced by this catholicism and have made India alone their home to live happily for centuries. It may, however, be true that their first encounter with this land and its people was marked by violence and mistaken conflicts; but time had only taught them to imbibe the spirit of this land which is to 'live and let live', and therefore, they too, became very much one with the rest of India. To take a very glaring example, we may consider the case of our Muslim brethren. In the recent past, the Hindu-Muslim question assumed one of the ugliest forms of communal conflict in human history. Apart from resulting in horrible bloodshed, inhuman tyrannies, unspeakable base expressions of beastly conduct, the conflict has brought about the unfortunate division of this great land, which by Nature herself was meant to be integrally one—its geography having provided it with oneness and unity, keeping it bounded by the great Himalayas in the north and the deep seas in the south. But the situation was quite different only about sixty years ago. Barring insignificant instances of differences here and there, which is only natural anywhere and amongst any people in the world, the Hindus and the Muslims lived very amicably together. History stands as witness to this truth. Mr. Hamilton, writing in the *East Indian Gazetteer*, towards the end of the last century, says with reference to a district of Bengal, which some years ago received notoriety for communal disturbances: 'The two religions are on most friendly terms, and mutually apply to the deities and saints of the other, when they imagine that application to their own will be ineffectual.' He also says that 'for almost a century past, the Mohammedans have evinced much deference to the prejudices of their Hindu neighbours, and strong predilection towards many of their ceremonies'. Dr. Taylor, another careful student of Indian conditions, writing sometime later about another part of India, inhabited by the two communities in almost equal proportions,

noted that 'religious quarrels between Hindus and Mohammedans are rare instances'. 'These two classes live in perfect peace and concord, and a majority of the individuals belonging to them have even overcome their prejudices so far as to smoke from the same hookah.' Lord Meston, who was Lieutenant-Governor of the United Provinces, another place notorious for recent Hindu-Muslim riots and considered by many as the hatching ground of the Pakistan ideology, also said: 'From time immemorial, Hindus and Mohammedans have lived together at Ajodhya and Fyzabad in peace and amity. As a symbol of their happy unity, you see Mohammedans worshipping at Bāber's mosque, and Hindus paying adoration at the shrine of Rāmācandra's birthplace, within a few yards of each other, and within the same enclosure wall.' These are no myths. Many of us even bear testimony to such friendly way of living. Even today, such a spirit of mutual fellow-feeling is not absent.

We have dealt with the above theme only as an example to show that even what we may think to be widely different religious and cultural outlooks can live together and work for mutual benefit as has actually happened. The present separatist trends and disintegrated outlook have their roots in wrong assessment of values that have unfortunately been put into our minds by vested interests, either political or social, communal or regional, economical or sectional. Very wrongly, we have started thinking that our welfare lies in safeguarding our limited and narrow interests only. We forget that we are but the limbs of the body politic of a nation. If the vitality of the body becomes weak, no amount of care of the individual limbs can help their survival. It has been aptly said that the different units are like so many precious stones embedded in a golden ring which is the nation itself. If the stones loosen themselves or the gold gives way, the stones, however costly and pretty they may be in themselves, will lose bearing and security, and will be scattered away and

left at the mercy of their uncertain fates. Very often, we forget this great truth that a part of an organic whole can never live happily by itself in its smallness, guarding its selfish interests and fighting for it alone. This mentality gives rise to a viciousness which infects others also, and life, as a result, is made miserable. Even the love of our country should not bring narrowness into our outlook. Speaking the other day about the impending danger resulting out of our parochial outlook and group loyalties, Dr. Radhakrishnan said: 'If we are to avert the impending catastrophe, we need progressive and patriotic minds, patriotic not for your cities or for your country, but for the whole world which makes you feel humanity is your first and foremost consideration. Such a kind of patriotism will have to be developed in us.' We feel this is essentially the Indian attitude to and conception of true patriotism. True love of India will mean true love of its genius and this genius shines marvellously in its all-embracing love for whole humanity, and in its spirit of 'renunciation and service' which, Swami Vivekananda said, are the national ideals of India.

#### IV

Coming back to our point of discussion, we repeat once again that the greatest need of the hour for us is to develop a common national outlook, a strong love for the country as a whole. India is a free country with a national government to look after its integrity and work for its progress. This is an accomplished fact, and has to be accepted as such. All the citizens of India, therefore, must look upon India as their national home. This land should not only be the land of their living, but also of their culture and adoration. Extra-territorial loyalties and inspirations on the part of any Indian citizen is not only a political crime, but a sacrilege against faith also. In spite of our individual religious beliefs, different political outlooks, varied social customs, and special considerations for

one's own State, we are first Indians, and then anything else. We shall have to believe, and that sincerely, that we are now a nation consisting of Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Parsees, and many other people, and that the destiny of India cannot be ruled by the Hindus, or the Mohammedans, or the Christians, by themselves. But it will have to be ruled by all the Indians fused together in their love for the country as a whole, and bound up by the feeling to live and die together. This spirit of oneness is not difficult to cultivate, specially in India, which has made successful experiments of unity in the midst of apparent diversity. What is needed is the desire to be one. Once, Sister Nivedita significantly said: 'Immense batteries may be made by numbers of people uniting together to think of a given thought. If the whole of India could agree to give, say ten minutes, every evening at the oncoming of darkness, to think a single thought, "We are one, we are one, nothing can prevail against us to make us think we are divided; for we are one. We are one, and antagonisms amongst us are illusion", the power that would be generated can hardly be measured.' At any cost, we have to awaken ourselves to the necessity of this oneness of thought, and to a sense of urgency of it to fight the evil of disintegration which is sapping at the very roots of the nation's healthy growth.

#### V

From the above discussion, we have seen that, but for some exceptions here and there, the genius of India has found its expression in a very broad outlook of life and in the spirit of unity in the midst of diversity. Its tolerant and all-embracing spiritual convictions have not only fused its own different philosophical schools and religious sects into one strong federation, but has also influenced alien religions to live peacefully and happily in its bosom and made their adherents as much its own children. Here, in this land, various interests have joined together to make

a great nation. If, therefore, the national bark of India has to be properly steered safely to its goal, the spirit of its passengers must be one of co-operation and mutual assistance. Let us live like happy members of a well-knit joint family, in which individual interests are not let loose to fight against one another, but where each member is ever ready to sacrifice his own interest to promote that of others and thereby allowing a common interest to flourish which, in its turn, safeguards the interests of all and removes the question of clash or quarrel from rising at all. We believe this can be realized in India, in whose soil such growth is natural as we have pointed out earlier. But no amount of mere political sermons or parliamentary legislations can make the minds of men develop the spirit of unselfishness and sacrifice. This is possible, only if we imbibe the national genius of India, which found its true expression in the development of its deep spiritual consciousness.

We may touch the individual just in passing here. S. D. Sorenson, in one of his recent articles, writes: 'It is very questionable whether peace can be secured in the world until it is anchored in the human heart. How is it possible to achieve disarmament, or peaceful conditions in industry, or peace between different political parties, or even peace in the home, when men's hearts and minds are restless, irritated, anxious, and distraught?'

No society or nation can expect integrity from its members or nationals, unless these individuals have an integrated personality in themselves. And this integrated personality develops only when one is at peace with oneself (and, consequently, with one's neighbours also). Here is the greatest need for a spiritual outlook which comes through the practice of religion in life, and which Indian cultural tradition has always emphasized as a basic prerequisite for any good life.

The present decay should not at all dishearten us. Nothing is lost if we once again determine to be true and honest Indians. We believe with Swami Vivekananda that 'out of this decay is coming the India of the future; it is sprouting, its first leaves are already out, and a mighty gigantic tree is here already beginning to appear'. Let us forget our narrow interests and fill ourselves with hope and love for our motherland, struggling together for its greatness which is a fact in the making, and let us declare proudly with Swami Vivekananda: 'I am an Indian—every Indian is my brother. . . . The ignorant Indian, the poor and destitute Indian, the Brahmin Indian, the Pariah Indian is my brother. . . . The Indian is my brother, the Indian is my life. India's society is the cradle of my infancy, the pleasure garden of my youth, the sacred heaven, the Varanasi of my old age. . . . The soil of India is my highest heaven, the good of India is my good.'

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## AESTHETIC FORM

BY DR. P. S. SASTRI

Form, said Rudolf Arnheim, is 'an indispensable prerequisite for the perceptual characterization of the content'. Form is common to all works of art. It appears as the shape the work has taken. By shape, we mean the total effect produced by the outlines of an object. It is form rendered

definite. As definite, it presents a certain structure. Now, structure is the way in which a thing appears to hold together. It implies a complex whole and in any experience, we are aware only of the qualities manifested by this structure. It is through these qualities that we seek to apprehend

the nature of artistic form. As Koffka put it, we are in contact with the work of art by virtue of its structural qualities. Some of the fallacies in art-criticism arise from a mistaken prominence given to some one or other of these qualities. The form of the work includes these and it is also something more.

In the visual arts, form cannot be perceived save as colour. Colour is only the superficial aspect of form, and yet it is necessary for the being of the work of art. One indispensable aspect of the aesthetic form is the medium. The function of the medium is not to indicate objects, but to convey the artist's imagination of the objects. Medium is that by which or in which something is conveyed. Artists make different patterns with the same medium, and they treat the same pattern, too, differently. One cannot make the same things in clay as he can in wrought-iron. The feeling of the work is different in each case. As Morris figuratively said, the metal challenges you, coaxes you, to do a particular kind of thing with it. In other words, the good artist has a feeling of the medium, a feeling for it. The primary medium expresses the nature of the form of experience. There is also what Mr. T. M. Green calls the secondary medium. This is the subject-matter whose interpretation achieves artistic expression only indirectly through the organization of the primary medium. Signs, symbols, and words form the primary medium of literature. This medium is essentially symbolic. When the artist makes of it an expressive organization, we get the artistic form; and the subject-matter becomes artistic only when it is expressed in a certain medium. The primary medium which is the cognizable aspect of form is in itself aesthetic; and it is capable of transforming the non-aesthetic into the aesthetic.

Aesthetic form exhibits two possible extremes of its being. One is the 'form as proceeding' and the other is 'shape as superin-

duced'. The latter is the mechanical form existing independently as an unalterable pattern in textbooks of prosody and the like. It imposes an external control or check, because it is essentially static and rigid. It accordingly interferes with the free movement of the expressed. The former is dynamic. It is ever growing. This is the basic character of aesthetic form. The evaluation of the medium depends on this factor.

The selection of the medium is a part of the artistic process. The artist thinks and feels in terms of his medium. The manner of handling the medium is called the technique which enables him to make the material do what he wants it to accomplish. In other words, the artistic form is something which acquires its character or status out of the very experience which is supposed to give rise to the content. The articulation of the artistic experience is thus twofold.

There is another aspect of the problem. Roger Fry observed that we were given our eyes to see things, not to look at them. It is the contemplative attitude that makes the object render a certain unique form to the artist. From one point of view, the contemplative attitude leads to the emergence of form, and from another, to that of content. Both are basically identical. Such a form is not definite or fixed for all time. It is a constantly growing or developing entity. Each case of the aesthetic form is an essay or experiment in the struggle towards perfect expressiveness. In this process, it is active in controlling and regulating the varied details. Hence the essential character and value of a work of art is generally revealed in what the aesthetic form subordinates and conquers. While imagination is constitutive of the entire creative activity, the aesthetic form is regulative of the actual composition.

Such a form can achieve only an expressiveness limited by the world of symbols. The idea that transcends the symbol and gives rise to it is also the originating power

of the form. Since art has nothing to do with a purely intellectual idea, and since the idea has to be charged with the imaginative activity, we can say that imagination itself evolves as the content and also as the form, and these two are the aspects of the same entity, like the sound and meaning of a word.

C'ezanne observed that there are two states in the production of a work of art. The first is the realization of sensations, the analysis of percepts; and the second involves the processes by means of which this analysis is communicated. Form arises out of the latter since it is a function of perception. And what makes a presentation aesthetic is not the quality of experience, but the organization of the elements. In this organization, there emerge three kinds of artistic values, according to the phenomenological theory of Geiger. They are the artistic value (like symmetry, harmony, rhythm, equilibrium, proportion, and unity), imitative values, and positive values. It is arguable whether such a form is not the same as the total work of art.

As against this tendency, we have the cubism of Picasso, Braque, and Juan Gris which aims at revealing the aesthetic aspect of the natural world. The appearances of objects are reduced to their significant forms; and this is held to reveal something about the essential nature of these objects. Juan Gris, accordingly, emphasized the formal values in composition while advocating his theory of synthetic cubism. The realistic elements are controlled and regulated by the architectural structure. Then we get a different order of reality which is only suggested by the original one. The analytical cubism of Picasso and others, on the other hand, separates the plane surfaces from the essence of the objects. From the analysis of the structure, they abstract forms which have their own proportions and forms. A composition thus begun is an invention of purely formal relationships. Picasso in paint-

ing and Henry Moore in sculpture, in their endeavour to transform the forms, began to explore the animistic forms. In this endeavour, the cubist realizes the essential nature of the artistic form as one of refashioning human ideas. His mistake lies in believing that he can create forms anew. This mistaken belief makes the cubist products bizarre. He represents the opposite pole of the crass realist. Neither the visible outline, nor the imaginary shape can be equated with the aesthetic form.

Artistic form is not the same as the outlines, though this outline is necessary. It is not the same because the outline is not a self-evolving, dynamic entity. It is not the same, as a diagram with its relational unity is not one with the diagram presumed by us in the experience of the object. It provides a general framework of relations. The objects perceived is primarily perceived or retained in the mind with a shape; and this is a construction emerging from the activity of the senses and intelligence. This form operates as an experienced individual entity and also as a symbol of the idea conveyed by it. It is both an abstraction from the sensed object and a concrete entity. The testimony of the artists favours the assumption that the form of an object is actually sensed. As Berenson put it: 'The artist has the first glimpses of his design ... as if through a lightning rift in a cloud.' The design is a composite unity of decoration and illustration. This unity cannot be split. Thus a poem and its prose paraphrase do not have the same value because they have different forms. This difference implies also a difference in their meaning. No theory of meaning can tell us why the particular combination of words in Prospero's speech in *The Tempest*, IV. 1, is unique and valuable. But an approach from the standpoint of form can throw considerable light on this question. The specific aesthetic quality seems in such a passage to reside primarily in the form. Such a form also



appears as one providing a network of relations. Without this character, form cannot weld into a unity the diverse factors that appear in a work of art. Even here the form presents divergent trends. In the visual arts, the relational continuum presents the various units or parts not in succession but in simultaneity. The verbal arts have to depend on succession, thereby implying time as one of the essential features of form. In either case, it involves spatial and temporal characteristics, though one is prominent in some and the other in others. In this light, one can argue for the view of Herbert Read that beauty is the unity of formal relations among our sense-perceptions; and that art is an attempt to create pleasing forms. Actually, it is the shape, not the form, that pleases. Form is a quality beyond common cognizance. It is something like an inner radiance, says Berenson, to which a shape attains. The shape belongs to the world of existence, while the form belongs to that of essence. It is the shape that has a relatively stable being, while the form as essence is dynamic. In other words, aesthetic form can never claim finality or perfection because it is intuited by the artist in his experience and by the reader in his observation or study.

As against this formist theory, there is a theory known as formalism. The two are different. The formalist holds that visual beauty is entirely a matter of form. This form involves geometrical shapes and relationships. Thus Hanslick in his *Vom Musikalisch Schoenen* observed that the content of music is nothing but dynamic sound-patterns. But these patterns become dynamic only when they are expressive. This term 'expression' is a notorious one in aesthetics. It has, at least, five possible meanings: (i) Expression can be the embodiment of something in a body. The aesthetic form, however, is not merely like a body; (ii) Expression may be the outer which reveals the inner or the expressed. Then it is

endowed with causal efficacy; and this is debatable; (iii) Expression may be that which releases some inner tension by means of external behaviour. But the aesthetic form is not a mere outlet for some seething rebellious energy; (iv) Expression can be that which results from a movement directed to the satisfaction of conscious desire. In many successful cases, this conscious desire does not appear to be present; (v) Finally, expression may be the self-expression; and if so, the reader has very little to do with it. Expression in itself is neutral. It becomes aesthetic when it is related to imagination.

But the expressionist theory believes that shape or form is beautiful only because of what it means or expresses. Here, the ideal of art is perfect expressiveness which can by no means be realized. Expressiveness, even if imperfect, becomes aesthetic only when it is charged with imagination.

It was Croce's error to identify all expression with aesthetic expression. A similar tendency appears in what Mallarme said: 'Poetry is not written with ideas; it is written with words.' Neither the delightfully vague word *expression* nor the term *words* can give us the aesthetic form. Words are to literature what colour is to painting. Colour, by itself, has no aesthetic quality in it. As Bell said: 'Colour becomes significant only when it becomes form.' It is form that transforms a neutral stuff into something aesthetic. As Roger Fry put it, relations transform even the effects of disagreeable sounds. Colour and sound are basic to all expression; and these give us a clue to the apprehension of the nature and value of aesthetic form when they enter into a relational continuum.

This relational continuum operates in all aesthetic process in some manner or other. It may be viewed as plan, design, outline, and the like. In classical poetics, it appears as plot. In evolving a design, the artist comes to handle form as such. Roger Fry in *The Architectural Heresies of a Painter* declared

that one of the main weaknesses of the architect as an artist is to be found in his failure to realize plastic design. It lies in his inability to handle form successfully. But this inability is forced on him by the materials with which he has to work. Even if he cannot realize the plastic design, he can effect a formal organization. And, beauty is a function of formal organization. The manner in which its components are interrelated reveals form which may here be viewed as an expressive organization of the materials. This takes us to Bell, Fry, and Reid.

'Significant form', says Clive Bell, is the one quality common to all works of art. Generalizing this, L. A. Reid notes that 'beauty is just expressiveness' and that 'the true aesthetic form is expressive form'. By significant form, Bell meant 'relations and combinations of lines and colours, aesthetically moving forms'. It is an integrated unity of meaning and perceived form, and it is analogous to Prall's 'surface texture'.

Significant form does not mean mere formalism or simple expressionism. What it actually means is not quite clear. It seems to be a very fine but obscure expression. Taking significant form to be an indefinable, ultimate quality, Fry observes that from the contemplation of, say, a beautiful pot, and as an effect of its harmony of line and texture and colour, 'there comes to us a feeling of purpose; we feel that all these sensually logical conformities are the outcome of a particular feeling, or of what, for want of a better word, we call an idea; and we may even say that the pot is the expression of an idea in the artist's mind'. As Fry admits, this significant form corresponds to Flaubert's 'expression of the idea'; and we do not know what Flaubert meant by it. By significant form is meant concrete significant form. Berenson would define it with reference to tactile values and movement. To be aesthetic, the figure in painting must convey 'ideated sensations of touch and movement'. This seems to be parodied by Housman who

associated a good poem with some movement in the spinal column, in the liver, in the abdomen, or in the nervous system.

Form presupposes an arrangement, a plan, of something. It involves a structure. It appears as shape. It is relational, and it is ever growing. As an outline, it is one with the skeletal structure.

The skeletal structure is the plan, the over-all arrangement. It enables us to understand a work of art. But the organic structure involves the inter-relations of the various elements in a work of art. This depends on meaning. Here we get dependent beauty which presupposes some concept or other; and here we get the basis for the emphasis on delineation as the essential feature of the plastic arts. Such a work pleases by its bare form. But the bare form is not the truly aesthetic one because it tends to be static and therefore no form at all.

While the temporal movement reveals the true character of form, there are spatial forms which involve a considerable complexity of kinaesthetic and organic experience. That is, the perceived objects come to appear expressive. In answering how this happens, Lotze, Vischer, and Lipps advanced the theory of *Einfühlung* or Empathy. This doctrine does emphasize the symbolic character of the work of art. But it ignores the nature and value of form. Moreover, the doctrine may be made to work as long as we are concerned with the so-called beautiful works of art. But there is ugliness which, too, belongs to the field of aesthetics. It is not easy to argue that the spectator imputes his own ugliness to an external entity that he perceives. The only way out of this difficulty for the empathist is to fall back on a variety of illusionism. Von Hartmann and Lange argued that beauty depends on the combinations of the secondary qualities. It does not reside in the real physical objects, or in mental reality. This is an extreme position favouring the vanish-

ing of aesthetic form and of all art. As Volkelt observed, art presents the transformation of the actual material, movement, feeling, and space. It is the emerging, growing form that shapes its material and movement. That is, the essence of a work of art does not exist before it is actually created. It is not a mere fabrication of symmetry, balance, and proportion. It is not even the product of an entirely voluntary process. It is, however, a process determined and regulated by the primary aesthetic awareness of form.

Out of this awareness, there arise some characteristics. Clarity, for instance, is achieved through the author's sense of form. This sense of form involves the manner of treatment and also a specific form otherwise known as the compositional pattern. How a something is expressed is the problem of the manner of treatment; and this is a function of what is expressed and for what purpose. Out of this function, arises what is called the subsidiary form. Clarity, continuity, cogency, structural force, rhythm, and the like are some of the aspects of subsidiary form. They effect the congruity of the units.

The sense of form arises in the original experience and contemplativeness of the artist. The artist is at liberty to pursue a single aspect of form, or to take up two or more aspects.

In the first case, we get the forms like the simple lyric in literature. But the combination of two or more forms gives rise to the secondary properties known as balance, symmetry, and rhythm. Their function is to suggest the condition or nature of the artistic form. The sum total of these properties is called composition. Composition and technique arise in answer to the demands made by form. That is, artistic form is not the product of any technical craftsmanship. It is not the same as formal beauty. It is a specific object of immediate and intrinsic satisfaction. To this extent, there is truth in the formula of art for art's sake. But since the form is expressive form, art is at the same time for life's sake.

Artistic form is a unity. Its simplicity or complexity depends on the medium in and through which the form is revealed. The artistic integration of the components depends on artistic form. But the artistic rhythm is a product of the artistic form. The artistic form is the relational continuum, the first articulation of the imaginative activity. It cannot be circumscribed or regulated by any external rules. Imagination manifests itself as the form and the rest is managed by this form as it were. The essential aesthetic quality of any work of art is to be found in this aesthetic form.

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## THE SPIRITUAL IMPACT OF RAMAKRISHNA-VIVEKANANDA ON NIRALA

BY SRIMATI KAMALA RATNAM

My first introduction to the living poetry and, through it, to the personality of Sri Suryakanta Tripathi, whose pen name was Nirala, came during my visit to Ujjain in November last. I had gone there to participate in the annual Kālidāsa festival which centres around paintings and sculpture based on his immortal works, the staging of his

dramas and research discussions. Poet Shivamangal Singh, 'Suman', now Principal of Madhava College, Ujjain, is a lifelong devotee and admirer of Nirala. In between sessions and during car journeys, the conversation would invariably turn to Nirala, for this great son of India and Hindi poet had breathed his last barely four weeks back.

The death of Nirala in tragic circumstances, which were his lot during the last twenty years of his life, has shocked the Indian literary world and particularly, the Hindi writers into a realization of the sad plight in their personal lives even when they are read and appreciated by the most enlightend and effective section of their people. The story of Nirala's life is the story of great suffering and sacrifice for the cause of Hindi. The continuation of English as the medium of instruction and administration all over the country even after fifteen years of independence is regarded by many as a great stumbling block in the growth and development of the complete Indian personality. Nirala also felt this and suffered for it every moment of his life. He knew that the true joys and sufferings, the hopes and aspirations of his people could not be expressed through a foreign medium. And so he devoted his entire life to the cause of serving Hindi which was his mother-tongue.

Suryakant Tripathi was born in 1896 to Brahmin parents of a district of eastern U.P., which has given many distinguished poets and critics to the Hindi language in modern times. Nirala's parents had moved to Mahishadal in Bengal in search of employment, with the result that Nirala was nurtured in Bengali environments. He spoke and wrote fluent Bengali and some of his earliest works were written in the Bengali language. He switched over to Hindi after he came in contact with his talented and gifted wife who had a wonderful insight into the Hindi language. Nowadays, it is possible to make some sort of a living by writing poems and articles in Hindi, but it was not so when Nirala began writing. By the time he was twenty, he had lost both father and mother and, not in the distant future, he was destined to lose his wife also. Nirala was passionately devoted to his wife, and for a long time after her death, he used to roam about the cremation grounds of his village in search of a bead or broken glass-bangle,

which he would press to his aching heart. His grief nearly drove him mad and sitting on a small hillock, he would, for hours, watch the floating procession of dead bodies in the river. His strong physique and athletic body withstood the ravages of grief for some time; but as hunger conquers everything, he entrusted his baby son and infant daughter to his mother-in-law and he went to Calcutta in search of a living.

It was in Calcutta, in 1921, that Nirala came directly in contact with the teachings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda. These made a lasting impression upon the mind of the young poet and laid the foundation of his philosophical ideas. At that time, he was employed in the Editorial Staff of the Ramakrishna Math's Hindi magazine called '*Samanvaya*' published by the Advaita Ashrama. Throughout this period, Nirala was in poor financial circumstances and he had to take up any work that came his way. During this period, he was asked to produce proof of his ability even to the extent of proof-reading! In his spare time, he read vigorously and was very much influenced by the writings of Vivekananda, Rabindranath, and other Bengali revivalists. His first poetic inspirations came to him in Calcutta. He translated much of Rabindranath, Bankim, and Sharat, and wrote all the poems which were later included in his first collection '*Patimal*'. He often frequented the theatre in Calcutta and kept company with singers, musicians, and athletes. Though essentially a man of literary habits, Nirala was a champion wrestler, and revelled in physical feats. Whenever he was introduced to young men who were dreaming of writing poetry, he would question them first about their health and interest in games. He believed that it was not possible to write good poetry without a strong and vigorous body. He was gifted with a resonant voice and had studied classical music. His character and entire personality, even his dress (whenever he

could afford it), bore the stamp of the Bengali cultural revival.

During the years of his active association with the Ramakrishna movement, Nirala drank deep at the fountain of Vedānta. The members of the Ramakrishna Mission trusted him so much that most of the editing work of their Hindi magazine was left to him. While working for the '*Samanvaya*', he used to live for sometime in the premises of the 'Udbodhan Karyalaya' in Bagh Bazar along with the Mission *sādhus*. It was here that he met Swami Saradananda in 1922. Nirala identified himself completely with the Mission and used to consider it as his very own. Later on also, while at Lucknow and other places, he used to take keen interest in the activities of the Mission centres there and supplied their libraries with books and periodicals, participating in their functions like an ordinary individual. He read all the works and sayings of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda, translated some of them, and assimilated them all. He has made some beautiful translations of Vivekananda's poems also, 'Let Śyāmā Dance There!' being one of the most beautiful of them. In Nirala, there was a combination of fearless power and compassionate motherhood. He was deeply influenced by the vigour and personality of Vivekananda and whenever he spoke very forcefully he used to say: 'When I speak like this, do not think that it is Nirala speaking. But think that it is Vivekananda who is speaking from within me. You know very well that I have digested all the 'work' of Vivekananda, and when something like this comes out of me, then you must know that it is Vivekananda who is speaking' (*Nirala Abhinandan-granth*, p. 114).

This influence was seen not only in his words, and outward bearings, but it had become a part of his mental working as well. Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda placed the experience of Vedānta above mere knowledge of it. The approach of many others before them was more dispassionate

and dialectic, a mere intellectual examination. But they added to it the element of feeling and the truth of experience. Nirala's poetry possesses this same quality of truth and experience. He is not satisfied with merely an intellectual examination of the situation. He is more concerned about the way it has its impact on persons. And this is what makes him such a great and gifted poet. In one of his best known poems '*Jāgo phir ek bār!*' 'Awake ye once again!' written in 1921, when he was in close association with the monks and was residing in the premises of the Balakrishna Press, he reminds us of:

'The great message of the *ṛṣis*  
Mystically given to atoms and sub-atoms:  
"You are great  
Always great,  
This weakness, cowardice,  
Submission to desires is transitory,  
You are the very Brahman  
The entire expanse of the Universe  
Does not equal the speck of dust upon  
your foot—

Arise and awake ye, once again!"

How reminiscent are these lines of the fiery words of Swami Vivekananda: 'Arise! Awake! And stop not till the Goal is reached!' This is a message of new strength and self-confidence for the downtrodden people of India. And further there is the same sense of values, as was seen in Vivekananda, when Nirala says:

'Who is there that can snatch away the  
cub from the lioness's lap?  
Will she keep quiet while there is yet life  
in her?

O Fool! It is only the goat-mother  
Who watches with fixed eye—  
Powerless—

When the butcher takes away her young,  
That weeps over her cursed fate with  
Bitter tears.

But what?

The strong shall win at last,  
This is no rumour of the West  
This is the *Gītā*, the *Gītā*,

Remember this again and again—

Awake ye, once again!

Swami Vivekananda prized fearlessness as a great quality and this sense of fearlessness had crossed its limits in Nirala. There was no obstacle, no opposition which he could not defy. He was even prepared to defy fate itself, and actually did so, when the astrologer read his horoscope and predicted that he was destined to marry again. No sooner had Nirala heard this than he gave the horoscope in the hands of his baby daughter who made short work of it. In spite of great family pressure, Nirala never married again. And it was not chance that such a spirit was housed in Nirala's body. Over six feet tall, his wrestler's chest thrust out, eyes, nose, and lips flashing and hair flying, he used to present the very picture of Śiva engaged in the *tāṇḍava* dance. He could challenge the whole world. Had he a teacher like Ramakrishna who would show him the road to *sannyāsa*, he would have been a great *sannyāsin*. As Vivekananda wanted his countrymen to be, Nirala was fired by an intense sense of patriotism. Vivekananda had defined Advaita in terms of hard work, intense patriotism, and a new sense of self-respect. Nirala gave a new turn to Hindi poetry by introducing these very elements in it. The ideal of 'service as worship' preached by Vivekananda appeared in Nirala in his overwhelming sense of self-sacrifice. Towards the close of his life, Nirala did don the ochre, but he was too much of a poet to surrender himself completely to it. Yet Nirala gave the utmost importance to *sannyāsins*. Their life and experiences were very real to him. This was owing to the spiritual impact of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda movement upon Nirala. One whole poem entitled '*Sevā-prārambha*' describes in glowing terms the first attempt made by the Ramakrishna Mission at organized service. In his essay on 'Swami Saradanandaji Maharaj and I', he describes some of his spiritual experiences which cannot be

proved on the basis of science. Swamiji appeared to him like the living image of Hanumān. He wrote something with his finger on his neck and Nirala felt as if the words had burnt themselves into him. The short story '*Bhakta our Bhagavān*' is a curious mixture of the poet's home environment and the atmosphere of the Ramakrishna Mission. In this story, Nirala sees the living contours of the map of India in the image of Mahāvīra carrying a mountain peak in one hand and the mace in the other. For sheer beauty and grandeur, this conception has no parallel. His book '*Prabandha-Padma*' (*The Lotus of Essays*) is dedicated to Swami Saradananda whom he considered to be an *avatāra* of Mahāvīra. In this connection, it is interesting to note that Vivekananda had wished to introduce the worship of Mahāvīra in Bengal, in order to give impetus to the feelings of strength and bravery in the people. The admirers of Nirala consider him to be the literary counterpart of this Mahāvīra spirit. Such forceful and powerful stirrings had not been heard in Hindi literature before. Nirala was the pioneer of free-verse in Hindi and he traced its origin in the powerful unbridled metre of the Vedas themselves in order to satisfy editors who refused to publish him and critics who found fault with him.

Ramakrishna and Vivekananda gave the knowledge of Advaita to Nirala. They also taught him that service to humanity was not contrary to Vedānta. This created a conflict within the poet: 'If man and the world are illusory, why waste time in serving them?' In his poem entitled '*Adhivāsa*', there is a picture of this mental conflict. The poet asks 'Where is my *adhivāsa*, my final rest?' The answer is, 'that point where all activity ceases'. But as long as the poet is moved by the joys and sorrows of the world around him, how can his activity cease? The poet hears the call of the miserable around him and he rushes to serve them, to clasp them to his breast, and that is the end of his

'*adhivāsa*', his salvation. And for this he has no regrets. There is the beauty of total dedication in his renunciation of soul-perfection. The ecstasy is so great for the moment, that the goal is completely forgotten. Some of his most powerful poems contain this challenge to *advaitavāda*. His poems '*The Beggar*' and '*The Widow*' are very good examples of this. The beggar comes on the road, pitifully, regretfully. His stomach is a hollow pit, and his body, resting on a stick, is a pack of bones. Even the cloth, which he carries to hold the few grains of alms, is tattered and torn, and two hungry children walk by his side. His cracked lips are wetted only with tears—when he receives nothing from the rich alms-giver, the dispenser of his destiny. In the poem '*The Widow*', all the unfortunate widows of India have combined into 'one motionless flame, immersed in thought, like the memory left behind by the mad dance of time. . . . When she weeps silently, because no sound has the right to escape her lips, then the sky hears her with infinite patience, and the wind stills itself, even the rivers withdraw their waves in order to listen to her'. The poet addresses God and says: 'Oh God! have you ever wiped a single tear? Or is your task to create sorrow for all?' Every tear that falls like a dew-drop from the leaf spells out the misfortunes of India.

In another poem entitled '*Dāna*' (*Charity*), he describes the infinite wealth and beauty of nature which man receives as a gift from God. Nature, in her bounty, showers her choicest treasures on man. Song, beauty, infinite colour, smell, the rise and fall of language and emotion, and many other things higher than these are given to him, because he is the finest of God's creation. And then the poet's attention is drawn by a host of monkeys sitting on one side of the road over

the bridge, and a row of beggars on the other side 'black-bodied, near to death, starving'. What is the cause of their misery, the poet demands. But as often, the answer is silence. Suddenly, there is a ray of hope; a holy Brahmin emerges from his bath in the river. He has poured sacred water on Śiva's head, and his cloth is full of rice and other grains. The Brahmin is very pious, a devotee of Rāma, he worships Śiva every day, reads the *Rāmāyaṇa*, and utters the name Nārāyaṇa only. Seeing the monkeys, he takes special delicacies from his cloth and feeds them. As for the beggars, he did not even notice them. But, far in the distance, the devil was looking; he screamed: 'I am man, the finest in creation!' Nirala was deeply influenced by the teachings of Advaita. He tried to feel himself one with humanity, sharing in its joys and miseries. He very often said that he would sacrifice his own salvation for the misery of the world around him. His most powerful work is '*Rām kī Śaktipūjā*', a long poem of nearly 300 lines. This is not only one of the best poems in Hindi literature, but one of the very best in the literature of the world. I heard it for the first time from the mouth of poet 'Suman', who reads it with very much the same fervour and spirit with which the poet himself read it. Suman's declamation is so real and alive that for a moment it seems that the spirit of the master is speaking through his disciple. The poem has infinite power, sublimation, inspiration, and the will to stake all in order to achieve the objective. Earlier, Swami Saradananda had written a book '*Bhārate Śaktipūjā*'. This must have been one of the strongest inspirations for this poem. By worshipping the mother, Sri Ramakrishna had given a new dignity and sanctity to woman. Nirala not only upheld this, he elevated it to a poet's vision.

# INDIA IN CULTURAL TRANSITION

BY PROFESSOR BATUKNATH BHATTACHARYA

Inter-cultural understanding to promote world peace and unity is the high purpose to which the Ramakrishna Mission, justifying the sacred name it bears aloft, is dedicated. Sri Ramakrishna's is the gospel of harmony of faiths, and Swami Vivekananda, as its evangelist, stands out in recent history as the apostle of human fellowship and the voice of peace on earth and goodwill among nations. These aims of vital importance to mankind are focussed and spotlighted by the UNESCO's project for an international forum of cultural exchange, and are, in these days, voiced widely by the agencies and intellectuals associated with it. This cultural climate and spirit of *rapprochement* is particularly suited to elicit and define East-West reactions to the basic problem of modern life. The position of free India is of special interest amidst this world-wide ferment of thought stirred by the new conditions of human existence.

Does the approach of the Orient to these questions differ from the Occident's? Adequate answer can be given only upon a survey of mankind today and through an insight into courses of thought among the leading classes in society. Despite the variations in human nature due to heredity, geography, and history, the fact of its essential sameness is the bedrock of faith on which all movements of unification must rest. No utterance on this is more explicit or emphatic than Swami Vivekananda's: 'We are absolutely one, we are physically one, we are mentally one, and as a spirit, it goes without saying, we are one, if we believe in spirit at all.' This Vedāntic idea is increasingly being endorsed by the findings of science, by physiology and psychology, as well as sociology. In the clarity of his vision, however, the Swami was equally emphatic in his recognition of diversity as the soul of

creation. Absolute equality that which means a perfect balance of all the struggling forces in all the planes can never be in this world. Variety is the very soul of life. When it dies out entirely, creation will die. Just as there is an individuality in every man, so there is a national individuality; each nation has a message to deliver, each nation has a mission to fulfil. Likewise, says Rabindranath: 'Every race is a limb of humanity. Every unit wins its place by an adequate answer to the question, What has it contrived as a gift, as help for mankind?' We must accept the hard saying that out of diversity comes advance. However patent and amply proved, this diversity is what man finds so difficult to reconcile himself to in actual practice. 'Today, the world over, the problem is not how to be one by effacing differences, but how to be one while retaining them. Man loses his patience in binding a whole community by a single ideal.' These words of Tagore pinpoint the problem of our day—the tension of economic and political fanaticisms which divide the world and whip up passions more devastating than the religious bigotries of the past—and the delusion that big powers cherish about their office of running the world and the infallibility of the recipe they offer for the ills of mankind. The effort of religion, according to Goethe, is to reconcile man to the inevitable. The cult of unity in the midst of inevitable diversity is mankind's sorest need and the fundamental tenet of its religion of humanism.

The immense cultural variety of our globe has been marked off under seven regional groups: Islamic, Indian, Sino-Japanese, Russian (which is partly Asian and partly east European), the Western, comprising Euro-American, Hispano-Indian of the middle and south Americas, besides the African and the marginal sub-groups. Apart



from race and habitat, history and natural resources, the factors accounting most for the present-day variations are mechanical industries, mass education, and urbanization—in a word, the degree of permeation of the modern standard of living. To reduce this mosaic of cultural features and complexions to two typical categories would be a form of over-simplification. But the process of bringing about the unity of mankind is evidenced by global assemblies like U.N.O. ; its debates manifest a uniform grammar of thought and idioms of emotional articulation where interests and passions are at work. It would seem that the dimensions of man's psyche are not as multiple as those of external nature and a break-up of the contents of the inner being may distinguish two broad make-ups, conveniently termed Oriental and Occidental, without too strict a reference to latitude and longitude. Thus considered, certain ideations and attitudes would be found to be more definite in the southern and far-eastern Asia than in other regions. No doubt, these traditional ideas and values are largely being altered by the closer and continued contact of the leaders of thought and the educated strata in different countries, facilitated by modern systems of transport, publicity, and communication. In the masses of people, however, tradition has deeper roots and a longer lease than in the upper classes. In India of the pre-independence days, the positive components of the traditional attitudes and judgements were widely held up. Rabindranath, for instance, is a remarkable exponent of India's traditional values, notwithstanding the immense horizon his mind habitually contemplated. Truth, for India, he says, is monism in knowledge, world-fraternity in sentiment, and selfless austerity in practice. He stresses, in particular, 'the hardy strength of poverty, the stilled intensity of silence and the austere benevolence of renunciation'. He points out that a sense of cosmic harmony, the sanctity of all crea-

tion, non-injury to life, sovereignty of man's soul, its liberation as above physical freedom, sacrifice as the root-principle of social polity, the highest prestige in society of integrity and ascetic virtue, and the end of life willingly accepted and consciously prepared for, have not been matters of talk, but qualities widely inculcated by institutions. It is out of natural inclination stimulated by Indian influence, that these traits have been accorded the highest place in south-east Asia, China, and Japan.

In the regional culture of the West, other values have been actively cultivated, to wit, ceaseless wrestling with nature to win her secrets for human ends, self-assertion as man's distinction, an active career till the close, supreme worth of personal freedom, cardinal duty of loyalty to the State, political pre-occupations above ethical ones, and death being regarded as the last defeat. These impulses and judgements have been, for ethnic, climatic, and economic reasons, more esteemed than the Christian virtues of meekness, forbearance, return of good for evil, etc. These features of the Western mind are fast being assimilated in other cultural regions also. And the claim iterated by eminent thinkers that, in technique and values of life, the West leads the way and the rest of the world follows it, is ripening into a truism.

Time alone will test whether the aim of homogeneity of humanity would materialize through the phase of conscious evolution, to which civilization is now sought to be lifted or whether the pessimistic view that life, by perfecting itself, wills its own annihilation would sum up human destiny. Against the background of the Berlin tension, super nuclear tests in disregard of worldwide shrieks and protests, and mounting fear complex and warnings against total extinction, the odds for and against human survival are equal. One wonders if the economic aid and cultural co-operation programme will be swift-footed enough to overtake the growing

threat and avert a catastrophe. But, leaving aside the dark thought of this way to suicidal insanity, homogeneity requires an educational curriculum planned to foster the will of mankind to bring about a common ethics which allows no double standard, a unitary system of knowledge with a set of principles valid for all inquiries—social and scientific. All this presupposes a new mental attitude for mankind, different from the one historically proved to this date, and such alone would make the spread of a Sarvodaya (world-good) movement like Acharya Vinoba Bhave's land-gift mission possible, and through it, balance the surplus and deficit in Nature's bounty all over the earth. As Swami Vivekananda declared: No amount of political or social manipulation of human conditions can cure the evils of life. It is a change of the soul for the better that alone will cure the evils of life. Sister Nivedita, too, said that India might accept sociology as a working hypothesis for the synthesis of sciences, but her own conviction was that psychology occupies that place. Cultural disparities and religious differences do not alienate or antagonize peoples so much as political 'isms', national ambition, and economic interests. Political freedom for every distinct human group, mass education, and economic self-sufficiency and ease for all peoples are being pushed on by U.N.O. agencies as well as through national initiative. Cultural divergences are losing sharpness where material interests have nothing to gain by their accentuation or perpetuation. Complete understanding of the constituents of racial individuality, of the dynamic urge of nationalism, of customs, rituals, taboos, and social institutions reveals the basic oneness of the human psyche and explains the mystery of the age which both binds and loosens, prompts social, asocial and anti-social expressions of personality, the unitive urge, and the conserving inertia. In the words of a modern thinker, men are at one in the submarine depths of their psychic life.

The relativity of ethical concepts and judgements is no longer a disputable hypothesis after the accumulated data since the time of Fraser. But does it negate absolute morality or the basic oneness of man's moral constitution? Marriage customs and pre-nuptial conduct, duty of man to man, truth and honesty of dealings, and family relationship endlessly vary from the primitive to the most forward society. And yet, it is true, as Swami Vivekananda says, that principles exist and we do not make but discover them. Human regeneration cannot proceed on the quicksands of ethical incertitude. The certitude and steadiness in morals have been the gifts of religion.

In the beginning, apart from sacred writ and revelation, ethics in most societies, had not found its first roots. In India, the Vedas are declared to be the source of all norms of conduct or *dharma*. The buttress of morality has been religious sanction. Sanskrit texts treating of a large range of subjects have been drawn upon through the ages to meet all the needs of adjustment and revision. In them are enunciated the broadest ideas of world unity and human fraternity. Hindu social polity was, no doubt, based on privileges and was hierarchical in character. And the problem is to adjust this basic mould to the modern ideas of equality though these had also been fostered by many sects in this land from age to age. Myths and legends command varying degrees of credence and authority with different social strata according to the leaven of modern ideas. And their allegorical import and deeper significance are widely appreciated. Religion, understood as the reaction of the whole personality to the experience of the universe as a whole, or as the deepest probe into the science and ethics of life and the mystery of existence and ultimate reality, is unlikely to be dislodged from its high place in the Indian mind; rather, it may gain a greater hold on account of its philosophical strength and support. No doubt, the nine-

teenth century saw religious ferment and social upheaval of diverse kinds in India; but the age-old respect for spiritual experience and authority has always withstood every shock. Considering the philosophical outlook modern science is developing, a sharp conflict of it with religion, as in Europe, may not be the problem in this country. Indian religions, being averse to proselytization and inculcating respect for men of other faiths who strive for self-realization in their chosen ways, have not bred here intolerance of the type noted elsewhere.

The ascetic life has been held up to the highest reverence as embodying the ideal of self-denial and even-minded serene meditateness, making for tireless, disinterested social service (of which some well-known institutions are living examples in this age. It is an inestimable asset in social economy, specially in times of crisis such as may lie ahead in the growing complexities of an overcrowded world. Extreme self-denial, said Swami Vivekananda, is the centre of all morality. The formation of society, the institution of marriage, the love for children, our good works, morality, and ethics are all different forms of renunciation. Notwithstanding the claim of certain ideologists that we have created or inherited a civilization which can dispense with personal sacrifice, it is obvious that in the anticipated future, when the earth will have bare standing room for the human race, a stricter code of conduct, a keener civic sense, a deeper concern for public good, and a finer perception of other's rights and feelings will be imperative.

The Indian scene, fast, yet silently changing, may provide a sample of the transformation East-West contact is effecting. Non-vocal masses, eighty per cent agricultural and rural, and only thirteen per cent of them literate, still continue and uphold the old social patterns and usages. But the example of the forward urban section and recent social legislation on marriage, divorce,

inheritance, and caste disabilities is telling surely, though slowly, upon old ways of life. In dress and diet, foreign travel and family pattern, tradition is relaxing with unexpected suddenness. But communal, provincial, and caste ties and attachments are still being utilized for political ends by all parties. And even the forward sections have a life divided between two worlds—one dynamic, and the other not yet born, as also between science and religion. The Indian ethico-spiritual heritage is not depreciated or disowned even by the modernists, although the precise import and contents of it are rarely defined or formulated. Sharp divisions of classes, based on economic standing and service cadres are springing up, and point to the dominance of economic interests. Egalitarianism is moulding external behaviour. And backward and submerged sections becoming self-conscious are ascertaining equality and independence, and sometimes, as in the South, breaking away from the old social framework. Stratification in the Hindu polity had a pacifying effect and made the interior groups self-contained, each with its *amour propre*, its special prestige. Education, having still a long leeway to make up, is yet to dissipate this. Hindu exclusiveness mostly attached itself to knowledge, virtue, and austerity, and these found in any unit, always won esteem in society. The road to equality of privilege in this regard will widen with the spread of Sanskrit culture. The break-up of family life is a symptom of the economic revolution the socialistic pattern fostered by the State is effecting. The effect of it, as everywhere, is to saddle the welfare State with omnibus functions and diverse liabilities. Industrialization in India, like agrarian reform, is still a child of State policy more than that of popular upsurge and enterprise. Divided between public and private sectors, it is generally criticized as enormously increasing the economic disparity and creating more unemployment instead of reducing it. Out-

cries against inflation, high prices, diminishing average of consumer goods, and the State's helplessness to curb and control the profit motive are frequently featured in the press. Resentment against the rich becoming richer is not ebullient except among party leaders. Industrialization is yet to establish itself in peoples' estimation as the solvent of their economic ills, looking to the fringe of the population it benefits showing signs of prosperity along with the mental traits of an industrial labour population. Reducing the family to the lowest denomination, the old family unit is breaking up with the spread of town life and industrial pursuits. The drift towards town life grows unchecked. Industrial slum areas steadily growing and urban limits widening under State schemes, the countryside, too, is slowly being urbanized. Power generation lags far behind the need for consumption. Automation, which benefits employers, is viewed as a menace by labour. Mechanization is pushing its way into industries, and slowly and meagrely into agriculture. Suitability or not of mechanized tillage and the use of purely chemical fertilizers to Indian conditions are still a moot question.

Modern life can hardly claim to be a wholly new and discrete phase of civilization. Yet it has certain distinctive features like exploratory audacity, ethical free-thinking, a one-world outlook, and a large, though somewhat abstract, humanism. Its obvious marks are speed and mobility, mechanization for leisure, labour-saving, and loosening of old ties and loyalties. These are affecting the Indian mind as it does humanity everywhere. Enterprises like polar settlement or space flight prove the unbounded possibilities of human invention and organization, as also in the soundness of humanity's core. This faith is most needed in a shrinking world with an explosive population and limitless requirements.

In India, the sway of tradition is still unshaken in many of its usages, rites, and

ceremonies—a contrast to the non-conforming extremism of the nineteenth century. Old temples are being rebuilt, and new ones are being constructed. Worship, specially community worship, is multiplying, while many of the old taboos are giving way, and the living faith behind time-honoured forms and customs is being eroded by the new attitude to life.

The *gurukula* system of education, with its discipline and personal touch, is being imitated in many present-day institutions with remarkable results, while Yogic exercises, too, are becoming popular with the hope of gaining psycho-physical vigour and powers. The Indian cultural heritage, unique in its wealth and variety, in arts, literature, and philosophies, calls for earnest dissemination; and its positive features which can meet the all-time needs of humanity should be fully explored. India's ancient wisdom has been, from age to age, adapted and popularized in the provincial languages, leading to spiritual awakening. Its classics and masterpieces are now studied and admired in foreign countries not only for their literary beauty, but also for the light they shed on the roots of ethics and society. Sanskrit, if taught compulsorily, can help the emotional integration of the people of India today.

Not homogeneity, but unity in diversity is the Indian vision of the future of world culture. From Ram Mohan Roy onwards, her great men have been of one accord on this point. In cultural values and basic assumptions of life's conduct, the West is essentially one, but religion, language, and local customs, in spite of extensive efforts for unification, have not eliminated dissensions and conflicts completely. Knowledge, understanding, and sympathy at different levels of economic and technological development between races and countries can, by and large, make thinking alike, while active aid and co-operation in the vital undertakings of mutual well-being can create a disposition to solve differences

through discussion and negotiation and make for human kinship. In the phase of closer associations in the midst of tussles and crises in race-culture relations, India's unitive wisdom and ideals will be of inestimable help and can stimulate inter-cultural harmony.

## THE SACRED WILL

BY SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

The encounter between Christ and the individual soul—this, according to Christianity, is the beginning of the history of the Sacred, which is also the beginning of sacred history. For Christ and his redemptive skill, this is no beginning; for he existed from when, no time can tell. But for man this is the beginning, as it was then that Christ came to impart his sacredness to man in sin, and transform him by his saving power. This saving power has no end and it stretches in the farthest future, giving man infinite possibilities of meeting Christ and getting saved. For, according to Christianity, man's nature is sinful in spite of Christ's action on it, and so long as it is sinful, the necessity of meeting Christ's face in history stretches through infinite time.

In Vedānta, conceptions of the Sacred are different as conceptions of man's nature and man's encounter with God are different. In Vedānta, man's nature is essentially divine, sacred, pure, and transparent, though for the time being, under a temporary eclipse. Like a light under a bushel, this divinity under eclipse gives man constant impulsion to emerge out of it, to manifest the sun of his divinity freed from clouds. And so it is this effort to manifest his true nature fully that makes history for Vedānta. According to Vedānta, man meets with the face of God, too, during various stages of history. But it is his own face he sees; for God makes himself accessible to man through incarnations, and incarnations are God-men or man-Gods who punctuate history.

There is the personal God in Vedānta; but this personal God is a working aspect of the Absolute of philosophy, and that Absolute is in reality, our innermost Self.

There is no question in Vedānta of the history of the Sacred beginning with the encounter of the incarnation with a selected few, and their redemption. For Vedānta, man's redemption is a *fait accompli*, and if dependant on anything, it is on himself and not on God. This immediately brings in ideas of grace and free-will in Vedānta on the one hand, and in dualistic religions on the other, which is really the subject-matter of this article and which we will discuss a little later. To say that we are divine in nature, that this divinity is under a temporary eclipse, and that this eclipse acts as a momentum for searching the sacred and divine in us is to say that this life of ours is a self-accepted limitation. There is nobility and grandeur in an accepted limitation for it is conscious of itself and hence a certitude; such a certitude is given to us by the scriptures which are the inspired utterances of spiritually illumined sages and saints. The same scriptures, in portions relating to cosmology, tell us that this world with its space and time, with its plants and human beings came into manifestation as the result of a self-willed act of disequilibrium in the eternal spirit. From the spirit came space, from air came fire, from fire came water, from water came earth, from earth came the plants and from plants came human beings. The world is not the creation of a God, but the result of a self-

willed moment of disequilibrium of the spirit, which means that man is not indebted to a God for his existence or for the values for which he lives. The gradation of manifestation from space to plants and man does not mean a series temporal, nor that man is a product of plants. It only shows the spiritual order of evolution and involution. For it is the same Spirit that preferred a disequilibrium and manifested the world, and resides in man, as his soul, as his will. It is the same will that chose to manifest the world that is the will of man. The world-manifestation is not of the past, but an eternal springing forth of man's spirit.

In the case of God making his encounter with a chosen few whom he redeems and charges with a mission, God initiates a sacred history. History here is a necessity. In Vedānta, history is not a necessity; it is a concession. For man is as near to the spirit today as he was ever. At no time was he separated from it. Only ignorance separated him from it, and the history of his progress is a history of ignorance. In the former case, the Sacred is put through history; it has need of history to manifest itself; God has need of history to save man from his sinfulness, whereas in the second case, there is no history at all. What history can there be for the sacred timeless Spirit and sacred causeless Will? But there is history if one wants it.

Herein the Sacred emerges, independent of a God, or without God. Man is sacred in his own right, because of the divine Spirit he enshrines now as ever before, the divine Spirit which has no history. But because he has been forgetful of this treasure, because the soul has been under a partial eclipse, he has been searching for a fuller integration with its glory. Man has a partial vision of the Divine which leaves him discontent and pushes him to a greater and fuller grasp. Man is in search for a fuller autonomy, for truth, goodness, and beauty, and the search for these values is a search of his soul for its totality. A search of his soul for its totality

is a search for sacredness. From the side of man, it is longing, effort, and search. From the side of the Spirit whose nature is autonomy, truth, goodness, and beauty, it is the stillness of accomplishment, the peace of realization. The Spirit, like a light-house, sends out his rays of truth, goodness, and beauty. Man's effort at integration with the sacredness of the Spirit is endless. Spirit's dynamism to lead man to sacredness is also endless. Here, we find unity and harmony between man and spirit, the former in search of the sacred, his soul, the latter in its radiation of the sacred. The fact that man enshrines the Divine and that he has partial visions of its splendour, makes the search for totality, psychologically speaking, a self-accepted limitation. I agree to be small, for the pleasure and thrill of becoming big. When man accepts a limitation, the Sacred in him does so automatically. From the beginning to the end of the search, the Sacred evolves, *so to say*, giving man the certitude of a self-transcendence, that was in fact lying asleep in him without need to be awakened.

No God is required to egg on man in his search of the Sacred. His soul is enough. Is it not God who gave man his soul? may be a question. And the Vedāntic answer is: 'None gave it to him; for all things can be given, not the soul.' It is his soul that invests truth with sacredness, goodness with sacredness, and beauty with sacredness, and not God. If in some dualistic religions God is the repository of infinite auspicious qualities, it is the certitude felt in our soul that demands us to visualize such a God.

The Sacred without God is not a blasphemy. Even if it is blasphemy, does not blasphemy participate in the sacredness? It is not blasphemy, not in the sense what Meister Eckhart says is not so. He says: 'God is not good; I am good.' I am what I am because I am above the dualism of good and bad: I am the supreme Good. The creator-God or the usual God is not this supreme Good. In this idea of the search of

the soul as the search for sacredness where the soul depends on its inner directive and not on God, we steer clear of all fanaticism and dogmatism about the Sacred and also of false prophets of the Sacred. Man's soul is sacred and so life is sacred. Those who do violence against the sacredness of life by their utterly materialistic ideologies do violence to themselves. For the sacredness of life is not mocked by the suicides, philosophical, racial, or otherwise. The sacred in history can be made use of by dictators to their advantage. But the Sacred in the soul is above all dictatorship and hypocrisy.

The Sacred of which we are speaking cannot also be secularized. Secularization is only a canalization of the Sacred into fields which are arid of the Sacred. But, according to us, no field is completely arid of it. A secularization which is ninety-nine per cent secular (using secular in the ordinary language) and one per cent sacred is not a real secularization. For the one per cent sacred is enough to purify and transform the ninety-nine per cent of the secular.

Man's search for his soul has taken various forms since the beginnings of human thought. In the 'know thyself' of Socrates, in the 'Republic' of Plato and his ideal of philosopher-kings, and Aristotle's ideal of happiness as the exercise of the highest virtue which is the best part of us, we find this search taking shape sometimes as search for spiritual autonomy, sometimes for beauty and happiness, but always for balance of being. That is the one phrase that can summarize the Greek search. In Kant, the search took a subjective turn; and, in an effort to deliver the subject from all objectivity, he invested with autonomy his 'categorical imperative'.

Nietzsche's superman gives a sudden turn to the German search and pushes it into a blind political alley. Nietzsche's thought which is powerful in certain respects, puts the philosophical clock back in Europe for some time, until Bergson comes to give it a spiritual touch through his *elan vital* that is uncon-

querable in its power to take the human mind up the ladder of creative evolution. In the libido of Freud, the search gives psychological autonomy and power to man's soul, but the spiritual content is lacking.

In India, from the beginning of her thought, man's search for soul's totality has been fully defined. The scope of its search is spiritual autonomy, truth, goodness, and beauty. The earliest writings of Indian thinkers (which modern scholars affirm are the earliest writings of thinking man) contain visions of man's spiritual essence in its totality, as the home of truth, goodness, and beauty, and the immediate possibility of realizing this essence in its full autonomy. This vision is *Ātman-Brahman*, the totality that man can aspire to achieve, a totality that is irreducible by man's partial comprehension or mal-comprehension. Ideas such as Brahman is Reality, sacred, and non-dual and Brahman is existence, knowledge, felicity, peace, sacredness, and beauty abound in the Upaniṣads.

Man's nature is essentially divine, and truth, goodness, and beauty are paths illumined by the Spirit, giving him direction and purpose in his endeavours and growth. Grace in Vedānta is to be conscious of this divine essence and its directives, first-hand. None can make us conscious of the Divine except He himself, acting as pure will. To say that a personal God or creator-God can bestow grace is to hamper the spontaneous flow of the light of the supreme Spirit as pure will. All that we have to do to merit grace is to keep our will untouched by any desire, even the desire for salvation. The will, untouched by desire, in its totality, is the God-head. The will is total when desire is not yet born; it reduces itself when it is put through means of achieving desires, until at last, it comes to a mere point when it actually touches the object willed for.

All this manifestation including man's will is the testimony of the Spirit's sacred will, sacred in the sense of being total. The

Spirit supreme willed and the manifestation was there. It is also the testimony of His grace, grace to be divided into two, subject and object, without which no knowledge would have been possible. So the Divine's will and grace are the same. Both are sacred.

The spirit or Godhead is in all things and beings in the form of will. There is a will at the heart of things, even as there is beauty in every form. The pleasure and freedom in life is to contact this will at the heart of things and to feel by and by its totality extending in a monolithic or an irreducible form in and through things, in other words, to feel its all-pervasive nature. When we talk of will it is one and all pervasive; when we talk of things, we have to talk of a will at the heart of things. But then, is it not total even at the heart of things? This is the mystery, if mystery it can be called.

This mystery was expressed in a telling manner in the *Gītā*. 'By Me all this world is pervaded in My unmanifested form. All beings dwell in Me, but I do not dwell in them. Nor do beings dwell in Me; behold my divine *yoga*! Sustaining all the beings, but not dwelling in them, is My Self, the cause of beings' (IX. 4-5). How can the spirit sustain all beings without dwelling in them, unless it is by His will? For will has no need of a body to manifest itself. Here the supreme Spirit wants to insist on His power and freedom to sustain beings without physically or materially dwelling in them, sustaining them by His pure will.

In man, it is the same will of the Divine that manifests as his will. When it is free even of the desire for salvation, then it is really free will and we use the word free will in that sense. Free will is not '*libre arbitre*'—arbitrary freedom. Man's will has two faces—one turned towards Being and the other turned towards becoming. The face turned to Being is always in meditation and peace. The one turned to becoming faces and uses man's intellect, mind, senses etc. The aspect turned to becoming collects

knowledge, experience. The other facing Being is the witness, it simply looks on the actions and decisions of the first, but at the same time inspires it.

According to Vedānta, knowledge happens in the following way: the sensorial apparatuses collect their data and present them to the mind, the mind questions or doubts them and presents them to *buddhi*, which, again, discriminates according to memory and presents it to the ego-sense which functioning in the hands of will says 'it is this or it is not this'. All apprehensions are acts of immediate awareness and hence acts of will. Will as free will or as freedom plays its role in three different ways to make knowledge possible.

First is the unifying or synthesizing function in all knowledge. The opposing or heterogeneous sense-data—we say opposing because, the auditive image of a thing is not the same as the visual image of the same thing—are unified into a whole as knowledge. No doubt, it is consciousness or the Self that does this synthesis. But no knowledge is valid unless related to a subject and this appropriation by the subject, which is the final act, is an act of will. Not only that, the plan of unity in every piece of knowledge is the design of the freedom of the will. There can be no unity without freedom.

Secondly, the apprehension of an object like 'it is this' is an act where memory or conception glides into perception. There is an immediacy about it; it is an immediate act of awareness. Time and space are abolished by this immediate awareness wherein the Self seizes the object as its own self and says this is Mr. John—or this is the same book. The Intemporal is touched here. This again is an act of the will.

The third aspect of the free will that enters into action is its extreme subjectivity. Every knowledge is made into a relation and pushed off as a predicate in a judgement and the will remains always as the subject. The subject never becomes the object. When



collecting experience, the subject enters into relation with the object, and even gives the impression of becoming the object. But when an experience is predicated or defined, the subject gets into subjective isolation and pushes off all experience which was once its own on to the predicate side. In other words, every experience is an effort to grasp the subject which fails, but which ends in knowledge. This again shows the extreme freedom of the will, or the freedom of the subject manifesting as will, to detach itself completely from all experience and be in isolated glory.

These three kinds of freedom which the will exercises in every act of knowledge, and specially, the last freedom of detaching itself completely, are forgotten when we speak of free will as something which is not free, which is the gift of somebody etc. The will of the Supreme is the same in our hearts and at the heart of things. It is always free and total in our hearts and becomes cramped and reduced as and when we make a choice to have this or that. This does not mean that we should not desire something or choose something. It only means that we should be aware of the total will behind each and every choice and desire. How can the free will be the gift of somebody? How can its freedom be spoiled by circumstances? It is always free and behind every act. Man alone of all creation is conscious of consciousness. In other levels of creation, consciousness sleeps or is awake, but is not conscious of itself. It is impossible to deny that this self-consciousness is behind every act and thought. Self-consciousness by a flash unites the two levels of consciousness and this unity is the act of the will. For will alone can unite two levels of consciousness and the will is total behind every act of self-consciousness.

To say that will as self-consciousness is behind every act and thought is to affirm the indivisible unity and cosmic nature of will. It is wrong to speak of the will in my

heart and the will at the heart of things as separate. This will is untouched by suffering, sin, and death. To separate the will into my will and the will at the heart of things is to sin against its unity and integral nature. We sin when we cut ourselves away from the unity of purpose and oneness of will underlying this creation. We sin when we act in a selfish way. Look at the liberated ones, Buddha and Christ, look at their courage of conviction. They had no single thought that injured the cosmic will, the cosmic good. Their acts always sprang from the conviction of a single will behind creation. In other words, they had no selfish motives. They were bold and were never afraid, for they knew that whatever they did and thought were in conformity, in harmony with the good of the All. This was their strength. This can be our strength too. If we can turn our thoughts and acts in the direction of the current of the cosmic will, or at least, make the maximum approximation to its unity of purpose through every act and thought, then we shall not be afraid of good and bad actions or their consequences. All will become good from the side of the will of the totality.

A selfish thought or act cuts the unity of this cosmic will. No doubt, we cannot help engaging in selfish thoughts and acts, in so far our lives have not the same quality as that of the liberated ones. But the knowledge that, at the source, the will is the totality and that it becomes cramped as it takes its path along channels of desire and choice is a saving knowledge.

When the integral nature and unity of my will is broken by a selfish thought, then I become weak morally and spiritually, and then I commit acts that violate the will of others. How true are the words of Swami Vivekananda: 'It is only the weak who sin.' I commit sin when my will is frustrated and is sick. A sinful act produces suffering, for a sinful act separates us from Reality by cutting the cosmic will. And all suffering

is of the nature of separation from Reality, from unity.

In traditional Vedāntic language, sin is an error of knowledge, a lack of knowledge. We already showed how the freedom of will enters in action in all knowledge. When this freedom does not do its role, the result is an eclipse of the will, from which results wrong knowledge and wrong action. Vedānta is against any emotional preoccupation with sin. In Vedānta, sin, so long as it is an empirical discovery and not a theological dogma, can be corrected by true knowledge of oneself, the knowledge 'who am I'. The consequence of self-knowledge is a new life and rehabilitation to will and its creativity as freedom.

How true is it that what is involved in sin is the will? The preoccupation and anguish of the sinner, as we all know, is not for what he has done, but for the fact that he does not see any possibility of correcting his feeble will which may err the very next moment. This possibility of falling again produces the anguish in the sinner. To quote the words of Sri Ramakrishna in a different context: When a neighbour died, the house-owner became very much anguished. When asked, he said: 'I am anguished not because my neighbour died, but that Death has found

my house and may visit me next.' The sinner's anguish is not caused by the past nor by the future, but by his present incapacity to rectify his sick and frustrated will.

If the sinner is not afraid of sin, but on the contrary, is conscious of his sin, then it is a quite different story. One cannot be conscious of sin in a responsible sense, unless the superior will lights a candle and allows the inferior part of us to 'go and sin no more'. The decision to sin no more can be ignited only in will's incandescence. So will has to be burned any way. There is an inevitable waste of will in which state alone lucidity can be had. We must lose life, to gain it, says Christ. We must, at least, mentally live through the sin and suffering of others to be enlightened. Buddha and Christ lived through the sins of others. They alone could do it, as they had no sin of their own. When we see one part of us go through hell-fire, or in better terms, get burnt up by the fire of purifying consciousness, then the Buddha and Christ sleeping in us get awakened and we are reborn. We are reborn to integrate with that total Will that is untouched by suffering, sin, and death.

## JOHN DEWEY'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

BY MR. SHAMSHUDDIN

Among the persons responsible for shaping the system of American education, two names stand foremost. They are John Dewey and Horace Mann. Neither of them, single-handedly, altered the educational scene of his country; rather, joined together, they formulated some of the major philosophical concepts which underlie the whole system of education in America. In fact, Horace Mann, a lawyer who later turned educator,

laid the foundation upon which John Dewey erected the structure of his system of education.

John Dewey, whose books have been published in many lands and languages, is essentially a pragmatist and an experimentalist. He is extremely practical in thinking and is mainly concerned with the practical success in life. He defined the educational process as one of continuous growth, and said:

'Infancy, youth, adult life—all stand on the same educative level in the sense that what is really learned at any and every stage of experience constitutes the value of that experience.' Thus Dewey feels that it is the chief business of life at every point to make living contribute to an enrichment of its total knowledge.

Regarding the purposes of education, he further said: 'Government, business, art, religion, all social institutions have a meaning, a purpose. That purpose is to set free and develop those capacities of human individuals without respect to race, sex, class, or economic status. And this is one with saying that the test of their value is the extent to which they educate every individual into the full stature of his responsibility. Democracy has many meanings, but if it has a moral meaning, it is found in resolving that the supreme test of all political institutions and industrial arrangements shall be the contribution they make to the all-around growth of every member of society.'

To John Dewey, philosophy is not merely a passive contemplation, but something which helps to solve the problems of life. To him 'Truth' or 'Reality' is not eternal, but something closely related to man and his life in social environment. It works in life and satisfies man's wants. In his opinion, there are no absolute moral principles or fixed values of life. But being created by men, they go on changing. Man thus becomes the experimenter and the creator of values. For doing this job successfully, it is necessary that the individual should develop himself fully, not as a solitary self but as a social being. Dewey has also deep faith in democracy, which implies co-operative activity, group-relationships, and equal opportunities for all.

John Dewey defined education as 'the development of all those capacities in the individual which enable him to control his environment and fulfil his possibilities'. For him, education means the realization of

practical ends. He lays stress on two important aspects of education—the psychological and the sociological. The first is concerned with the child, the study of his nature, interests, and activities, and the second is concerned with the study of social conditions in which the child's powers are interpreted. Thus Dewey emphasizes the study of the child through a social medium as he has to live in and for the society. He believes that the child's powers can best be developed in the environments of his society only.

While giving out the aims of education, Dewey says that they cannot be decided beforehand and are not fixed in advance. They will differ from child to child. In fact, education tends to make the life of the child richer and fuller. Thus Dewey claims education to be the life itself and not preparation for life. Regarding the functions of education, Dewey says that it fills the gap between the innate nature of the child and the social standards of life according to which he has to live. The main function of education, therefore, is to enable the child to live a socially desirable life. At first, an attempt is made to study the innate impulses of the child, and then, after proper direction and guidance they are sublimated, for the socially desirable life of the child. Thus the child learns to control his innate impulses as well as his environments so as to form proper habits useful for life in society. In this way, education takes the form of a process of continuous growth. This growth is from within the child and not imposed from outside. The teacher only helps and facilitates the process. Dewey emphasizes one thing more and that is the constant reorganization of human experiences according to the needs and demands of the changing society and world. The ever growing personality of the child selects and reorganizes his ideals according to the needs of the time.

In Dewey's philosophy of education, the school is not merely a place for imparting instruction to the child, but something more

important than this. It has to take the form of a social institution to help the child to grow socially conscious by its co-operative living. The training which the child gets at home is further enlarged and augmented in school in a more scientific way, and with better equipment. Thus the school here replaces the home and family. The school has to plan its work in such a way as to create a social environment so as to afford social experience to the child. In this way, the school helps the society to attain its aims of modern life and progress. As regards the teacher's place in Dewey's scheme of education, it can be said that he is not prominent; but, still he is important in the whole process of education. He has not to thrust his personality and his ideals of life on the child, but to maintain such social order and create such environment as to give natural guidance to the child's experiences.

In Dewey's scheme of education, the curriculum is not something fixed in advance to be rigidly forced into the child's brain. It is very informal and changes according to the needs and interests of the child. It reflects the social life and activities of the child and takes the form of conversation and communication, inquiry, construction, and beautiful expression. The stress is laid not merely on the intellectual development of the child, but on the development of his whole personality. Knowledge is imparted not for its own sake, but for providing the child a better life in society. The child is made to learn critical thinking and ability to reason out things. The subjects are not taught separately, independent of each other, but as total knowledge closely correlated with each

other.

As regards the method of teaching, Dewey substitutes the word 'teaching' by 'learning'. He believes in the activities of the child and his gaining of experiences by himself rather than in books and the exposition by teachers. He lays greater emphasis on self-education, play-way and creative activities, resulting in self-government and self-discipline. Co-operative living and group activities of children in Dewey's school of education help them to inculcate proper habits, interests, aptitudes, and morals in themselves. In other words, Dewey's method finds best expression in 'Project-method' which lays stress on the child's purposeful activity and self-learning.

Dewey has also great faith in the principles of democracy when he says that 'every individual should have a share in determining the conditions and aims of his own work'. He also advocates full freedom to the teacher in the organization and administration of the school and the methods of teaching. He desires that there should be free communications between the teachers and the parents through occasional conferences and meetings. They should have free discussions and help each other in solving common problems of their children.

In short, John Dewey has advocated the philosophy of education which is the need of the day. The child here develops into a self-directing personality strengthening his powers to shoulder greater responsibilities of life in future. The pragmatist outlook of Dewey, if adopted intelligently, will really go a long way in realizing the real aims of education in the present-day world.

# THE EMERGENCE OF MAN

BY PRINCIPAL B. S. MATHUR

Addressing the annual convocation of the Annamalai University, the U.S. Ambassador John Kenneth Galbraith observed: 'Criticism is essential to the conduct of all open societies, since criticism is an instrument of change and a first step towards social improvement.'

Here are words of experience that can carry us ahead in our adventure of life. Education is not for just receiving information. It is to create ideas. It is to make us critics, creative geniuses, so that we might easily and comfortably be instrumental in the creation of a social change. We have advanced, thanks to scientific investigations. But we have still to go far, and this going, this progress in future, is possible on the foundations of creative and critical thinking. This is what, this structure of critical and creative thinking, education has to provide us with. Else, education is not man-making or life-giving; it is then just a passive experience of taking in information.

The Soviet Premier has rightly pointed out that communism and labour must go hand in hand. Similarly, information-getting and creation of new ideas must go hand in hand. Without labour, communism will fail and, without real critical thinking, the edifice of education will break down and ruin humanity.

A little of reflection will show that man, today, is devoid of humanity. It is so because man does not think. The moment he thinks, he can fasten on to his divinity which, expressed in his deeds, thoughts, and visions, will create the idea of oneness all over the world. This thinking, this going back to our past, our origin, which is the divinity in us, is the beginning we must make if we are keen on a lasting peace in the world.

The suicide of humanity that is in progress, which we see all around us, must not be allowed to continue. Let us think. Let us be conscious of our great responsibility of

thinking out solutions for all manners of differences, not only geographical, but the real ones—the cultural and economic differences that make us enemies in the world. Instead of peace, friendship, and harmony, we have chaos, discord, and frustration. This all-pervading disappointment is here as our constant companion just because of little critical and creative thinking on our part. Let us have education for 'criticism', not for mere slavery.

The ambassador is right. He is for open societies that are mentally alert and active, and ever keen on increasing improvement, that are not weary of constant efforts for progress in future, based on thinking with no malice or bias. Who can forget Rabindranath Tagore's penetrating words?

Where the mind is without fear  
and the head is held high;

Where knowledge is free;

Where the world has not been  
broken up into fragments  
by narrow domestic walls;

Where words come out from the  
depth of truth;

Where tireless striving stretches  
its arms towards perfection;

Where the clear stream of reason  
has not lost its way into  
the dreary desert sand of  
dead habit;

Where the mind is led forward  
by Thee into ever-widening  
thought and action—

Into that haven of freedom, my  
father, let my country awake.

Here is truth we are after, and its immediate realization will put us on the road to freedom and greatness, on that great road which can take us near God, our goal, our fulfilment and flourish of life on earth. Mind is the thing that is significant and that matters. If it thinks in the right fashion,

if it can be up critically and in a creative fashion, what is there that we cannot accomplish on earth? At the moment, we are beset by complications, by cutting and penetrating differences—the real process of dehumanizing of man which is working for the collapse of our civilization. We urgently need free knowledge; we cannot permit walls to be erected. We have to change, and we have to alter our present fundamentals if we want to go forward and realize our life's goal. Tagore is thinking of that atmosphere where mind can be free, alert, not shy, and also, not aggressive. Tagore is hundred per cent for independence of outlook. Certainly, he is thinking of real education, discipline of mind, body, and heart, which can immediately release the necessary fund of energy for ceaseless progress in the world. These sweet, true, and substantial words of Tagore, to my mind, are addressed to workers in the field of education, light, and learning.

This adventure of education must continue, must persist, in its enduring and endearing mission of ever free knowledge which can resolve narrow domestic walls. Tagore wants us to be fearless. This is being critical; this is being creative.

The emphasis is on mind and its liberation. There is lot of darkness in the world; the head takes this darkness in, and the result is ignorance in the world, creation of narrow domestic walls. The immediate need is perfection, pursuit of ever new and ever progressive truth. For this realization, for this accomplishment of truth, man must think, must create his own ideas. He must be intensely and intimately most personal; then he is most universal; then he is in a position of advantage and influence, and he can liberate that all-embracing, spreading energy, really a penetrating force, which can easily and briskly transform man into something divine, when he will see no difference between man and man; then he will be in God, living in harmony and rhythm.

A new adventure will start; the desert of dead habit will turn green, and new ideas will, then, thrive into ever-widening and ever-enlightening thought and action. Mere new thinking is not the end. The end is action, concretization of new ideas, establishment of a new world, a haven of freedom, in which man is free to make his own way, out of the depth of truth, tirelessly striving after perfection.

This is Tagore's aim of life. This must be the end of education which is a preparation for life.

Dr. Albert Schweitzer writes in his book, *The Decay and the Restoration of Civilization*: 'In the education and the school books of today, the duty of humanity is relegated to an obscure corner, as though it were no longer true that it is the first thing necessary in the training of personality, and as if it were not a matter of great importance to maintain it as a strong influence in our human race against the influence of outer circumstance.'

The outer circumstances must not be allowed to dominate; inner ideas, new ones, born of our own personality, hence of the universal personality, imbued with real humanism and sacredness, must be generated in education and schools. Education for the development of human personality which can tolerate no differences between man and man—that should be the burden of education in order to make man free to think, dream, and act.

Man has his own personality given to him by divinity. He has to communicate with the universe. Not only that. He has to be one with the universe. That is man's burden. That is the burden of education. That way, in the union of the individual and the universal, there is harmony, an atmosphere of peace and adventure, in which man can arrive at his fullest emergence, in complete harmony with divinity and humanity. This emergence education has to achieve.

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Dr. P. S. Sastri, M.A., M.Litt., Ph.D., Reader and Head of the Department of English, Nagpur University, discusses the delicate subject of 'Aesthetic Form' in his learned article, and presents the views of eminent art critics of the West on the subject. Aesthetic form is expressed by various artists in various ways through various mediums; but all successful artistic form should be 'a unity', a 'relational continuum', and the 'first articulation of the imaginative activity' of the artist. ...

Nirala is an outstanding name in Hindi literature of modern times. Apart from being a great poet and a powerful writer, he was also very noble as a man. In his early years, he was closely connected with the Ramakrishna Math and Mission and had the opportunity of studying deeply the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature, which had influenced his life and writings. Srimati Kamala Ratnam, M.A., T.D., discusses beautifully in her article this 'Spiritual Impact of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda on Nirala'. ...

Professor Batuknath Bhattacharya, M.A., B.L., formerly of Surendranath College, Calcutta, discusses in his article 'India in Cultural Transition' the various cultural trends and social ideologies of the world that are coming together and clashing with one another today, particularly in India. He also tells about the efforts that are being made to iron out the differences and mould human society in certain uniform patterns. But he significantly points out that for harmony and peace, the development of 'the cult of unity in the midst of inevitable diversity is mankind's sorest need and the fundamental tenet of its religion of humanism'. To this end, he says, 'India's unitive wisdom and ideals will be of inestimable help'. ..

Swami Nityabodhananda of the Ramakrishna Order and head of the Ramakrishna Vedanta Centre, Geneva (Switzerland), explains in his article, 'The Sacred Will', the difference between the conceptions of the Sacred in Christianity and in the Vedānta. He says that, in the Vedānta, the Sacred does not require a history starting with a 'man's encounter with God'. The soul itself is sacred in essence and 'the pure Will, untouched by desires, in its totality, is the godhead'. For one's redemption, it is not necessary to meet any other godhead. Only the knowledge of the Self, which shines as the pure Will in every man, will liberate him from all bondages. ...

Mr. Shamshuddin, M.A., M.Ed., F.R.G.S., of Raipur presents in his brief article some salient points of the educational philosophy of John Dewey, the famous American educationist, who has aroused great interest all over the world by his new experiments and methods in education. ...

Principal B. S. Mathur, M.A., of M.M.H. College, Ghaziabad, says in his article, 'The Emergence of Man', that the essential characteristic of human nature is its power to liberate itself from seeming bondages around it and become universal. He is not his true self unless he is able to 'communicate with the universe, ... to be one with the universe'. The aim and the burden of all training and education is to help man emerge into this harmony of the individual and the universal.

### SCIENCE AND PEACE

The search for peace is commonly regarded as the spiritual quest of the individual, the satisfaction of which is the business of religion and philosophy. But we are talking here of that peace which we need on this earth

to make it happy for its inhabitants and to provide conditions and opportunities for their material and spiritual progress. Of late, the achievement of this peace has become an international necessity, and it is engaging the attention, not only of the politicians, but of the scientists also. The 'Pugwash' conferences, now known as Conference on Science and World Affairs, suggested by Einstein and Russel in 1955 and held eight times since, have been a great stimulus and a major factor in encouraging the movement for the scientific study of peace and 'conflict-resolution'. The main aim of these conferences has been to provide a meeting ground for the senior scientists of the world to find out ways and means to divert science from its destructive purposes and turn it to constructive ones. These conferences, as well as the growing consciousness of the necessity of protecting mankind from destruction, have attracted the attention of the scientists to make a scientific study of the elements of peace and the conditions in which it can be established and strengthened. The April 1962 issue of the *World Union-Goodwill* makes an interesting study of the scientific efforts towards the study of 'peace'.

'A major effort is being made in Canada to establish a Canadian Peace Research Institute which, initially, will employ 25 scientific personnel on various research projects relating to peace and resolution of conflicts.' This Institute has the active support of many well-known organizations like the Voice of Women, the Canadian Committee for Control of Radiation Hazards, the Combined Universities Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the World Federalists of Canada, and the Society of Friends (Quakers). The Institute has a strong board of directors, consisting of such well-known figures as Dr. Hugh Keenleyside, former Director General of United National Technical Assistance Administration and Dr. Brock Chisholm, former Director General of World Health Organization.

The chief aim of the Institute, which will

have allied institutions elsewhere, too, is to 'examine the physical, economic, and social facts involved in specific problems underlying international tensions' and to 'recommend to their governments the means of alleviating or eliminating such specific problems'. For this, various allied activities and studies will necessarily be taken up from time to time. Efforts are on to raise a fund of \$ 2,200,000 through public subscription and the Government of Canada has been approached to assist the Institute with additional grants. It is hoped that 1962 will prove a break-through year for the Institute.

The moving spirit behind the scheme is the famous nuclear physicist Dr. Norman Z. Alcock, the former Director of Engineering for Canadian Curtis-Wright Ltd. and Vice-President of Isotope Products Ltd. He has given up his lucrative job in 1959 to work whole time for the establishment of the Institute. 'In the process, he has virtually bankrupted himself and impoverished his family who stand loyally behind him.' But his sacrifice has inspired many, and lively interest is being witnessed in his movement. Similar efforts are also afoot in other parts of the world.

Apart from this Institute, there are various other organizations working scientifically towards the establishment of international peace. The Michigan University's Centre for Research of Conflict-Resolution is a prominent one among such organizations. Since its inception in 1959, this Centre has been doing very useful work towards the study of the conflicts from various angles, and it has the co-operation and support of many prominent educators and scientists of the United States and abroad. Its main interest, of course, is not conflict, but 'conflict-resolution'. The Centre publishes a valuable magazine, *The Journal of Conflict Research: A Quarterly for Research Related to War and Peace*. The Peace Research Institute of Washington and Institute of International Order are two of the other such organizations



working in the field of scientific peace. Dr. Theodore F. Lentz, director of a peace research project at St. Louis, is regarded as one of the pioneers in the field. His book *Towards a Science of Peace* has influenced many and has been one of the major contributing factors towards this current of scientific effort for peace.

In Europe, also, such researches are in progress. One of the most important institutes doing such work is the Institute for Social Research in Oslo. It has opened a special section for Research on Conflict and Peace. The Peace Knowledge Foundation of England, the Grotius Seminarium of Holland, the Peace Research Group at the University of Zagreb in Yugoslavia, and the Society for the Scientific Study of Peace which is working widely with the collaboration of sociologists and scientists in many parts of Europe are also some well-known institutions working in this line. Many more institutions like these are being planned.

In the East, probably the most important institute is the Gandhi Peace Foundation,

started in 1958. The Foundation, while yet consolidating its work, is carrying on research in various subjects and movements concerning international matters, with special reference to the feasibility of bringing about peace and harmony through the application of Gandhian techniques. The foundation has before it a large scope for work so far as the study of various human problems and their solutions are concerned. It hopes to extend its scope of activity to wider fields.

From the above reports, we see that sincere efforts are afoot today to make science, which represents one of the chief achievements of the human mind, turn 'its attention to peace—man's major problem area'. Though most of the activities and the literature in this field are of technical nature and of little interest to the layman, the *World Union-Goodwill* believes that 'a whole new climate of opinion and new levels of understanding are in the process of being created'. 'And it may well be that the study of conflict-resolution will prove to be one of the major factors leading to an integration of the many different streams of human thought.'

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**VEDĀNTA EXPLAINED (ŚAṆKARA'S COMMENTARY ON THE BRAHMA-SŪTRAS).** BY VINAYAK HARI DATE. WITH A FOREWORD BY THE LATE PROFESSOR R. D. RANADE. *Published in two volumes by Booksellers' Publishing Co., Mehendale Building, V. P. Road, Bombay-4. Vol. I: 400 Pages; Vol. II: 552 Pages. Price Rs. 17.50 and Rs. 27.50.*

The volumes under review are written on the same lines as Swami Vireswarananda's *Brahma-Sūtras*, published by the Advaita Ashrama, but more elaborately, and covering almost all the points dealt with by Śrī Śaṅkarācārya. The name of the book itself explains its character, though the descriptive subsidiary title is rather misleading. The book is not a translation of Śaṅkara's commentary, but rather a faithful and scholarly summary of it, with additional sentences here and there to elucidate certain points. At places, the commentary is translated almost

verbatim; but, more often, the salient points are dealt with in a compressed way. The style is lucid and the presentation very readable, and helpful for a clear comprehension of Śaṅkara's views. The author's own claim is: 'I have remained absolutely faithful to Śaṅkara, though I have added a few lines here and there to bring out explicitly what is merely implicit in the commentary, my aim being to preserve the unity of ideas rather than that of mere words.'

Each volume contains at the end a helpful summary of the *sūtras*, as well as a collection of the texts quoted by Śaṅkara. The *sūtras* are given in Sanskrit, together with analytical translations. Most of the texts quoted by Śaṅkara have been given in translation. The second volume has, in addition, a scholarly and illuminating section on 'New Light on the Philosophy of Śaṅkara', in which are included the topics: (1) Aim and Method, (2) The Theory of Knowledge,

(3) Māyā, Avidyā, and Vidyā as Powers of Brahman, (4) Brahman, Nirguṇa and Saguṇa. (5) Karma Upāsana and Jñāna, and (6) 'From Theism to Mysticism. Needless to say that the subjects mooted in this section are very important in understanding Śaṅkara's philosophy, and the learned writer has combined scholarship with easy presentation.

The book is very readable, and the get-up excellent.

There are a few inaccuracies or printing mistakes, as they are bound to be in the first edition of such a voluminous work. For instance, in page 13 of Volume II, the reference for the quotation 'Everything else is perishable in nature' should be *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, and not *Śvetāśvatara*. In page 30 of the same volume, the line 'the measure which is mentioned (the soul is atomic in size)' is rather misleading: for the commentary quotes passages referring to the minutest part of hair, and point of a goad, and not that of 'atom'.

S. G.

**THE TEACHINGS OF BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA MAHARSHI IN HIS OWN WORDS.** EDITED BY ARTHUR OSBORNE. *Published by Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai, Madras State, 1960. Pages 256. Price Rs. 4.*

The talks of the Saint of Tiruvannamalai with the visitors who came to him from all parts of India and from the West, were a great source of solace and inspiration to these seekers. Established as he was in the highest Advaitic realization, from which standpoint, 'there is no dissolution, no origination, none in bondage, none striving or aspiring for salvation, and none liberated' (*Gauḍapāda Kārikā*, II. 32), Bhagavan Sri Ramana Maharshi repeatedly asked the seekers to enquire about the subject of everything, the 'I', which is the first entity in all experience and the locus of all relationships. Discouraging mere academic discussion, the Maharshi stressed the need of spiritual effort in the form of self-enquiry to realize one's true nature. Most of his teachings are in the form of records of his talks preserved by the visitors.

In the present work, Mr. Osborne, who has already published a few books about the sage of Arunachala, has arranged his teachings topicwise, under specific headings, so as to build up a general exposition of the same. This difficult task has been admirably done and there is a progressive development of the subject from chapter to chapter. Starting with theory and proceeding on to practice, the place of renunciation in self-enquiry, the need of a *guru*, the method of self-enquiry, and the utility of other spiritual practices like

breath-control, diet-restrictions, silence, holy company, etc. in the path of self-realization, the book ends with the chapter on the 'Goal', wherein the Maharshi says: 'Self-realization is the final goal and is itself the purpose' (p. 222). The comments of the editor, given in smaller types, are a great help to the reader in understanding the teachings. The book is a welcome addition to Sri Ramana Maharshi literature.

SWAMI BHAKTANANDA

**THE BHAGAVAD-GĪTĀ.** BY S. PARTHASARATHY IYENGAR. *Published by Gnana-vignana Trust, Gautama-shramam, 3 Peyalvar Koil Street, Madras-5. Pages 138. Price Rs. 2.50.*

This book is a simple paraphrase in English of *Śrīmad Bhagavad-Gītā*, the most popular of the religious books of the Hindus. The author tries to explain the teaching of the *Gītā*, and his interpretation is based mainly on the Viśiṣṭādvaita system of Śrī Rāmānuja. He lays emphasis on devotion and the grace of the Lord for liberation and, consequently, self-surrender is the first step in spiritual life. The author seems to attach much importance to the *ślokas* (like verse 66 of chapter XVIII), where self-surrender is emphasized by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Some topics such as the nature of the soul, *avatāra*, *karma-yoga*, *bhakti-yoga*, *Puruṣottama*, etc. are explained elaborately and clearly. The English rendering of some *ślokas* is not clear.

Each chapter has an introduction outlining the ideas contained in it. Moreover, in each chapter, there are sub-headings according to the different ideas. This is a characteristic feature of the book. This helps the reader to understand the theme of each chapter and the different ideas dealt with in it. In all, there are 121 divisional headings in the book along with the references to the stanzas of the *Gītā*, for each heading. Readers who know English but have no knowledge of Sanskrit would go through this edition of the *Gītā* with profit. The present work is not an unwelcome addition to the already voluminous literature on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*.

The brief Introduction by C. Rajagopalachari adds to the value of the book. The Foreword by Sri M. A. Narayana Iyengar is a short biography of the author, who is no more. There is a portrait of the author as the frontispiece.

The author deserves the gratitude of us all for making an honest attempt to clarify the different ideas contained in the *Gītā*. The book is worthy of a wide circulation.

HIRENDRA NARAYAN SARKAR

# NEWS AND REPORTS

## THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION INSTITUTE OF CULTURE, CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR THE YEARS 1956 TO 1960

The Institute, founded in 1938, seeks to promote the cultural integrity of India through a proper interpretation and appraisal of Indian culture, and also seeks to promote better knowledge and understanding and to establish cultural relationships between India and other countries. During the period under review, the spacious new building of the Institute neared completion.

### *Cultural Activities and Inter-cultural Relations:*

*Lectures:* Number of weekly lectures organized: 1956:43; 1957:53; 1958:48; 1959:44; and 1960:47.

Number of special meetings held to commemorate important days: 1956:11; 1957:12; 1958:11; 1959:10; and 1960:5.

*Classes:* Weekly classes were held on scriptures by some recognized scholars and Swamis. These were well attended.

*Discourses:* Eight discourses on *Mahābhārata* were given in 1959, and three on *Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* in 1960. Some discourses in Bengali, in the form of *kathakāta*, were also given.

*Study Circle:* During all the years under review, a study circle met, twice a week, to read Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature. Average attendance: 6 to 10.

*Seminars:* Two seminars were held in 1956 to study the traditional arts, crafts, and literature of West Bengal. In 1960, a seminar was held on 'The Organization of Leisure Activities for Students between the Ages of 15 and 22'.

*Symposia:* The symposia conducted by the Institute have aroused interest, not only locally, but, through the medium of the Institute's *Bulletin*, in foreign countries as well. Number of symposia held: 1956:4; 1957:1; 1958:2.

*Language Classes:* Regular classes were held for teaching Hindi and Bengali.

*Publications:* The monthly *Bulletin* of the Institute completed its eleventh year in 1960. During the years under review, volumes I, III, and IV of the second edition of *The Cultural Heritage of India* were published. Volume II is nearing completion, while volumes V, VI, and VII are to follow.

*Library and Reading Room:* The library was moved to the new building in July 1959 and reorganized under

the guidance of Sri B. S. Kesavan, Director of the National Library, Calcutta, and Sri Subodh Mukherjee, Deputy Librarian of Calcutta University. The shelves can accommodate 100,000 volumes and the reading room has an area of 3,000 square feet providing seating accommodation for 120 persons. In 1960, the reading room received 321 periodicals, and had an average attendance of 74. The library had 31,054 books in 1960, and 10,878 of them were issued for reference. The library has books in English, Bengali, Hindi, and Sanskrit.

*Children's Library:* Opened in May 1960, this library meant for children between 6 and 14 years of age has been a source of attraction. The library is equipped with special furniture, decoration, and appurtenances. At the end of 1960, it had 2,001 volumes in English, Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Malayalam, and Telugu. The number of books issued was 7,195, Membership numbered 330 and the average daily attendance was 64.

*Students' Day Home:* This Home, opened in 1959, serves undergraduates studying in Calcutta colleges with facilities for daytime study and recreation. Besides a text-book library consisting of 4,705 volumes, a recreation room, modern sanitary arrangements, and meals at nominal charges are provided. The total number of students enrolled was 800, the daily attendance being about 500. A warden and two tutors assist the boys.

*International Scholars' Residence:* This department provides opportunities for social and cultural intercourse on an international level. It has 36 double rooms. In 1960, 27 students, nine research scholars, two lecturers, and one professor, coming from various countries, stayed at the Scholars' Residence.

*International Guest House:* Distinguished scholars and eminent personalities who took part in various cultural programmes conducted by the Institute, stayed for short periods in the Guest House.

*Museum and Art Gallery:* In a room specially allotted for the purpose, a small collection consisting of coins of the Gupta period, old banners, stone, brass, and bronze figures, and art collections, including several oil paintings, etc. are exhibited.

*Sanskrit Catuspāthi:* The Catuspāthi is intended for the purpose of studying Sanskrit philosophical literature in its different branches. During the years under review, students in small groups, studied the different philosophical systems.



SWAMI MADHAVANANDA  
*New President of The Ramakrishna Math & Mission*