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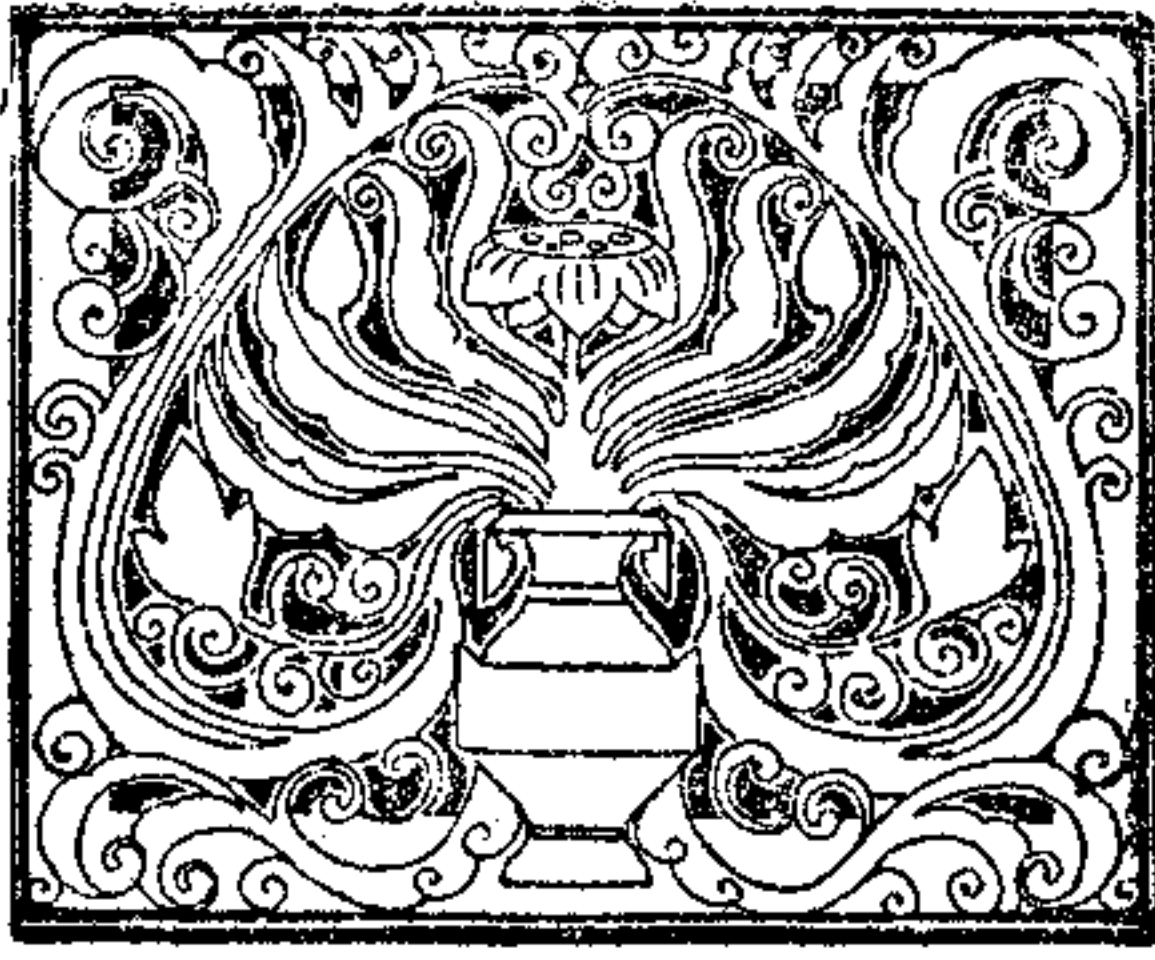
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Cover :

On the way to Sri Amarnath—Panchtarni.



Prabuddha Bharata

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No. 4

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

SRI RAMAKRISHNA REMINISCES

'Once, a long time ago, I was very ill. I was sitting in the Kali temple. I felt like praying to the Divine Mother to cure my illness, but couldn't do so directly in my own name.¹ I said to Her, "Mother, Hriday asks me to tell You about my illness." I could not proceed any further. At once there flashed into my mind the Museum of the Asiatic Society, and a human skeleton strung together with wire. I said to Her, "Please tighten the wire of my body like that, so that I may go about singing Your name and glories." It is impossible for me to ask for occult powers.'²

*

'Once a rich man came here and said to me : "Sir, you must do something so that I may win my lawsuit. I have heard of your reputation and so I have come here." "My dear sir," I said to him, "You have made a mistake. I am not the person you are looking for ; Achalananda³ is your man."'

*

'Lakshminarayan Marwari, a Vedantist, used to come here very often. One day he saw a dirty sheet on my bed and said : "I shall invest ten thousand rupees in your name. The interest will enable you to pay your expenses." The moment he uttered those words, I fell unconscious, as if struck by a stick. Regaining consciousness I said to him : "If you utter such words again, you had better not come here. It is impossible for me to touch money. It is also impossible for me to keep it near me." He was a very clever fellow. He said : "Then you too have the idea of acceptance and rejection. In that case you haven't attained Perfect Knowledge." "My dear sir," I said, "I haven't yet gone that far." Lakshminarayan then wanted to leave the money with Hriday. I said to him : "That will not do. If you leave it with Hriday, then I shall instruct him to spend it as I wish. If he does not comply, I shall be angry. The very contact of money is bad. No, you can't leave it with Hriday." Won't an object kept near a mirror be reflected in it?⁴

Comp.—Swami Sarveshananda

1. At another time the Master added that Hriday had already asked him to pray thus to the Mother. *Vide 'M' : The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, (hereafter Gospel) trans. Swami Nikhilananda, Madras : Ramakrishna Math, 1969, p. 346.*

2. *Gospel, p. 859.*

3. *Gospel, p. 227.* Achalananda was a well-known Tantric sadhaka who had, however, a little inclination to name and fame.

4. *Gospel, p. 547.*

THE CHOICE OF AN IDEAL

(EDITORIAL)

Every man, howsoever important or insignificant he may be, has his own ideal to be achieved in life. One naturally feels an urge within to struggle for a better state of life than his present one; and he tries in his own way to attain his cherished goal. Normally one chooses the goal of his life according to his psychological constitution, and environmental circumstances in which he is placed. One may, however, change the goal as he grows physically and intellectually. For instance, a boy who might have once aspired for professorship in the University, may in his later life wish to be a minister of the State.

Generally, man wants to achieve something, which, he thinks, is within his reach; but there are some courageous men who like to take a sort of pole-vault to attain what is apparently beyond their capacity. And, in this wonderful world, examples are not lacking of such men who have succeeded in reaching their desired goal. Napoleon Bonaparte might never have dreamt in his childhood that he would be an Emperor of France some day. We find in his life that his ambition went on changing as he rose from rank to rank in the French army.

Now a question arises: why does a man aspire for a better state of life? To this, an obvious answer is: everyone feels that in the higher state of life, he would be more happy, more at peace, more free, more powerful, and less miserable than his present condition of life. In the heart of his heart, every man craves for unalloyed happiness, uninterrupted peace, sovereign power, unobstructed freedom, absolute cessation of misery, and immortality. This is the *inner quest* of every human heart, and one tries hard to attain it in his own way.

In the world, we find that after a hard struggle, a man might achieve his desired

goal: For instance, we see, someone wanted to be rich, and he becomes rich; someone desired the pleasures of this life, and he gets them; someone aspired for power and position, and he secures it; but to his utter dissatisfaction, the man experiences that in spite of achieving the cherished goal of his life, the thirst of his *heart* has not been quenched. Surprisingly enough, one discovers that although in his office he is the boss of thousands, free to exercise his power and freedom, there is somewhere someone, who holds his nose-string and controls him like a slave. Some realise that in spite of their wealth, and objects of enjoyment at their disposal, they are not really happy or at peace. And it is everyone's experience in life that, howsoever rich or poor one may be, none can escape death. Man, with great hope in his heart, proceeds to quench his *inner craving*, but the more he travels the path of his life, to his amazement he finds that in spite of getting what he wanted, the thirst not only remains unsatisfied, but it also increases thousandfold. Looking to such a pitiable condition of man, the great saint Jñāneśwar has said in his *Amṛtanubhava*: 'A thirsty man runs after a mirage taking it to be water, and feels troubled because he does not get it; but even if he were to get it (mirage-water), what has he achieved thereby?'¹

The Saint means: Some people become disappointed because they could not attain the ideal of their life, but even if they were to achieve it, what have they achieved? That is, in spite of achieving the ideal, man's thirst for unalloyed happiness, uninterrupted peace, sovereign power, or eternal

1. Jñāneswar, *Amṛtanubhava*, (Marathi), 7:210.

life, can never be quenched. So what is the use of attaining such worldly ideals?

Now a question may arise : if this craving of the human heart is never to be satisfied by attaining any ideal in this world, why should a man feel such an urge at all? The answer is : Man's real nature is divine. 'Each soul is potentially divine,'² says Swami Vivekananda. He is the Atman—the ever pure (*nityaśuddha*), ever Conscious (*nityabuddha*), and ever Free (*nitya-mukta*). He is of the nature of Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute—*Saccidānanda-swarūpa* ; His real nature is Peace, Purity and Non-duality—*Śāntam, Śivam, Advaitam*. Man is none but God, the ever Perfect, the Almighty, and the eternal Being, from the absolute point of view. Such being the potential nature of every man, he feels a natural inner urge for eternal bliss, eternal peace, eternal freedom, immortality, and transcendence of misery. This urge shows that he wants to go back to his Blessed state, which he has lost due to ignorance. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda has said, 'What is the goal? . . . You must end where you begin ; and as you began in God, you must go back to God.'³

If a man realises God, i.e., if he realises his own real nature, he regains his lost paradise, and gets what his heart was so long craving for. Unless man transcends his manhood, and attains godhood—his real nature—there is no hope of the inner urge being fulfilled to his full satisfaction. And religion alone can help in transforming man the animal into man the God. Swami Vivekananda has said, ' . . . mankind has made gigantic advance in knowledge. The highest utility of this progress lies not in the creature comforts that it brings, but in manufacturing god out of this animal man.'⁴

2. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (hereafter *Com. Works*), Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, I (1970), p. 124.

3. *Com. Works*, III (1970), p. 4.

When men are asked to follow religion in order to realise their real nature, and in order to satisfy their inner craving, they feel as if the world is being snatched away from them. It is because religion demands absolute renunciation of the worldly enjoyments, and one-pointed devotion to God. Majority of men in this world are running after the pleasures (*preya*) available in it ; and very few indeed are choosing the path of the Good (*śreya*). The former are unwilling even to listen to religious talks, and say, 'religion is opium'. They have yet to realise by their own experience that the world is more so. They are so much intoxicated by the wine of the worldly pleasures that they, to their misfortune, hardly feel what a deadly poison they are swallowing in the form of enjoyments. In this connection, Swami Vivekananda has said, 'Can senses ever be the goal? Can enjoyment of pleasure ever be the goal? Can this life ever be the goal of the Soul? If it is, better die this moment ; do not want this life ! If this is the fate of man, that he is going to be only the perfected machine, it would just mean that we go back to being trees and stones and things like that. . . . What are we here for? We are here for freedom, for knowledge. We want to know in order to make ourselves free. That is our life. . . . The infinite human Soul can never be satisfied but by the Infinite itself.'⁵

Although man has known from time immemorial that the attainment of any worldly ideal can never lead him to perfect satisfaction, very few choose God-realization as the ideal of their life. It is because very few really have the faculty of discrimination, developed in them. In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, Yama, the god of death, says to Nachiketa : 'The preferable (*śreya*) and the pleasurable

4. *Com. Works*, IV (1972), p. 210.

5. *Com. Works*, IV, pp. 239-40.

(*preya*) approach mankind. The man of discrimination, having considered them, separates the two. The intelligent one selects the electable (*śreya*) in preference to the delectable (*preya*); the non-intelligent one selects the delectable for the sake of growth and protection.⁶ The choice of the world to God, therefore, is due to the lack of *Viveka*, the faculty of discrimination, in man. This, however, does not mean that this faculty is not present in all men. It is present in everybody, but it has become clouded by the intoxication caused by the opium of the worldly pleasures. 'The means for attainment of the other world [God],' continues Yama, 'does not become revealed to the non-discriminating man who blunders, being befooled by the lure of wealth. One that constantly thinks that there is only this world, and none hereafter, comes under my [death's] sway again and again.'⁷ So strong is the glamour of the senses, and the stupor brought about by them, that 'even wise and learned men, who are clever and adept in the vision of the exceedingly subtle Atman, are overpowered by the inertia (*tamas*) and do not understand the Atman, even though clearly explained in various ways. What is simply superimposed by delusion, they consider as true, and attach themselves to its effects. Alas! How powerful is the great veiling power of dreadful inertia!'⁸ So says Acharya Śaṅkara in his famous treatise *Viveka-cūḍāmaṇi*. Even though the intoxication of the senses is too much for a man to overcome and understand his folly, he can cultivate by practice the faculty of discrimination by studying the lives and experiences of men, from time immemorial.

Some may say, God-realization is beyond us, and it is not known whether we shall ever attain full satisfaction of our inner

craving thereby; why should we leave the bird in hand and go after two in the bush? To such men, Śaṅkara says, 'What greater fool is there than the man who having obtained a rare human body, and a masculine body too, neglects to achieve the real goal of this life?'⁹ He is right in saying so, because man alone has been blessed with the faculty of thinking, and in human birth alone it is possible for an individual to understand that he is being deluded by the senses in spite of his intelligence, and suffering from birth to birth. If one neglects this opportunity, he is a great loser. Although one may not be fit for absolute renunciation today, he may proceed gradually according to his psychological constitution and capacity.

About the glory of manhood Swami Vivekananda has said, 'The older I grow, the more I see behind the idea of the Hindus that *man* is the greatest of all beings. . . . man alone becomes *God*, . . .'¹⁰ And his Master Sri Ramakrishna has emphatically declared, 'The only purpose of life is to realise God.'¹¹ This he said not only to his all renouncing disciples, but to the householders as well. Every man can aspire for God-realization irrespective of his caste, creed or status of life. Different paths have been prescribed for men in the scriptures of all the religions of the world, according to their *swadharma*, psychological constitution, to enable them to realize God. One may follow the one which suits him best.

Someone may ask, how can God-realization be the only purpose of human life? It is because that is the only way for his inner craving to be really satisfied. When one seeks eternal bliss, eternal peace, eternal life, and eternal freedom, one unconsciously or consciously seeks God and none else.

9. *Ibid.*, 5.

10. *Com. Works*, V (1970), p. 94.

11. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*, trans. Swami Nikhilananda, New York : Ramakrishna Vivekananda Center, 1942, p. 273.

6. *Katha Upaniṣad*, I. ii. 2.

7. *Ibid.*, I. ii. 6.

8. *Vivekacūḍāmaṇi*, 114.

One may believe in God or not, but he is seeking Him. Bhagavan Sri Krishna has said in the *Gītā*, 'My path, O Son of Kunti, men tread in all ways.'¹² To realize God means to attain the satisfaction of the inner craving; and this is what every man is struggling for. So what Sri Krishna and Sri Ramakrishna have said is true.

Someone may argue: But what is the utility of God-realization? Why should we try to realize our real nature? What is the guarantee that our heart's craving will be satisfied thereby?

The answers to all these questions can be best given in the light of the statements of those, who have realised God. The ṛṣis of the Upaniṣads come forward and say:

'One who knows Him (God) attains immortality here itself.' (*Nṛsimhapūrvatāpanīya Upaniṣad*, I. 6). 'By knowing Him men transcend death; there is no other way for attaining freedom.' (*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad*, VI. 15). 'One who knows the Self goes beyond sorrow.' (*Chāndogya Upaniṣad*, VII. i. 3). 'Eternal happiness is for those, who are discriminating and who realise in their hearts Him who being One, the controller, and the inner Self of all, makes a single form multifarious; and not for others.' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. ii. 12). 'Eternal peace is for those, who are discriminating and who realise in their hearts Him who, being the Eternal among the ephemeral, the Consciousness among the conscious, alone dispenses the desired objects to many; and not for others.' (*Kaṭha Upaniṣad*, II. ii. 13). Also, the great sage Nārada says, 'One who attains that becomes perfect; he becomes immortal; and he becomes satisfied.' (*Nārada-Bhakti-Sūtras*, 4).

In this way, numerous quotations can be cited from the scriptures, which are nothing but the records of the direct realizations of the wise men of the world. The scriptures

of all the religions are one on this point. While talking on 'Hinduism', in the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893, Swami Vivekananda had said, 'Thus the whole object of their [Hindus'] system is by constant struggle to become perfect, to become divine, to reach God, and this reaching God, seeing God, becoming perfect, even as the Father in Heaven is perfect, constitutes the religion of the Hindus. And what becomes of a man when he attains perfection? He lives a life of bliss infinite. He enjoys infinite and perfect bliss having obtained the only thing in which man ought to have pleasure, namely, God, and enjoys the bliss with God.'¹³

Thus we see that the only way to satisfy our *inner urge* is God-realization, and nothing else. Therefore, even though the ideal appears to be beyond human reach, that is the only way left for us. The choice between God and the World is the choice between: the life of immortality and the life of repeated birth and death; the life of sorrow and the life of eternal bliss. The ṛṣi of the *Kenopaniṣad* says, 'If one has realised [God] here [while living in this world], then there is truth [his life will be blessed]; and if he has not realised here, then there is great destruction. The wise ones, having realised (God) in all beings, and having turned away from this world, become immortal.'¹⁴ The choice of all the wise men of the world should be to select the best possible ideal, howsoever high it may be. It is said: 'Not failure, but low aim is crime.' So it is meet for all intelligent men to keep this lofty ideal before their eyes, and always remember the words of Sri Ramakrishna: 'The only purpose of life is God-realization.' It is then and then alone, we can expect this world to be a better world; where men would live in peace and harmony.

13. *Com. Works*, I, 13.

14. *Kena Upaniṣad*, II. 5.

12. *Bhagavad-Gītā*, IV, 11.

SWAMI SARADANANDA TO DR. JANES

(An Unpublished Letter)

Morvi

April 4th, 1899.

My dear Doctor,

You can see from the above that I am still in my tour through Western India. We have come very near Mr. Gandhi's birth place, which we intend seeing in a few days.

Your very kind letter of Feb. 20th was forwarded here, also the pamphlet and the magazine, containing your writings. I have just finished reading them and I think they are highly interesting and instructive. I thank you very much for them.

The idea that the Oriental philosophy is pessimistic is both true and untrue. It was not pessimistic during the time of the Vedas and the Upanishads as any one, who have read them, well knows. But the pre-Buddhistic and the after Buddhistic periods are markedly so. I think Buddha is one of the chief causes to bring it in India, if I might say so with all due respect for his great genius, unbounded mercy and pure life. He forbade the meat-eating ; he made his whole family to take up the life of the Sannyasin ; he started great monasteries and nunneries, and took away really the flowers of the then existing society and the rest crippled as they were naturally, took to the idea that they were in the world and the family life on account of their weakness and want of Self-control. These ideas once established would surely degenerate the ideal of marriage and the social life, as it did. Before the time of Buddha, the Great teachers of the Vedanta were not the Brahmins but crowned Kings, who lived and moved and led a vigorous life in the world, and only became monks. Some of them during the last years of their lives. But Buddha in his rebellion to give the highest knowledge to the mass of the people, established an institution which gave a very high position to the monks & nuns in society and brought forth this degeneracy and decay of the social fabric. There was another natural cause of this, it seems and that is the great development of the resources of the country. It might not be compared with that of the present age ; but it was the highest that any country or society had reached at the time. The pendulum of social advancement went to one extreme, people became sick of constant enjoyment and did not know what to do with the accumulated riches and naturally Buddhism gave a great outlet at once ethical and religious. People began to establish hospitals for men and animals, gave all to the poor and to the building of great monasteries, and stupas and later on temples and took to the life of the monastery. Most of the Puranas which were written during the downfall of Buddhism have very little or none of the old Vedic religion, and are but faint echoes of the non-killing of the lower animals of the former religion mixed up with certain rites and ceremonials to be performed not before the symbols started by the Buddhists, but before the like symbols of creation and salvation as the Kally or the Lingum, started by

the revivalists of that time and placed some times in the very shrine of the Buddhists, when they could get hold of them or in like shrines built up very near the existing Buddhistic shrines. The task became the more easy as Buddhism never thoroughly annihilated the then existing worships and ceremonies and made little or no opposition to their remaining alongside itself. The modern Hinduism as you find in India is this mixture of some of the tenets of Buddhism with some of the Vedas and the worships, forms & rituals that were introduced during the period of its revival, most of which you do not find in the Vedas at all. Hence the ring of pessimism, which you find in what is called the orthodox Hinduism; but it is fast disappearing by coming in touch with the Western thought.

I am so sorry to hear both the little girls were unwell. I hope they will be themselves again before this reaches you. My love and blessings to them always.

The Swami Vivekananda is much better and has resumed class works, in the Math, though he is not quite himself yet. I had letters from Calcutta to inform, he is keeping well under the light work and we may hope of his perfect recovery very soon.

I do not know the full name of our late friend. His initials were J. J. Goodwin. Mr. Sturdy of England might know the full name.

Greenacre cannot afford to loose you, if it is to stand at all. I am so sorry to hear of it.

I do not know anything as yet of the Benares Congress. I will inquire when I go back to Calcutta soon.

Many here feel that your country is going to give up a very high ideal. Of course, a great change will come over your social, political and industrial life, if you keep the Philippines and begin to rule. Perhaps it is another instance of what the Vedanta teachers say, that a perfect society and a ever upward local progress in the earth or in any sphere, are impossible. Perhaps the Indian pessimism has also come after long and repeated struggles to create a perfect society and an ever continuous social progress. If America can realise what India has failed to realise in the past, why, we shall be obliged to change this sad tenor of our thought and I hope and pray that it shall be so!

Remember me to Mrs. Farwell and Miss Wyre, when you meet them next; and to all friends, kindly.

Have you read the article of Mr. Dresser on the 'New Thought' in the January number of *The Arena*? He has said in one place, 'I express the hope and I say it advisedly, after a careful comparison of the two systems of thought, that the tendency toward *Orientalism* will go no further.'

Of course, Orientalism means here the Vedanta as the former paragraph of the essay shows. Kindly tell him if you meet, that if the Vedanta has nothing to give to the world, we shall be the first to give it a pension and push it aside to make room for better and higher truths. But because the so-called new thought tickles men's interests a little by curing a few headaches or diseases brought about by other-sensitiveness and hence mostly mental, in morbid organisms. We cannot lay aside one of the great systems of thought, in the world, unique in its breadth of toleration, and its ability to meet all the planes

of life with due reverence as steps or links in a continuous chain, the end of which is the infinite and merciful God.

With very kind regards to Mrs. Janes and yourself always, dear friend ;
I am yours faithfully,

SARADANANDA.

FREE WILL OR PREDESTINATION ?—II

SWAMI ASHOKANANDA

III

Let us now come back to predestination. As I told you, Vedantists agree that God has a knowledge and an understanding of what individual beings feel. Human beings, of course, think in a certain way ; you may say we have a certain quality of consciousness. We also have a quality of existence, of which our sense of time is an important factor. In fact, if this sense of time were to vanish, our existence would be torn to pieces, nothing would be left of it : its very pattern is created by our sense of past, present, and future ; and in this pattern we experience reality, we realize our own values, God understands this.

The Vedantic sages further maintain that it is quite possible that there are other types of consciousness which God understands. For all we know, there may be an infinite number and variety of other types—this universe is so vast ! But all these types of consciousness are limited ; they are, if one may say so, modes of the infinite consciousness. And God, it is held, understands all of them. He is, as it were, seated in the heart of every being ; He is able to perceive through the perception of each whatever each perceives.

But in so doing, God does not become, say, a human being. He still retains His own divine character, which is necessarily

inscrutable to us. It is inscrutable because unless we ourselves become free from the bondages of time and realize ourselves as beyond all limitations, unless we transcend all these patterns of existence, we cannot form any idea of what divine consciousness is and how it functions. But to the extent we become free of our limitations, to that extent we may be said to go beyond our humanity and approach Divinity. And the same would be true of any other individual of any other type of consciousness.

It is not quite unimaginable, therefore, what the divine consciousness is like: we have only to liberate ourselves somehow from the limitations and peculiarities of the human mode of consciousness and existence. If some of you ask, 'Is that possible?' I shall say emphatically yes! And if you have agreed with the Vedantic statement about the true nature of man, you will at once accept that possibility. If man really is not the body, not even the mind, then he is in no way distinguishable from the Divine Spirit: the body no longer limits him, nor does the mind; he is the pure, infinite Spirit, which God also is, and therefore, there is complete identity between the two. That of course is the highest realization; but as we go on transcending the bondages and limitations of the body and of the lower phases of the mind, we come closer and closer to our divine nature, and in such closeness it

becomes possible for us to understand how God feels and what divine consciousness really is.

Now, it has been maintained by all those who have known God that if you come very close to the divine consciousness you will never raise such questions as whether God knows what men do or what He has planned for this man or that man. Such questions arise only on a lower plane of consciousness. I have on many occasions told you of the ideas we have about the nature of God. These are rather graded: first, there is the lowest conception of God as Creator, then a little higher conception, and a still higher, until last of all you come to the idea of God as the Absolute. You realize God as the Absolute by yourself becoming the Absolute; therefore that realization comes, as I said, through complete identity of the soul with God. But immediately below that highest level is the level of *Iśvara*. *Iśvara* can be translated as 'the Lord,' but strangely enough, our conception of God in that level has nothing to do with creation. A soul, travelling upwards, could not approach this exalted aspect of Divinity without having completely shed all the functions and faculties related to this diversified creation. Coming, as it were, face to face with *Iśvara*, the soul would have lost all consciousness of creation and its varieties.

Now, when you speak of God as omniscient and so forth, you could think of His nature in two ways: You could say that God is omniscient because He knows everything that is taking place—which would be a lower conception of God; or you could say that He is all knowledge, all consciousness, which would be a higher conception. In the latter conception you do not ask, 'Does God know what is going to happen two hundred years from now in America?' You could raise such a question only in a lower state. If in that lower state you have come close to Him through

devotion and purity of being, you will find that as the Creator and Ruler of the universe, He is manipulating all the laws that govern our lives and the lives of all other beings, visible or invisible. You will find that all the details of this vast universe in its gross as well as subtle form are taken care of by that God, and you could expect Him to know what He is going to do two hundred years from now.

But here is the catch: As long as you are interested in questions like what will happen in America in two hundred years, how much heart have you given to God? How much? As long as a person is interested in all these little details of existence and accomplishment, he is still far, far away from God. So you will see one peculiarity in religion: The people who think of God in the terms of which I have been speaking—that He does everything, rules everything, has determined everything, that He is going to put John in hell and Smith in heaven, and so on—those are the people who also go to the altar of God and ask Him for this and that. Give me heaven, give me happiness. Is my wife going to get well? Are she and I going to meet in heaven and live happily ever after? Give me health, give me wealth, give me prosperity—such are the thoughts that come to their minds.

On the other hand, a devotee of God who has reached a higher state—whatever path or religion he may follow—will say, 'Lord, I don't want any of those things; they are all extraneous. What does it matter if the body is sick? What does it matter if I am in poverty? What does it matter if You take everything that I have? You are the giver; You also take away; it is Your will. My only desire is that in whatever condition I am placed I may never become deluded. May my heart never stray away from You.' He does not think of God as determining the fates of John and Smith, managing heaven and hell, keeping track

of everybody, and deciding what He is going to do with this one and that one. No, he thinks of the nature of God, that He is all knowledge, all love, all truth, all goodness; He is the infinite Being; He is the solace of my soul; He is the ocean of infinite joy and comfort. And a strong longing grows in the devotee's heart to reach Him. If you ask such a devotee, 'why do you want Him?' he will say, 'I don't know. I just want Him!'

There is a story about Yudhishtira, the eldest of the Pandavas. The Pandavas were five brothers; the third one was Arjuna, whose name you no doubt remember if you have studied the *Bhagavad Gita*. Yudhishtira was a very devout and spiritual person; he was called Dharma-raja, that is, 'King of Spirituality,' or of 'Righteousness.' All their lives these brothers suffered endlessly; all kinds of troubles were visited upon them, and one day someone asked Yudhishtira, 'Why, when God is giving you all these adversities and sufferings, do you still seek Him? Why do you still want Him?' And Yudhishtira pointed to the majestic peaks of the Himalayas and said, 'Look, these mountains are not pleasant; yet I bow before them because of their beauty and majesty. It is not what God gives; it is His beauty that attracts me.'

That is the language of the devotee. He does not bother about such questions as 'Did God create this world? What will He do to Mr. So-and-so? What is going to happen to me?' The general facts of this existence are enough to know. Sometimes I say jokingly, I can tell all your future: after so many years you will get old, and in a few more years you will die. You cannot deny that that is quite a good prophecy. You see, about the basic things, the answer is clear. But the moment you care about little details, everything gets clouded. Your interest in such things takes you farther away from God; you get into greater and greater darkness, and you become more

and more uncertain about everything.

So it has been said that our conception of our existence is related to our conceptions and realizations of God. It is when you have a conception of God at the lowest level that questions about predestination and the little details of your future will arise: When am I going to die? Am I going to have sickness? Will I have to suffer a lot before I die? Well, if the end is death for everyone, who cares whether you suffer three days or five days? What difference does it make? But if you are dwelling all the time on these little things, then two or three days make an awful amount of difference. They shouldn't, but they do. Now, see the difficulty: the moment you talk about predestination, you are trying to probe into the mystery of the divine mind! Just think what a big job you have undertaken, what a big problem you have placed before yourself! And yet you approach that problem with a small mind! That is one difficulty in the solution of this problem of predestination.

However, let me go ahead a little further with the story. As I said, we recognize different states in the realization of the Divine Nature, and we find that with each description of God there is a corresponding type of world. It is very important to remember that as we grow in our realization of God, as we transcend our lower conception of Him, we thereby transcend our lower conception of reality and existence. Now, when we are at the lowest phase where we see an infinite variety of things and are interested in all these varieties, and where everything is governed by law, can we say that we have any sort of freedom? Or is everything predestined? My answer is that everything is predetermined—with just a little exception, which I shall speak of later on. Why determined? Because here everything external happens according to physical law; and within me, mentally, my mind is also governed by laws. You may say, 'But in

the mind there surely is freedom; so many alternatives come to the mind, a tussle ensues, and as a result of it we make a certain choice.' No! A psychologist, or anyone who has insight into your mind, would have seen exactly what you were going to do. Just as an expert billiard player knows how to cue a ball so that another ball will fall into a certain pocket, a clever psychologist would be able to tell you that under certain circumstances you will arrive at such and such a conclusion. Everything here, physical and mental, is determined.

Now the question is, 'Has God decided everything?' I would say that God has decided everything in the same way an astronomer decides when an eclipse will take place. Knowing the positions of the earth, sun, and moon at a certain time and knowing how they move, the astronomer can easily calculate that on such and such a day an eclipse of the sun will be visible from such and such a place. As long as we live in this world, dominated by its laws, dominated by its details, craving the details, then certain things are bound to result. When you act in a certain way today, which will itself be determined by your own inner state—your present abilities and circumstances—then certain things will be bound to happen to you tomorrow or three years after, or three lives after—bound to happen.

It is in this respect that many religious people say, 'Everything is in the hands of God.' The ancient Greeks had a strong sense of fatalism. Mohammedans believe in predestination or predetermination, and, as I have mentioned, so do many Christians. Vedantists have not used the word 'predestination' but have spoken of 'karma.' The law of karma is, actually, the law of causality. Whatever you do or feel or experience is bound to produce certain effects; you are bound by the law of causality internally as well as externally. This is not, of course,

predestination in the crude sense that God sits in heaven and says, 'I think I shall make Smith go through purgatory for six months. Write down!' And the scribe writes down, 'Smith: six months purgatory.' No, rather it is this way: the different planes of existence are governed by their own laws; in each plane many sentient beings live, and there they function according to the laws of their plane. They are caught by those laws; as long as they remain in that particular plane of existence they will have to submit to them.

As a matter of fact, their very existence on a certain plane makes them *like* its laws. If I live on the physical plane of existence, I like the law of eating food and having it create a certain sensation in my tongue, do I not? Or I like the comfort of room temperature kept at seventy degrees or sixty-five degrees; or I like to go into the stinging cold for five minutes and after coming back tingling all over have a hot cup of coffee or tea. All such things I have desired. It is not that I have been put in this situation against my will, like a prisoner in a terrible prison. I am part of this plane of existence, and as long I have a liking for it, I shall continue to be the plaything of the laws or forces that operate here.

It goes without saying that there is a joke in this arrangement. If God fulfills your desires pertaining to a plane of existence, He also gives you the opposite. You ask God for money; He may listen to you and give you wealth, but He will always write: 'You will suffer from extreme poverty.' You call to God, 'O God, give me health.' If He listens and gives you health, He will always say, 'You will suffer from a terrible illness.' Why is it so? It is inevitable, because you are asking for something which has an opposite—like the obverse and reverse of a coin. If you want the head, you will also have the tail. You cannot get away from it. You stand in the sun, and you will cast the shadow. You may say, 'God could give

me only the light and not the shadow.' Yes, He could, but you know, He's funny that way. He wants to run this universe according to a pattern. You may suggest from time to time that He should behave differently, but He just doesn't want to. You think you have found out some law by which you will get only wealth or only health? Don't fool yourself! You may get health and wealth, but be equally ready for their opposites. You are living in a world where action is followed by reaction, light by darkness; you can never change it. So you see, a soul is caught in a certain plane of existence. 'Caught' is not the exact word: the soul *likes* part of that plane; that is why it is there. But the other part catches him. He doesn't like it, but he is caught in it; it is a matter of law. As long as he is in a low plane of existence he is very much under the domination of such law—the lower the plane, the more determined everything seems to be.

Now, let us suppose that a soul has learned to live in a higher plane and doesn't want any of the things of the lower plane. What happens to that soul? It goes without saying that the higher a soul rises and the higher the world to which it belongs, the more free it becomes. When you go to a higher level, think higher thoughts, you will find you have more freedom to think those thoughts. Conditions within you or outside you will not hamper you so much. Some of you might say it is easier to think wrong thoughts than right thoughts. That is not true. Right thought is much easier to think; there is less opposition. Only in the beginning does it seem difficult. We have been in the habit of thinking wrong thoughts for so long that mind has become prone to it; therefore we think it is easy. It is not easy. If you could know all your past, you would be surprised to see what trouble you have taken to degenerate yourself through lives and lives and lives, until you have forced that good mind into bad ways. And yet with

only a little effort this spoiled mind can be made to go in the right direction; even in a short time you find it rises up.

Now, your rising to higher and higher levels is, of course, determined by the nature of your desires. If you no longer want the things of this plane of existence, if you want nothing for yourself but want only to help others, then you become the citizen of another world, and everything becomes easier. Although apparently living in the same world as others, you transport yourself into another world where there is more peace, more harmony. The point you should note here is that the more you realize your truer nature, the less you want anything extraneous to yourself—to your spiritual self. What is contained in the Spirit, that alone you seek—nothing else. So if a person finds his true Self, he enjoys complete freedom.

Why is it so? First of all, he no longer has to submit to the body and mind to satisfy himself. What he is seeking is already contained in the Self; therefore he does not have to go out; nor is there any necessity of seeking. Just as a river flows hundreds of miles through all kinds of country until it becomes one with the boundless sea and flows no more, in the same way our soul, having gone through all kinds of existences and suffered all kinds of troubles, at last reaches the infinity of its own spiritual nature. No longer is there any movement, no longer any desire to seek, no longer any necessity of seeking. Here is the true freedom of the soul.

Now, if you say, 'Yes, that may be freedom, but it is not free will,' I will ask why you have to have a will. To have a will is a degeneration. The soul is like a child whose mother has given him plenty of food and yet he goes on saying, 'Mother, give me this, give me that!' He is still hungry. As long as the soul is hungry it wills something. But why should it be hungry when it has realized itself as the all and the

whole? So we have never considered that a will is a very wonderful possession. A person with a strong will may be superior to one who is weak-willed or who is bound by ignorance, but compared with what he truly is, his will is a degradation. So we need not bother about this 'free will' business. In the highest state, where there is no want, there is no need to have a will.

What is it that we find in that highest state? We find spiritual truth, spiritual reality; we find also many virtues, which from the standpoint of morality constitute the culmination of all moral ideals. These are the things which constitute the very essence of freedom. And so it follows that when a person seeks to attain moral virtues or to realize spiritual entities and spiritual truths, he feels greater freedom than when he seeks anything pertaining to matter or to the lower mind. If I seek something material, I at once become subject to all kinds of laws, and, as I have already indicated, to speak of freedom in that state is just self-delusion; there is no freedom in it. But the more I go above that state, the more I ask myself, 'What is this existence for? What is it I am seeking here? Am I seeking joy? Am I seeking truth? Am I seeking good? Am I seeking reality?' And I think, 'Well, these things are vitiated on this level by limitations, by being mixed up with their opposites. No! If I want true joy, true love, true beauty, I must seek them where they are free from these contaminations.' This thought at once raises me above the material level. The more I think this way, the greater is my sense of freedom, until I reach the very highest, where I will not have the slightest doubt that here, at last, I have true freedom. And in that true freedom there is nothing to achieve; all that was to be achieved is already here. That is the story of man.

Now, from what I have said it should be clear that predestination is a fact in the sense

that the world of which I am a part spells my future as long as I subject myself to its laws. If, for example, I travel to Alaska, my body will suffer from the extreme cold, and then my mind will also suffer. That suffering is predetermined; everything is already determined like this. Hindus, therefore, have not thrown the burden of the punishments and sufferings of man upon God. They have just said it is law—the law of karma. Just as outside nature is governed by laws, so is man's internal nature governed by law. When a person dabbles in outside things and thereby entangles himself in external phenomena, he becomes subject to the law of karma, which is both internal and external; rather, it is essentially internal, but has reference to the external. It is in this sense that we believe in predestination in this lower plane of existence.

IV

Now, in saying that everything is predetermined, I earlier made the statement that there is a slight exception. It is this: While we are functioning through the mind and the body and being subjected to the laws pertaining to them and to external things, our true nature, the Spirit, has not become negated; it has not disappeared. It is there. And if we remember that it is vaster than anything we can conceive, that it is infinitely more potent than the most potent mind or anything in this external universe; if we further remember that it is itself of the very nature of freedom, because there is nothing to limit it; if we remember that it is the most excellent of all excellent things, because it is the very essence of all perfection, it is all light, all consciousness—if we remember all this and remember that that is what we truly are even in our forgetfulness of it, then we cannot but ask this question: 'Where is it when we apparently have become slaves of the mind and body and external world? Does

it just make itself disappear?' No, it cannot disappear, because it is everywhere. That Light never goes out, never can be dimmed. It is but natural, therefore, to think that this Light interjects itself into the stream of mental and physical phenomena in which we seem to be caught.

I would say, then, that apart from our innate sense of freedom, which belongs to our true nature and can never be obliterated, some part of the Spirit is injected from time to time into the stream of determined phenomena. It is as though the sky were covered with clouds, and suddenly here and there a patch of blue sky appears, and the sun's rays shoot out. This happens because the clouds, moving here and there, cannot cover the sky entirely. The movements of body and mind are just like the movements of the clouds. They are governed by laws, but they cannot entirely hide the Spirit. Like physical light, Spirit has a tendency of continually asserting itself, of shining out at the slightest excuse. If you have darkened the windows of a lighted room, wherever there is a chink, the light within will shine out. That is the very nature of light, and it is also the very nature of Spirit, which is luminous, infinitely potent, infinitely good.

And so it happens that in some accidental moment (because those things are not determined in any way) this light of the Spirit suddenly shines into our determined life. Often things come unawares; we don't know when they come. Who knows how often momentary glimpses of the Spirit are impressed upon our mind! These moments are innumerable. It must be so, because if it were not, man would be doomed to continue forever in the same condition. What is it that will lift us from a lower to a higher and yet higher state of existence until we have reached the highest in the very heart of the Spirit? A new element must enter our life, so that we can truly say nothing is ever repeated. Progress may be

slow, but something new is continually entering and becoming a part of our existence; therefore we are not repeating the same thing over and over again. We are not.

This new element is the Spirit, and the Spirit itself is free. Let the mind and body be governed by their own laws, the Spirit is not compelled to kowtow before them. It will not say, 'Well, now, mind is governed by laws; therefore I should not suddenly come and do my tricks there.' No. The Spirit does not care about the laws that limit the mind. It can assert itself at any time. Devotees have spoken of this as the grace of God. All theists say, 'Who knows how the grace of God works? The greatest sinner can be converted into a saint in one day through the grace of God.' The monists say, 'Because my true nature is divine and has always been so, who knows when this ignorance might disappear?' Who knows, for example, at what moment a person who is dreaming might wake up and the dream become negated? Is there any law that you must dream for, say, fifty-five minutes before you can wake up? There is no such law about it. In the same way, the Spirit is undetermined. So, you see, there is this element of freedom in our lives.

Now, if you still ask me, 'Free will or predestination? Give us an answer,' I will say this: If you want, you can be completely free now. If you don't want to be free, even so, little elements of freedom are entering into your determined life. As long as you seek things belonging to the lower levels, which are determined, to expect to have free will is just foolishness. The lower you go, and the grosser the world in which you live and have your interest, the more bound by law you will become. No need to bring God into it: predestination is the predestination of law. As long as you are part of the world of law, your future is determined. Just as natural phenomena are found to have a determined future which can be prognosti-

cated, in the same way human beings also become subject to predermined laws. Whether a man is able to forecast the movement of those laws or not, he will be subject to them. And he becomes so because he is bound to a certain mode of existence. So if you are in a lower state of existence, you are not free—except in the one sense of which I have spoken.

But you can become free this moment if you say, 'No, I want nothing of this lower state. I want only that which is free by its very nature. I want the excellences and perfections of the Spirit.' The moment you say that, greater freedom comes to you. The very nature of that which you are seeking is freedom, and your own true nature is also freedom; so as far as spiritual things are concerned, if you ask me about predestination or predetermination, I say, 'Yes, here,

too, your future is predetermined: you are going to realize yourself as the free Spirit!' That kind of predestination exists in the spiritual world; therefore, freely willing to be free, in the spiritual sense, is possible.

But never think you can become free in the material world. No. You get one thing, it will be followed by the opposite. Afterwards, you will wake up from this evil dream and you will say, 'That which I have been seeking does not belong here. It belongs in a higher world.' And then you will travel to that higher world. My friends, that higher world is within you. 'Lo, the kingdom of heaven is not here, it is not there; the kingdom of heaven is within you.'

(Concluded)

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ETHICS OF A MODERN CORPORATION—II

SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The Indian Message of Dharma :

It is against this thought background of ancient Vedānta, twentieth-century science and modern human experience, that we have to view economic activities of industrial corporations and business ventures in modern India. New scientific truths take time to influence social thinking and action; and much of our current socio-economic thinking and action is still influenced by nineteenth-century science. Ethical values, what India calls *dharma*, are inseparable from any ordered human society. Bereft of them, man becomes reduced to a beast, says Indian wisdom: *dharmena hīnāḥ paśubhiḥ samānāḥ*. *Dharma* as the principle of integration of

man with man in society, does not mean religion in the sense of creed, doctrine, or ritual, nor any scheme of other-worldly salvation. A mere accumulation of bricks does not constitute a building. It needs cement to unite brick with brick to make for its integrated structure. Similarly, a mere aggregation of men does not constitute a society. *Dharma* is the value that unites man to man to form the integrated organization which is society. *Dharma* stresses the idea of mutuality and interdependence of man in society. Man needs the context of other human beings for his very humanization. This is how Sri Krishna expounds *dharma* in the *Karna Parva* of the *Mahābhārata* (8.45.50):

*Dhāraṇāt dharmā ityāhuh,
dharmo dhārayate prajāḥ*

The Puruṣārthas

Indian philosophy considers *kāma*, sensate satisfaction, and *artha*, wealth, the means to *kāma*, as valid human pursuits, or *puruṣārthas*. But it considers *lobha*—greed and *moha*—delusion, arising from unchecked desire, as unethical, because they are anti-social. To restrain these two pursuits from becoming anti-social, Indian philosophy presents a third vital human pursuit, or *puruṣārtha*, namely, *dharmā*—ethical sense. It is *dharmā* that helps all people, not just a few powerful and clever ones, to experience the maximum *kāma* and *artha*. And Sri Krishna, the human manifestation of the one Divine Self in all beings, endorses this validity of *Kāma* in the *Gītā* (7.11) :

*Dharmā-viruddho bhūteṣu
kāmo'smi Bharatarṣabha—*

'I am that *Kāma*, sensual desire, in all beings, which is unopposed to *dharmā*.'

Indian philosophy refers to *dharmā*, *artha*, and *kāma* as the *trivarga*, the inseparable group of three, treats them as the universal warp and woof of all ordered human society, and presents *mokṣa* absolute freedom of the spirit, as the fourth *puruṣārtha*, as an optional trans-social pursuit meant for those few who desire, and dare, to go deeper into the spiritual dimensions of life and realise one's true nature in all its glory. For all the rest, this *mokṣa* experience comes, within the limitations of the social context, as *dharmā*. *Dharmā*, thus, is the confluence of the social and the trans-social ; and every sacred and secular literature of India sings its glory. Indian culture is rooted in, and inspired by, this great value of *dharmā*.

Dharmā versus psycho-social evolution :

It is the echo of this great value that we get in the concept of *psycho-social* evolution of twentieth-century biology referred to earlier. With the most versatile organ,

namely, the cerebral system, given to man by nature, says today's biology, evolution, at the human stage, has ceased to be primarily organic, and has become psycho-social. It demands that man, with the help of his cerebral system, detach his psyche or self from the organic system and make it grow and expand, in ethical awareness and social feeling, so as to realise its oneness with other psyches in society. Here we get an echo of the *anāsakti-yoga* of the *Gītā*. All greed, delusion, and exploitation proceed from the self, when centred in, and attached to, the organic system. By psycho-social evolution, man grows *spiritually* and becomes capable of digging affections in each other, of communicating with each other, of working in a team. It is at this deeper level that he becomes capable of realizing the value of *dharmā*, ethical sense, from within himself, and expressing himself, naturally and spontaneously, in moods and acts of service, and becomes also incapable of exploiting other human beings.

Our national cultural ethos will not allow our people to drift into the worship of, what several modern economic thinkers refer to, as, the false god of G.N.P., of an unchecked pursuit of organic satisfactions, of a mad rush after material affluence. Our philosophy tells us how and why to pursue these, and when and how to stop, and what higher things there are to pursue. If our own tested cultural values guide us in our economic pursuits in the modern period, we shall be satisfied with a measure of decent material and social welfare for all our people.

Our Economic Development in the Light of Indian Culture :

This itself will provide, in the context of the immense population of our country at low levels of economic development, a wide field for our industrial enterprises. The stimulus for expansion and diversification

of industrial production and making monetary profits is, therefore, to be sought in a national economic policy designed to effect a wide diffusion of purchasing power among our people. Therein will lie the real thrust of Indian socialism. Production of luxury and conspicuous consumption goods, according to Swami Vivekananda, has also a place, and can be encouraged, in a socialistic order, only as a means to provide gainful work for the poor.

In this context, the new concept of 'fulfilment' presented by Julian Huxley as the goal of evolution at the human state, as against 'organic satisfactions', which nineteenth-century biology had presented as the goal of all evolution, and which twentieth-century biology relegates to its pre-human phase, becomes significant. (*Evolution after Darwin*, Vol. III, p. 259) :

But like population explosion, this consumption explosion cannot continue much longer. It is an inherently self-defeating process. Sooner, rather than later, we must get away from a system based on artificially increasing the number of human wants, *and set about constructing one aimed at the qualitative satisfaction of real human needs, spiritual and mental, as well as material and physiological.*

This means abandoning the pernicious habit of evaluating every human project solely in terms of its utility—by which the evaluators mean its material utility and, especially, its utility in making a profit for somebody.

Social Purposes of Industrial Corporations :

When economic activity is conducted in the light of this philosophy of man and society, it ceases to be primarily a profit making venture. Profit-making does remain as one of its important motivations; but it becomes subordinated to the service motivation.

This is the ethical role of a modern cor-

poration, the word 'modern' breathing the spirit of modern science, of the modern humanistic values and urges, and the trials and tribulations of industrial experiences, of the post-war period. Our country is fortunately placed, in that we are in the early stages of our industrial development. Our industry has to learn from the dismal post-war experiences and warnings of British and Western European industry, and take steps to define a new role for our managements and trade unions, and *a new national purpose for our corporations.* A new revolution in trade unionism will follow a new concept of an industrial corporation in which the profit motive of the employer, which gave rise to the counter profit motive of the employee, gives way to the service motive. This will provide a context of a national partnership between management and labour, not for exploiting the corporation for mutual advantage, which may happen only in a capitalist system, but for the service of all the constituent parties concerned. It will flow from a *social purposes clause* to be inserted in the corporation's aims and objects, and incorporated in the Company Law itself.

Role of Labour—Management Partnership :

When we thus make the profit motive secondary and the service motive primary, we convert both the management and the labour of a corporation into what they really are, namely, *citizens of free India engaged in a partnership within a national productive enterprise.* This Management-Labour partnership then becomes the custodian of the wider interests of society. And it is in that high role of free and responsible citizens with its wider national horizons and awareness of national responsibilities, that the representatives of labour, now, being inducted to the managements, become a source of strength to the corporation. Such a process will hasten the conversion of the cor-

poration into a *trust* for the good of society. It is in such a responsible corporation, inspired with this ethical and human motivation, that workers can be expected to play a responsive and responsible role from the shop floor to the board room. Such a corporation will harmonize the demand of all the constituents of the corporation, namely, the workers, the investors and the shareholders, the state, the consumer, and the community at large. A corporation's obligations are two-fold: internal and external. Internal—to the corporation, for its continuance and development; to its employees, for their human dignity, development of skills, promotion, and security; and to its investors and shareholders for a reasonable return on their investment. External—to the state, by way of taxes due; and to the consumers, for supply of quality goods at reasonable prices, and to the community at large, by suitable welfare measures. The ethics of a modern corporation will also include the responsibility, for producing only such goods as are beneficial for humanity and needed for its development and fulfilment.

The Grhastha to spiritually grow into the Citizen:

Exploitation of man by man is not the evil monopoly of only corporate industry and business. It has been long practised by our people in the domestic sphere as well. If a man or a woman in distress approaches our homes for a job, we rarely offer him or her the wage commensurate with the job, but what can purchase one at the lowest level of his or her distress. It is good for us, who have plenty of religion about us, to know that this is rarely done by the people of the 'materialistic' West. What is still more tragic is the fact that the householder concerned, as also his or her friends, applaud such unethical and low

behaviour as *practical intelligence*! We here mistake cleverness and cunning for intelligence. The sooner our people learn to treat such intelligence as folly, and as crime against God and man, against God in man, the better for us and for our nation.

When we rise to this ethical and human level of thinking and action, we shall rise to the level of true citizenship of a democratic and socialistic India. This signifies the spiritual growth of the *grhastha*, or householder into the citizen.

The impact of millions of such citizens on the functioning of our industrial, financial, and business institutions, and on all our politics and administration, will be healthy and weighty in an unprecedented degree. *The good life begins in the privacy of our life, when we are unobserved by others.* It is millions of such attitudes and acts, mostly quiet and silent, that make a society *dhārmic* or ethical, imparting thereby substance and soulfulness and reality to the democratic and socialistic political structure of the nation. This is true nation-building, according to Swami Vivekananda, through man-making education and man-making religion.

Raising the Cultural Level of our Working People:

The Trade Unions and the Ministries and Departments of Labour need to turn their attention to the qualitative improvement of the life of our working people. It is obvious that, while collective bargaining has raised the worker's wages and salaries, there has not been a corresponding rise in the cultural level of his or her life. I have heard from some of our public sector managements that, in spite of earning over one thousand rupees a month, many workers live shabby, dismal lives. It is culture that brings the best out of a given quantum of money; money itself does not possess that power. Without

culture, all the money that one earns may be wasted in wasteful expenditure; and with culture, even a lesser amount of money can ensure a better quality of life to the wage-earner and his or her family. I saw this vividly illustrated when I was in Karachi during the war years. The Ramakrishna Mission, Karachi, was conducting a school for Bhils on the Clifton beach. As municipal employees, many of these Bhils used to earn double what the teacher in that school was earning as salary. But whereas the teacher's life was clean and bright, the life of the Bhils was wretched and dismal.

It is time that our nation turns its attention to the qualitative improvement in the life of millions of our working people. Apart from secular education, the one powerful source of cultural uplift and qualitative improvement of the life of our people is religion—not of the magical and superstitious variety, but *bhakti* and *bhajan*. Apart from adequate and general secular education, family planning and religion form two other important factors for raising the cultural level of our workers. Family planning, though very necessary as a programme for raising the quality of life of the worker and his family is not sufficient for achieving so great a purpose as cultural uplift. It must be accompanied by the ministrations of that science and technique of religion which imparts dignity, strength, and an inner enrichment to man in all stations of life. Schopenhauer's warning: 'When men achieve security and welfare, now that they have solved all their problems, they become a problem to themselves', can evoke only one response from any sensible person, namely, an immediate resort to the science and technique of enriching one's inner life.

Our people have built up, through the ages, a good capital of this inner richness; let us not, in the modern period, eat up this precious capital, but add to it while draw-

ing on it. That is the way of wisdom. It is the culture of *bhakti* and *bhajan*, derived from thousands of saints and poet-singers, of all castes and creeds, that has made for *the unique phenomenon of the dissociation of poverty from crime in our country*. Our working people must be educated to prefer, once again, *bhajan* at the end of a day's labour to drunkenness and brawls. Our poor are poor only in their pockets, but not in their hearts; their inborn culture makes them kind and hospitable, gladly sharing their piece of bread with a visitor. We are fast losing this wealth of culture in our common people by the materialistic impact of modern industrialism. This tragedy must be averted. Swami Vivekananda, accordingly, wrote in one of his letters from America to his workers in India: 'Keep the motto before you: Elevation of the masses without injuring their religion.' Several of our military officers have told me that it is the provision of facilities for religious life that contributes most for the morale of our jawans in our army.

Mass Production versus Production by the Masses:

The presence of a large segment of public sector corporations in our country, dissociated from the vice of the exploitations associated with the private sector, and controlling the commanding heights of the national economy, is a vital factor in giving our technology a human face. Public and private sector industries have to realize that private affluence and public squalor in our country is a standing challenge to our political system and to our social conscience. We have also to safeguard ourselves against the current materialistic philosophy behind modern production techniques which stimulate insatiable human cravings, and create ecological problems and which mutilate man and distort the social situation.

Introducing into our industry ethical

values, and giving our technology a human face, also involves, as suggested by Schumacher, adoption of intermediate and small-scale technologies, which are labour intensive, in place of high technology where it is not relevant. Using the scarce capital resources available to start thousands of small work units, and giving gainful employment to millions constitutes the ethics of industrial enterprise in our country today. This is to follow the wise lead given by Gandhiji : 'not mass production, but production by the masses. And, since the last two years, our national policy has happily turned in this direction.

Conclusion :

Public sector corporations have a great responsibility, therefore, to uphold ethical and human values in industry, along with achieving productive efficiency and rising profits, and thus set an example to all private sector corporations in the country. When ethical and human values will inspire industrial and business corporations in India, we can see the end of exploitation of man by man, and man by money-power, in our country. This will help to fulfil Gandhiji's dream, in spirit, if not in letter, of the prin-

ciple of *trusteeship* inspiring industrial and business activities in India. There are already some small industrial ventures in our country, sponsored by some of the members of Gandhiji's constructive work movement, which function under the trusteeship principle advocated by Gandhiji. It is heartening to find that such ventures, with slight variations, are functioning in some of the Western countries as well. I cannot conclude this exposition of the *Ethics of a Modern Corporation* better than by conveying the blessings, on the subject, pronounced by the Father of the Nation. Writing in the *Harijan* of 31 March, 1946, on the Eve of Indian Independence, Gandhiji had said :

Supposing India becomes a free country tomorrow, all the capitalists will have an opportunity of becoming statutory trustees. But such a statute will not be imposed from above. It will have to come from below. When the people understand the implications of trusteeship, and the atmosphere is ripe for it, the people themselves, beginning with Gram Panchayats, will begin to introduce such statutes. Such a thing coming from below is easy to swallow. Coming from above, it is liable to prove a dead-weight.

A Note on Administrative Re-organisation

(By the same author)

When discussing a subject like *Ethics of a Modern Corporation*, we cannot ignore the pressing problem of finding employment for the mass of our people through the dispersal of industries, using what I have referred to as intermediate and small-scale technology, in thousands of work centres in our rural areas. This will not only bring gainful employment and economic uplift to our long-neglected countryside but will also

stop the drift of our rural people to the towns and cities with its resulting growth of slums and attendant human problems.

The energizing of our rural India, and making our rural population take interest in national development, needs a more radical approach to administrative reforms than what we have so far attempted. Our administration is a Mughal and British legacy: they were empires and their interest in our

rural life was only *law and order* and *revenue collection*. The large districts that the British carved out were designed for these purposes; even the name of the head of the district as *Collector* was to emphasise his role as a collector of revenue. In Bengal, villages are grouped under Police Thanas, a law and order designation.

When we became independent and proclaimed ourselves a democratic republic, we should have changed the administrative set-up, to match with our vast planning and developmental programmes. But what we actually did was only tinkering with the Mughal-British legacy here and there; these little changes which we introduced in the structure did not meet with the demands of the revolutionary changes we introduced in the aims and programmes of our independent India's administration. *A dynamic national developmental programme and a static administrative structure will go together.* We must dare to make radical changes in that structure itself, if it is to serve the purposes of a revolutionary development programme.

It is heartening to note that, recently, the Prime Minister [Indira Gandhi] has instructed all states to see that the administration in the districts and below is strengthened so that, that part of the government with which the common people come directly into contact may make the people and itself involved in each other. I am happy to know that our own state [Andhra Pradesh] has appointed, in this connection, an administrative reforms committee. I hope it will take really radical steps to effectively involve the people in national development from the grass-roots level up to the District level.

Experience reveals one weakness of our present set-up; that is this: our villages are too small to constitute a viable unit of administration; and our districts are too big to constitute a viable unit of administration, with the very many duties

and responsibilities now devolving on its head, namely, the Collector. For making administration effective, and for involving the people in their development, and for energizing the rural areas with thousands of work centres, we need to treat the present taluk or block as a district and the taluk headquarters town as the hub of industrial, educational, training, health, family-planning, and administrative centre easily accessible from all parts of the taluk. Industrial estates, public and private, started in these taluk headquarters town will draw workers from the rural areas, who will go back after work to their homes through the network of roads and cycle and other relevant communication facilities; this will prevent slums developing in these industrial towns; smaller industries are to be started in the villages also. The area of a taluk being small, there will be plenty of intercommunication between its various villages with the help of roads and common work, education, and recreation facilities. *The village panchāyat below and the taluk parishad above will become the dynamic centres of self-government in the nation.*

The words taluk and zilla were coined by foreign rulers, in their own interests, to suggest revenue collecting regions. They evoke only the image of an exploiting administration in the minds of our people. But a word like Janapada will evoke a sense of a people's government—*swaraj*. It will, therefore, be advisable to give a more meaningful name to this administrative unit of a taluk or block. Mr. D. P. Mishra, when he was Chief Minister of the old Madhya Pradesh, had suggested this name Janapada to such an administrative unit, in his bill to reorganize that state; after his ministry quit, nothing came out of it; but I feel it is a very imaginative project and needs to be studied and made use of. The change can begin with our own state of Andhra Pradesh, a state of vast distances. The state

can be organized into about 180 Janapadas, corresponding to its present taluks or blocks, each under a Collector, which name also needs to be changed into Janapada Sevak; change in such names, to reflect the change in the colour and function of administration, goes a long way to involve the people in the administration. Under the Mughal and the British, we had Viceroys. What would have been our reaction if, after independence, we had continued to use the term Viceroy, instead of Rāshtrapati, to our Head of State. But we *wisely* made the change at the top, and *unwisely* left it unchanged at the lower levels; that is why our independence has brought about only a *surface revolution* and not a *national revolution*. Speaking at Madras in 1897 on 'My Plan of Campaign', Swami Vivekananda had said

To the reformers I will point out that I am a greater reformer than any one of them. They want to reform only little bits. I want *root and branch reform*. . . . you must go down to the basis of the thing, to the very root of the matter. That is what I call radical reform. *Put the fire there and let it burn upwards and make an Indian nation.*

This call of the great patriot saint of Modern India in another context needs to be heeded and given effect to in our administration. The Janapada project holds the key to 'put fire at the bottom and let it burn upwards to make an Indian nation.

India thus will become a *Union of about 3,500 Janapadas* through the present 20 or 21 states; each Janapada will become a bee-hive of nation-building activity; national and political awareness will spread in the countryside; and the centre of gravity of the nation will then be evenly distributed between the urban areas and rural areas, and exploitation of the latter by the former will end.

This state, and the nation as a whole, should not consider the increased cost of administration arising from 180 district Collectors, in place of the present 21 Collectors, with respect to Andhra Pradesh, and similar figures with respect to other states, as a serious objection when other advantages will be found to be revolutionary.

(Concluded)

VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE OF DYNAMIC VEDANTA—II

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

Narendra was making remarkable progress in his spiritual life, when suddenly his father died, leaving his family in great distress. There was not even sufficient food, for, the father, though he earned much, had spent it all. Many a time the young Narendra would tell his mother that he was invited out to dinner, so that by absenting himself from the family table there might be more food for his brothers and sisters. All this threw him into a state of doubt about God's existence. It was the old cry. If God

exists, does he listen to our prayers? Why is there so much misery in the world?' As he continued to wrestle with the problem, he one day fell into a deep spiritual mood and had a tremendous experience. All doubt regarding the co-existence of divine justice and human misery was dispelled. This experience removed all physical fatigue and spiritual discouragement. He felt a wonderful strength in body and mind. Referring to those days of trials and hardships, he told one of his brother-disciples: 'I have

attained my present state of mind as the result of so much suffering. I now realize that without trials one cannot resign himself to God and depend on Him absolutely.' In one of his poems he writes: 'O Mother, you have made me pass through no end of trials all through my life, but you have been taking me higher and higher in the scale of evolution.'

He could find no peace, however, until there was some solution to the family difficulties. When he came to his Master, Ramakrishna told him to pray to the Divine Mother in the temple and ask her for what he needed. As Narendra approached the temple, the thought of the Divine Mother became living in him, and when he reached the temple, instead of praying about his family, he asked for knowledge, for the strength of devotion that would bring realization. 'Did you pray?' asked Ramakrishna. 'No sir, I couldn't pray for material things.' 'Then go again.' He went again, and again prayed for purity, for realization. He tried a third time, but he could not pray for anything worldly, even to help his family. Then his Master said: 'It is well. Your family will have enough food and clothing.'

One day, while still a student he told his Master that he wanted to lose himself completely in the superconscious state, which he had once before experienced. The Master, knowing his rare potentiality, and his mission, said: 'My boy, what a small mind you have. You must go beyond that state of Samadhi which is trifling to one like you. There is even a higher state than Samadhi, from which the spiritual seeker returns to this world and sees that everything is a manifestation of the Infinite Spirit.' And so it was that Narendra had his complete realization.

Then the Master fell ill. He had taken upon himself so much evil from others that his body could not bear it. The disciples,

with whom we studied after his passing, told us that those days of the Master's illness were days of ecstasy; he would throw everyone into high spiritual moods, and seemed often to be in an ecstatic mood himself. Just before the end, he transmitted all his powers to Narendra and said to him, 'From today I have become a beggar.' All the powers of the teacher passed into the disciple, and Narendra thus became a dynamo of spiritual energy. The Master taught him all that he was to do: 'Take care of the boys and help them to build up their lives.' In this way, he made Narendra—the future Vivekananda—the leader of the group.

After the passing away of his Master, Vivekananda was filled with a great restlessness. 'You all have won peace', he remarked to the author of *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna*—"M", 'Why is this frightful restlessness in me alone?' To this, 'M' replied: 'You have a mission to perform; you cannot have peace until you have fulfilled it. There will be great peace for you later on.'

And so Vivekananda set forth as a wandering monk, going from place to place in India, observing the spiritual culture—and side by side with it the poverty and suffering of the masses. 'Religion is not for empty stomach,' he said. 'Something more must be done.' He believed in the potential strength of India's masses and felt tremendous sympathy for their suffering, but he was still puzzled over the evil he saw everywhere. He needed more training before he could feel sympathy for the morally fallen and for those who lived evil lives.

Once, when he was wandering in Rajputana, he became the guest of the Maharajah of Khetri, and had an occasion to listen—rather reluctantly—to the song of a dancing girl. The burden of the song was:

O Lord, look not upon my evil qualities.
Thy name, O Lord, is same-sightedness.

One piece of iron is in the image in the temple,
 Another, in the hand of the butcher;
 But when they touch the philosopher's stone
 Both alike are turned to gold.

This song brought about a new revelation to Vivekananda, and he declared, later: 'This incident removed the scales from my eyes and I saw that all are indeed the manifestations of the One supreme Spirit.' His heart felt a new love and sympathy for all.

In the year 1892, there came news of the Parliament of Religions to be held in Chicago. Vivekananda was asked by his disciples to attend, and interpret the Hindu religion to the West. While he was considering the matter, waiting to receive the divine call, he had a symbolic dream. He saw the figure of Ramakrishna walking from the seashore into the ocean, and beckoning him to follow. That was enough for him. He now felt certain that the Master's blessing was on him.

Before he sailed to America, he said to Swami Turiyananda: 'I am still unable to understand anything of your so-called religion. But my heart has expanded very much, and I have learnt to feel. Believe me, I feel intensely indeed.'² From then on he felt, a deep sympathy for both the materially poor and the spiritually starving masses, and tried to serve both.

When he landed in America he discovered that without a formal introduction it would be impossible for him to attend the Parliament. Accidentally, he came to know Professor J. H. Wright of Harvard University, and told him of his predicament. On hearing what he said, the Professor, who had come to know the Swami's calibre, remarked, 'To ask you, Swami, for creden-

tials, is like asking the sun to state its right to shine.' He wrote a letter of introduction to Dr. Barrows, general secretary of the Parliament of Religions, stating, 'Here is a man who is more learned than all our professors put together.'

When Vivekananda addressed the Parliament, he cast off all formalities. Where the other speakers started out with 'Ladies and gentlemen', the Swami very feelingfully said, 'Sisters and brothers of America!' and his profound sense of unity touched the hearts of his listeners and evoked tremendous applause.

In that brief first talk, he quoted from the Hindu sacred books: 'As the different streams having their sources in different places all mingle their water in the sea, so, O Lord, the different paths which men take, through different tendencies, various though they appear, crooked or straight, all lead to Thee.'³ And he quoted Sri Krishna: 'Whosoever comes to Me, through whatsoever form, I reach him; all men are struggling through paths which in the end lead to me.' (*ibid.*)

While the other representatives spoke only of their limited conceptions of God, Vivekananda told them of the Universal Being, who is the God of all religions.

He was acclaimed as 'undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions.' But in the midst of the immense popularity he never forgot his mission. He did not think of his own victory. Lying on a luxurious bed in the home of a wealthy host, he thought of the poor in India, and the bed became for him a bed of thorns. He rolled on the floor and cried in agony of heart: 'O Mother, what do I care for name and fame when my motherland remains sunk in utmost poverty! . . . Who will raise

2. His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, (1974), Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, p. 282.

3. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, (Com. Works), Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, Vol. I (1972), p. 4.

the masses in India? Who will give them bread? Show me, O Mother, how I can help them.⁴ Shortly before the Parliament he had written to disciples in India: 'With a bleeding heart I have crossed the world to this strange land, seeking for help. The Lord is great. I know He will help me. I may perish of cold or hunger in this land, but I bequeath to you, young men, this sympathy, this struggle for the poor, the ignorant, the oppressed. Go now this minute to the temple... and before Him (the Lord)... make a great sacrifice, the sacrifice of a whole life for them... these three hundred millions, going down and down every day.'⁵

During his ministry Vivekananda always stressed his gospel of strength—his dynamic Vedanta: 'Strength, strength is what the Upanishad speaks to me from every page. Strength, it says, strength, O man, be not weak. Are there no human weaknesses, man asks? There are, say the Upanishads, but will more weakness heal them? Would you try to wash dirt with dirt? Will sin cure sin, weakness cure weakness? Strength, O man, strength, say the Upanishads, stand up and be strong. Be fearless.'

'The first step in getting strength is to believe, "I am the soul." "Me the sword cannot cut; no weapons pierce; me the fire cannot burn; me the air cannot dry. I am the spirit." We all have the same glorious soul; let us believe in it.'

Vivekananda's inspiring message brought a new spirit to the Indian leaders and people. His dynamic spiritual ideal brought into being many centres for building up the spiritual life. Educational institutions for teaching the best of Eastern and Western culture were started, and through his inspiration hospitals, dispensaries and relief centres for the alleviation of distress and suffering were organized. The movement is

growing fast in modern India, freed through the self-sacrifice of Mahatma Gandhi and India's other great souls—all inspired by the practical Vedanta which stresses the spiritual nature and dignity of man and the ideal of service to the God in man. Vivekananda, believing in this heritage, had said: 'Allow me to call you, brethren, by that sweet name—heirs of immortal bliss—yes, the Hindu refuses to call you sinners. Ye are the Children of God, the sharers of immortal bliss, holy and perfect beings. Ye divinities on earth—sinners! It is a sin to call a man so; it is a standing libel on human nature. Come up, O lions, and shake off the delusion that you are sheep; you are souls immortal, spirits free, blest and eternal...'⁶

This was the message of the Upanishads and of Ramakrishna. The Master said: 'Once someone gave me a book of the Christians. I asked him to read it to me. It talked about nothing but sin. (To Keshab)—Sin is the only thing one hears of at your Brahmo Samaj, too. The wretch who constantly says, "I am bound, I am bound" only succeeds in being bound. He who says day and night, "I am a sinner, I am a sinner" verily becomes a sinner... If a man repeats the name of God, his body, mind and everything become pure. Why should one talk only about sin and hell and such things? Say but once, "O Lord, I have undoubtedly done wicked things, but I won't repeat them." And have faith in His name.'⁷

St. Paul declares, 'We are children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.' Vedanta declares: 'We are all children of God by our faith in God, who is our higher self. We are divine by our own right. But this divinity must be realized. God is the Father, Mother, Friend and Beloved. We are parts of the

4. *The Life*, p. 315.

5. *Com. Works*, Vol. V (1973), pp. 16-17.

6. *Com. Works*, Vol. I, p. 11.

7. 'M', *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (1957), Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, p. 68.

soul of all souls—eternal portions of God.’

Vivekananda says: ‘If the room is dark, do you go about beating your chest and crying, “It is dark, dark, dark!” No, the only way to get light is to strike a light, and then the darkness is gone. The only way to realize the light, the spiritual light above you, is to strike the spiritual light within you; and the darkness of sin and impurity will flee away. Think of your higher self, not of your lower.’

He spoke of the goal of all spiritual paths: ‘Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within, by controlling nature, external and internal. Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy—by one or more or all of these—and be free. This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms are but secondary details.’⁸ Religion is realization, direct experience of the Ultimate Reality, to be attained by the various paths. While the representatives of individual religions and religious sects were stressing one or more of these particular paths, Swami Vivekananda advocated the all-comprehensive ideal, thus:

Karma—path of selfless activity

Bhakti—path of devotion

Raja Yoga—path of psychic control

Jnana Yoga—path of philosophical self-analysis.

‘What I want to propagate,’ he said, ‘is a religion that will be equally acceptable to all minds; it must be equally philosophic, equally emotional, equally mystic, and equally conducive to action.... To become harmoniously balanced in all these four directions is my ideal of religion.’⁹ This means an integrated, wholesouled approach to the Ultimate Reality, which must be experienced.

Vedanta philosophers draw a distinction between Tattvam, the Ultimate Truth, which is absolute—and Matam, ‘opinions’ about it, which are relative. The trouble comes when people mistake the relative for the absolute. All individual religions are aspects of the One Religion, which stands for self-realization of the eternal relation between the eternal soul and Eternal God.

Truth—the Ultimate Reality—is universal. So is the One Religion of which the individual religions are only different aspects. When Swami Vivekananda pleaded for a Universal Religion, he meant NOT a new religion but a new attitude towards all religions. And he spoke on behalf of, not his own religion, Hinduism, but of all religions without any exception. ‘It will be a religion which will have no place for persecution or intolerance in its polity, which will recognize divinity in every man and woman, and whose whole scope, whose whole force will be created in aiding humanity to realize its own true, divine nature.’¹⁰ ‘The Christian is not to become a Hindu or a Buddhist, nor a Hindu or a Buddhist to become a Christian. But each must assimilate the spirit of the others and yet preserve his individuality and grow according to his own law of growth.’¹¹

It is this universalism of Vedanta which Mahatma Gandhi stressed when he spoke to the Federation of International Fellowships. These wise words all of us should bear in mind: ‘The object of the Fellowships ought to be to help a Hindu to be a better Hindu, a Mohammedan to become a better Mohammedan, a Christian to become a better Christian. Our attitude towards the other ought never be: ‘God! Give them the Light Thou hast given me!’ Instead—‘Give them all the Light and truth they need for

8. *Com. Works*, Vol. I, p. 257.

9. *Com. Works*, Vol. II (1971), pp. 387-88.

10. *Com. Works*, Vol. I, p. 19.

11. *Com. Works*, Vol. I, p. 24.

their highest development.' This is the central theme of religious universalism.

Another great ideal of Vivekananda's dynamic Vedanta is that of working for the salvation of others. Religion must lose its exclusiveness. The narrow-minded theologian speaks of heaven for those who *think like him*, and eternal punishment for those who hold other views. Vivekananda stood against such a selfish isolationist attitude. 'Work for the salvation of oneself and also for the welfare of one's fellow-beings', he said. 'We must learn, sooner or later, that one cannot get salvation if one does not try to seek the salvation of his brothers.' This thought had been impressed on him by his Master, Ramakrishna. Remember how as a young student he told his Master that he would like to remain continuously in the bliss of the superconscious state—and Ramakrishna's rebuke: 'How can you ask for such things? You wish to stay absorbed in personal joy like an ordinary man? This realization will become so natural to you that in your normal state you will realize the One Divinity in all beings.'¹² It is not compassion for other, but rather

service to man, recognizing him to be the veritable manifestation of God.'¹³

In ancient times, when the disciple, after his period of study, was ready to leave for home, the teacher would give him this advise: 'Let the mother be God to you; let the father be as God to you....' To this, Vivekananda added: 'I say, let the poor, the illiterate, the ignorant, the afflicted, be your God. Know that service to these is the highest religion.'

Now this is the point: religion is the manifestation of the divinity within ourselves to such an extent that we are enabled to recognize the divinity in others. Our spiritual goal can be attained only if we combine individual spiritual discipline with loving service offered to the God in every man. Spiritual practices are essential for building character, for unfolding the spiritual sense which helps us recognize the God in others, until we serve our neighbour—not only as we would serve ourselves, but as we would serve God.

This is the two-fold ideal of dynamic Vedanta: first let us ourselves become gods; then we can help others to be gods.

(Concluded)

12. *Vide, Life*, p. 131.

13. *Vide, Life*, p. 107.

VIVEKANANDA IN THE NEAR EAST, 1900—II

SWAMI VIDYATMANANDA

Another entry in Romain Rolland's diary, dated 1927, goes like this:

And I am sorry he [Vivekananda] 'did' Europe so fast without meeting Tolstoy. I see from the correspondence of Tolstoy how much the author concerned himself with Indian thought and after 1896 read the books of Vivekananda printed in New York. Miss MacLeod and the admirers of the Swami

talk much of the brilliant fashion in which he devoured books in just turning over their pages, to master the contents entirely. Well, I fear that this method wasn't enough to permit him to understand the deeper thought of Europe.

A further reference to the supposed undesirability of the Swami's French friends. But since it really was possible for him to

master the contents of books with such a hasty exposure, why then was he not capable of gaining a comprehension of European culture in a similar fashion? What he wrote in his 'Memoirs of European Travel' show that he fulfilled his ambition of so doing. Were Bois, Loyson, and Calvé such poor choices as indicators? Bois opened up French intellectualism and the French language. Père Hyacinthe knew Catholicism inside and out. And Calvé was a highly qualified representative of the artistic soul of Europe. If choice it was that caused Swamiji to associate with these people, he seems to have chosen very well.

And what a pity [Rolland continued] he couldn't return, that he had to die, without becoming aware—like many other Asians—of the impact of Tolstoy's great religious experience.

The reference here is to Tolstoy's conversion in 1876 which led him to attempt to adopt literally the pure Christianity of Christ, causing him to renounce all his possessions and condemn his own books written up to that time. It was in this period that he wrote *Resurrection*, whose theme is the redemption of another through unqualified sacrificing love.

The Journal of Romain Rolland continues, the date being June 1927.

Miss MacLeod, who has just come from France, where she saw Emma Calvé again, had wanted to compare Calvé's memories of Vivekananda with her own. As a result of what I had asked her, she questioned Calvé about Tolstoy. Calvé, who has retained a very clear memory of Vivekananda, said that in Constantinople she had heard him talk with admiration about *Resurrection* to Père Hyacinthe. The latter expressed reservations. 'Tolstoy,' he said, 'had no formal grounding for his religion.' [That is to say, his conversion was extra-church and 'naturalistic'.] Vivekananda regarded the Père Hyacinthe in silence for a minute and then said sweetly, 'Has any one of us

a formal grounding for his religion?' [That is to say, what is religion without direct experience?] And Calvé added, 'You couldn't forget what an expression of sadness, of pity, the Swami had when he was talking to Père Hyacinthe.'

* * *

Devotees of Swami Vivekananda have long been aware of who Emma Calvé was from what Swami Vivekananda wrote of her in his 'Memoirs of European Travel'. She herself spoke of him in her autobiography,¹ first brought out in English in instalments in the United States in the *Saturday Evening Post* in 1922. The chapter on Vivekananda was published as an article in the *Prabuddha Bharata* that same year and later incorporated in the book *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*. The French version of Calvé's autobiography, called *Sous Tous Les Cieux J'ai Chanté*, was published in Paris by Plon in 1940. The volume is very faulty as to dates and spellings, and the references to Vivekananda have been greatly reduced and modified. Finally, in Burke's *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*, the subject is exposed through use of material on Calvé supplied by Mme. Drinette

1. The autobiography, originally written in French, was translated into English by Mr. Rosamond Gilder, and published serially in 1922, in the *Saturday Evening Post* of New York. From this periodical, it was published in the same year in the *Indian Daily News* of Calcutta. From this paper, it was reproduced in the November 1922 issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, and from it, it was incorporated in 1961 in the *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*. The English translation of the autobiography was published in a book-form by D. Appleton and Company, New York, in the year 1922, under the name *My Life*. Mme. Calvé's reminiscences about Swami Vivekananda are found in chapter XXII of this book, under the name 'A Monk of the Order of the Vedantas'. *Maybe*, this chapter was dropped in the published version of the original French autobiography, due to fear of priests, as Mme. Verdier told the author.—Ed.

Verdier, a friend of Calvé's in the 1930's. To this I am able to add a few facts.

The expected working of the laws of heredity can hardly account for the talent that embodied itself in the girl who was to become from about 1890 to 1910 Europe's leading diva. She took birth in the coal mining town of Décazeville in southern France, in a family of labourers, and never had much schooling. What she later related about a romantic peasant childhood made happy by folk songs and Spanish influences was apparently a product of her imagination, a repainting of truth in terms of the kind of childhood the principal character in Bizet's opera *Carmen* would have had. The street where she was born has now been named after her, but it is more of a sordid flight of steps than a street. The house must have been inconsequential, as the Mayor of Décazeville told me that it was not fruitful to try to identify exactly where she had first seen the light of day. Encyclopedias give her birth date as 1862, and she claimed this herself till near the end of her life. But a copy of the original birth register, framed and hung on the wall of the Décazeville city hall, gives Emma Calvé's true birth date and name as follows:

16 Août [August] 1858
Rosa Noémie Calvet

Calvé's life followed a pattern often observed in the lives of artistic geniuses: obscure beginnings, rapid rise, brief ascendancy, and then a decline into regretful old age. The newspapers made her out to be the personification of Carmen—a role she sang more than three thousand times: impetuous, flirtatious, passionate. Perhaps she had these qualities, but she was also possessed of a remarkable voice, acting ability, and first-rate artistic instinct. In the biography of Nivedita, *The Dedicated*, by Lizelle Reymond, we learn that Swamiji saw Calvé in *Carmen* at the Opéra-Comique in Paris in 1900—considered a rather daring thing

to have done, since Carmen is a torrid love story, and the Opéra-Comique was known for its sometimes daring productions. Miss Reymond states as her source for this information Emma Calvé herself, whom Miss Reymond knew personally at Nice in the 1940's.

Calvé met Swamiji at the summit of her career when the favour of her friendship was sought by many. But she responded to this holy man and to what he stood for on his terms and in the only way she could, by being his friend and provider for a little time.

Besides the incidents which Calvé related to Mme. Verdier that have already been printed, there remain a few additional souvenirs from Mme. Verdier heretofore unpublished. These Mme. Verdier wrote down and gave to me a year or two before her death in 1972.

One concerns an incident that happened at Cabières,² Calvé's chateau near Millau. When Calvé was a ragamuffin little girl she used to point out to her playmates this old hilltop castle dating from the 11th century, saying that one day she would be its chate-laine. That day came in 1894 when her success gave her the money to buy the property. In the years to come she loved it and dispensed vast sums for its restoration and upkeep.

It was some time in the 1920's, writes Mme. Verdier, that Emma Calvé was staying at Cabières and had house guests. One afternoon the conversation touched on architecture and she told her guests to come outside on the terrace to look at the facade.

2. This incident which happened on the road leading past a chateau near Millau, has been published in the Prelude of the English version of the autobiography of Mme. Calvé (*My Life*) on pp. xi-xii. Mme Calvé writes: "‘who knows?’ I said to one of my companions. ‘Perhaps some day that castle will belong to me!’"—Ed.

In explaining the details of the facade, she walked backward toward the edge of the terrace, from which the hill descended abruptly. Suddenly, she told Mme. Verdier, she heard Swamiji's voice warning: 'Be careful.' She felt herself thrust forward, away from a serious fall. The wall that surrounded the terrace had fallen apart just at the place where she had been walking backward.

Another experience related to Mme. Verdier is the following. One time Calvé was visiting Marseilles. She was walking on the crowded main street of the city.

While walking and pushing her way through the crowd she saw someone towards her. She said she had the impression that it was a man. Pushing her gently, the person said: 'Remember your mantram.' She was so astonished, she told me, that she stopped on the spot and turned around to see who it was. But whoever it was she never knew, for he had disappeared in the crowd.

These incidents may reveal an artist's tendency to dramatize, but they show also that even in her old age Calvé thought of Swamiji, that he was a living presence to her to the end of her life.

About the mantram, let me explain. At some point Swamiji must have taught Calvé to chant 'Om Hari Om Tat Sat' and a peace chant from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*. For Mme. Verdier reports the following incident as having taken place in Paris in the late 1930's at the apartment of Liliane Proska, a mutual friend.

When she was in Paris I used to go to see her. We were always talking of Swamiji. I asked her that day to be kind enough to sing for me.

It was about 6:00 P.M. and the crepuscule [twilight] had set in. So she agreed and said: 'I will sing you the mantram as I used to.'

Then she became very quiet, very serious, and closing her eyes she began with her deep, rich, full, powerful voice: 'Om. Om. Hari Om Tat Sat.'

The whole room vibrated so strongly

it seemed lifted with the most tremendous vibrations.

She was like a statue yet very reverent to what she was doing—a beautiful attitude.

In her autobiography (English version) Calvé says: 'The Swami taught me a sort of respiratory prayer. He used to say that the forces of the deity, being spread everywhere throughout the ether, could be received into the body through the indrawn breath.'³

That this mantram, learned from Swamiji, had made an impression on Calvé and had remained with her, is clear from some notes she left.

Emma Calvé died at Millau on January 6, 1942—or more exactly in an ambulance taking her from Millau to a hospital in Montpellier. After her death many of her effects came into the possession of a Millau admirer, Georges Girard, who has kept them as best he could in anticipation of the founding one day of a Calvé museum. It was M. Girard who organized the Emma Calvé centenary celebration at Millau in 1958 and who was influential in the establishment of a memorial tomb. The papers of Calvé preserved by M. Girard are in a state of disorder: many loose pages bearing Calvé's huge sprawling hand, bear her thoughts; there are travel notes and a well-worn copy of the photo of Swamiji wearing a turban, taken in Chicago in October 1893. There is also a scrapbook, in which the diva had inserted letters and testimonials she had received from eminent persons. Pasted to one of the pages of this scrapbook was the letter from Swamiji to Calvé of May 15, 1902,⁴ already referred to.

All Calvé's personal papers are, of course, written in French. In reproducing their

3. Vide *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, (hereafter, *Reminiscences*) Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama, 1964, p. 268.

4. This letter was published in the March 1974 issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata* on p. 95.

contents in the following pages I have rendered the texts into English.

On a big piece of paper Calvé had written :

Aûm ! Aûm ! Om
Assato ma satgamaya
Tâma soma jïotor gamaya
Mertiourmâ ameurtam gamaya
Rouddra yâtra ledag chiman
Tena nam paï nettiam

adding : 'Phonetic rendering of the first verse of the Baghavad-Gitta.' Of course, the first three lines can be distinguished as a famous peace chant from the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad*, I, 3, 28. They should be written as follows :

Asato mâ sadgamaya
Tamaso mâ jyotir gamaya
Mrityor mâmritam gamaya

which translated means :

Lead us from the unreal to the Real,
 From darkness to light,
 From death to immortality !

The last two lines are from the *Shvetashvatara Upanishad*, IV, 21, and should be written as follows :

Rudra yatte dakshinam mukham
tena mâm pâhi nityam,

which translated means :

O Rudra, may your face which is gracious protect me forever.

On another big piece of paper the diva had written down the same verse, this time adding a translation :

O Thou whom I dare not name,
 Conduct me from the unreal to the reality,
 From the abyss to the light,
 From death to immortality.

To this page Calvé had added : 'Bhagavad-Gita. Sanskrit prayer, set down according to the way it sounds after having heard it chanted by Swami Vivi Kananda.'

On a scrap of paper referring to her teaching methods Emma Calvé wrote : 'The Swami Vivi Kananda taught me Mantras which I teach my students to chant.'

Among the papers are several old travel diaries. An entry in one of them, not dated but obviously written in Chicago in 1895[?] before she met Vivekananda, reads as follows :

Mme. Mildwards⁵—she's a friend really dear to me. Very intelligent, having fine big ideas, speaking French well, has given religious lectures more or less everywhere in the world—Buddhist. She speaks to me often of her master—the Souami, which means master in Hindu.

The Souami Vivi Kananda : Penetration into spiritual matters [apparently an effort to define the meaning of his name], is a wandering monk of the Vedas—the sect which prides itself on having preserved the pure moral science of Brahma. He lives like Jesus, sometimes in the home of one, sometimes in the home of another, carrying everywhere the word of life—he owns nothing. Distinguished doctor, lawyer, chemist, linguist—he knows everything, he understands everything. He speaks and writes fluently the French language which he didn't know at all hardly a year ago.

He is at the moment in New York, at the home of my friend Mrs. Leggett. I would like to know him.⁶

5. Mrs. Milward Adams, a well-known lecturer on dramatic arts, physical culture, and metaphysics, and one of the early friends of Swami Vivekananda in Chicago.

6. On the basis of this document, it appears that Mme. Calvé did not meet Swami Vivekananda in the March of 1894, as it was previously known to be so. (*Vide. Marie Louise Burke, Swami Vivekananda in America : New Discoveries, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, 1966, p. 120.*) From this document it is also revealed that Mme. Calvé was Mrs. Betty Leggett's friend, and she did not meet Swamiji till he was Mrs. Leggett's guest in *New York*. Mrs. Betty MacLeod Sturges did not marry Mr. Francis H. Leggett of New York until September 1895, and Swamiji did not become their fulfilled guest at *New York* earlier than November 1899. It, therefore, appears to us that Mme. Calvé did not meet Swamiji earlier than the third week of November in 1899, when both of them were at Chicago. From Sister Nivedita's letters of this period to Mrs. Ole Bull, we learn that Mme. Calvé was

Another little notebook is a travel diary of the 1900 trip. From it we learn several facts not known before.

On the occasion when Père Hyacinthe Loyson and Swamiji spoke at Scutari, it seems that Jules Bois spoke also: 'Jules Bois gives his lecture after that of the Swami and of Loyson, on the same subject: three philosophers: Carlyle, Emerson [sic] and Nietzsche.'

This gives a hint as to the subject matter of Swamiji's lecture at the American College of Girls on November 2. We had known before only that he had spoken on Hinduism.⁷

Another entry in this travel diary gives even more details as to what Swamiji said:

Departure for Scutari. Visit to Miss Patrick, the directress of the American College. First time the Swami teaches philosophy in Asia. He explains to us Descartes, Spinoza, Nietzsche. The latter wants to aid the élite, the superman, to develop—preventing the unenlightened from killing a Christ or a Galileo, creating thus an aristocracy of the intelligence. Spinoza—idealistic pantheism—Gcd in everything. Philosophy deals with the romance of the soul of the universe.

There is much more, but it is difficult to make out the import of some of the notes. Much that Swamiji said that day was apparently outside of Calvé's previous experience.

Indeed, a bit farther on the diva refers to her ignorance of such subjects in a charming confession:

in Chicago then, and enacted the role of Carmen. Surprisingly enough, we do not find any mention of Mme. Calvé's name in any of Swamiji's letters earlier than November 30, 1899, as we find those of Sarah Bernhardt, and others. Maybe, the matter quoted here was written by her in the second week of November 1899, if it was written in Chicago.—Ed.

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

He [the Swami] gives us short courses in philosophy. And so I'm finding out things about Carlyle and Emerson [sic]. I'm going to become a scholar. This will supply me with a bit of literary baggage that I lack, and help me to live more of an interior life, to make me sufficient unto myself. The big question for a poor woman.

In Greece, as the *Life* tells us, the group visited the National Museum, the Acropolis, and the site of the ancient Eleusian rites. On the evidence of a postcard (in the Sen collection) sent to Christine from Athens, we are able to add that they must have gone also to the ancient city centre of Athens, dominated by the temple of Hepaistos (plate 1), known as Theseion, the best preserved in the city. On the postcard picturing the temple (plate 2), Swamiji wrote: 'Great fun. I write without the possibility of being written to as I am changing place all the time. How do you do? Vivekananda'.

One of the short courses in philosophy Calvé was eager to enjoy was inspired by the visit to the Museum. She noted, in papers found at Millau:

The Museum contains the most beautiful collection of amphores [a tall jar with narrow neck and two handles] in the world. I saw the delicious statue of Minerva Athena.

This was evidently the famous marble imitation some 42 centimetres high of Phidias' colossal statue of Athena, the deity that originally graced the Parthenon. Discovered in 1879, this ancient copy in miniature was housed in a special room of the National Archaeological Museum. It was surely there in 1900, as Baedeker's 1894 *Handbook for Travellers* on Greece gives a detailed description of the statue conforming to what Calvé noted. Calvé forgot, however, to mention the shield of Athena, attached to which is the snaky-haired head of Madusa. She had written:

If I am ever obliged to sing *Armide*⁸ I shall have those jewels reproduced, those interlaced serpents on the breast. That bizarre girdle formed of two snakes, their heads raised. The serpent, the Swami tells us, is found again and again in all religions: the Virgin Mary crushing the serpent, the archangel Michael squashing the dragon—the most ancient civilizations known to man adore the serpent. Those religions which have endured have all kept the serpent—the emblem of wisdom, of prudence, of force: Moses, the Hindus, the Egyptians, and Christianity. The word ‘mage’—‘yatur’ in Hindu—means ‘charm’, ‘charmer’, ‘master of the serpent’—that is to say, master in God; this word ‘mage’ comes from that same adoration of serpents.

That Swamiji possessed an incredible knowledge of the symbolism of the serpent is revealed by this report of his exposé on about November 12 at the National Archaeological Museum in Athens. It is not surprising that he could discuss ideas relating to the serpent power in Hinduism, even the snake in Egyptian mythology. And everyone knows about St. Michael and the dragon. But Moses and the serpent? And the Virgin Mary crushing the serpent?

The source of the first of these allusions is the 21st chapter of Numbers. During their years of wandering after leaving Egypt the Israelites often complained against Moses and Jehovah. As a punishment the Lord sent fiery serpents which bit and killed many. At this the people repented of their infidelity, and asked Moses to pray to the Lord to take the serpents away. So Moses made a bronze serpent and set it upon a pole. And any man bitten by a serpent, in looking at Moses’ serpent, lived.

The second allusion is even more obscure. At the time of Pius V (latter part of the

sixteenth century) the theological claim was often put forth that the Virgin Mary was a new Eve able to crush the snake by which the original Eve had been deceived: Mary as redemptress. This idea was beautifully represented by Caravaggio in his painting ‘Mary and the Boy Jesus with St. Anne’. In the painting Mary has her left foot planted squarely on the serpent’s head, her divine son pressing down on her foot with his own. The painting is in the Borghese Gallery, Rome, where Swamiji may have seen it in 1896.

The word given by Calvé as ‘yatur’ is most probably ‘jâdu’, which is Persian for ‘magic’, ‘charm’. ‘Mage’ means magician, also a person of exceptional understanding. Magic is defined as the pretended act of influencing the course of events by compelling the agency of spiritual beings, but I am unable to find in the etymology of the words any connection between magician, or mage, and serpent.

In the chapter of her autobiography (*My Life*), reproduced in the *Reminiscences of Swami Vivekananda*, Calvé describes the excursion to the ruins of the ancient Eleusian temple compound thirty kilometres from Athens:

When we were in Greece, we visited Eleusis. He explained its mysteries to us and led us from altar to altar, from temple to temple, describing the processions that were held in each place, intoning the ancient prayers, showing us the priestly rites.

The *Life of Swami Vivekananda* too says, the group went to Eleusis. But marvelously informed as he was, Swamiji could not have given such a detailed conducted tour as Calvé ascribes to him. The mysteries being secret, little is known of them. Presumably fasting and ritual purification in the sea took place, before the yearly procession started from Athens. The rites celebrated the annual vegetation cycle of death and rebirth in nature, and hence symbolized

8. Tasso’s story of Armide, a beautiful queen with supernatural powers, was recast as an opera by some forty different composers, the best known version being by Gluck.

the immortality of the soul. Swamiji could clearly have dwelt on the implications for the idea of transmigration of souls of the mysteries.

* * *

From what she wrote in her personal papers, from what she said to Mme. Verdier, and from the presence among her treasures of Swamiji's photo, clearly often handled, it is certain that Swamiji meant much to Emma Calvé. Yet her [French version of the] autobiography⁹ is queerly reticent on the subject, and even the language of the English version (*My Life*) is restrained. Mme. Verdier left the following explanation, which may be taken as the reason. The conversation occurred on the last occasion the two met, in Paris in the late 1930's.

It was still in that same apartment in Paris, the last time I saw her. She was waiting eagerly for the coming out of her book. I said to her: 'I hope you have given a whole chapter¹⁰ to Swamiji, referring at length to his saving your life in Chicago!'¹¹ I found her suddenly very embarrassed and extremely shy—momentarily silent. Then the conversation began and it is at that time that she told me.

'You know, Drinette, I could not recount what I wanted to about Swami Vivekananda. You know I am very old, and I am a catholic. Lately I saw several times and had long talks with the village priest in Aveyron. My parents are buried in the small cemetery adjoining the church. I am old and my only

desire is to be buried next to them. I am a peasant girl from peasant stock and I want when I die to be near my father and my mother in my little village—in the *soil* of that village where I was born.

'If I had written about Swami Vivekananda what I wanted to, besides simply that I had met him, the priest told me that he would refuse my burial in the little church cemetery. I would be excommunicated. So, Drinette, that I could not stand.'

Emma Calvé is buried in sacred ground, but not beside the church at Décazeville. Her mother is buried in the Miramont cemetery of that city. The grave of Calvé is at Millau, in the big Catholic cemetery; she bought the plot at the time of her father's death at the turn of the century, thus insuring a place for his body and eventually for her own. In 1942 she was buried in this plot, which at that time was marked with no more than a simple headstone. But in the year of her centenary a committee of admirers arranged for the erection of an imposing monument over the grave, dedicated on August 15, 1958, with considerable ceremony.

The tomb consists of a stèle at the top of which is fixed a bronze portrait of Emma Calvé. Below are incised her name and dates. Further down are engraved two lines from the role in which she got her start as singer in Brussels in 1881—Marguerite in Gounod's opera based on Goethe's *Faust*.

God the just, to Thee
I abandon myself.
God the good, I am Thine,
forgive me.

Act V, scene III.

Any one knowing the opera might think it curious indeed to display these lines from the final scene on a gravestone. But we may see in them the true sentiment of the tired Carmen. Marguerite sings these words in prison, where she is awaiting execution for the crime of killing her child. She prays

⁹. Vide footnote No. 6.

¹⁰. It appears that the French version of Mme. Calvé's autobiography was not published earlier than 1940; and the English version of the same, which was serially published at New York in the *Saturday Evening Post* was translated from her original French manuscript, which was later published in 1940, perhaps after dropping the chapter 'A Monk of the Order of the Vedantas', due to the fear of the village priests.—Ed.

¹¹. Vide M. L. Burke, *Swami Vivekananda in America: New Discoveries*, Mayavati: Advaita Ashrama 1966, pp. 120-22.

thus, putting herself in God's hands and pleading for redemption. The rear of the prison opens and angels are seen bearing Marguerite heavenward.

Below is the title of her autobiography, which also describes in one line her life :

Sous tous les ciels j'ai chante
Under every sky sang I

And at the base of the monument appears this line :

Que canto soun mal excanto

meaning, in the dialect of Aveyron, that one can get rid of his troubles by singing.

On page 206 of her autobiography [French version] Calvé included an appreciation of Vivekananda. It measures a single paragraph, and is admiring but restrained. But in her papers at Millau, set down in her characteristic big hand, I found a composition on the subject longer and fuller, and expressing, one may believe, what she really felt. From internal evidence one may say that it must have been written within two or three years before her death. She quotes in this composition what she herself had noted (for it is in the present tense) on the voyage to the Near East some forty years before. The words speak for themselves:

Later, in 1900, I had the rare privilege of visiting Greece, Turkey, and Egypt with several friends, Miss MacLeod (plate 3), and the Swami (plate 4). I tell about these voyages in my book of souvenirs that is going to be published in New York and in France. Here then is what I said about them during those unforgettable hours, the best in my life.

To live close to the Swami is a perpetual source of inspiration; we live in an intense spiritual atmosphere. For him every occasion inspires parables, quotations, ranging from Hindu mythology to the profoundest philosophy. Sometimes he is gay, full of fun, ready with rapid repartee, joking and laughing like a child. He is inexhaustible in telling us interesting stories. He possesses a voice like a cello, with low vibrations

that one cannot forget, and which fills both lecture halls and hearts.

—
He speaks of Christ, of the Gospel, with admiration and respect, saying that the monks of his order celebrate Good Friday and sing the hymns of adoration of St. Francis of Assisi. He adds that they cannot read the story of the Crucifixion without shedding tears, and the *Imitation of Christ* is among the books on their bedside tables. He added this powerful word: 'The waters of the Jordon may mingle with our Ganges; They come from the same source.'

—
Christ is the highest representative of God. The first five verses ('word') of the Gospel according to St. John embodies all of Christianity.

—
There is no limit to the rapidity with which we may get through our present life, and those which await us. This may be several years; this may be fifty existences! All depends upon the intensity of desire! Be beings of desire. Past lives have formed our present tendencies; let us live in conformity with those tendencies.

—
Whether intellectual, devotee, mystic, or a practical person, let us put our lives on a solid foundation. But teach the neighbour equally, and go ahead with courage. For Life is courage!

—
Let us gain the mercy of God and of his greatest children—those whom people call saints [incarnations]. These are the two great pathways for coming to Him. Insofar as one has been allowed to know one of these children of light, our life can be transformed, and if our longing is sufficiently intense, one of them, or his messenger, will come to us!

* * *

The road downhill for Calvé was rough. In 1934 she was forced to sell her beloved Cabières to, as she said in one diary entry I saw, 'put bread in my mouth'. She tried to gain her living giving music lessons. At the age of eighty, so she told Mme. Verdier, to earn money she contemplated making a

tour of vaudeville in the United States. Who knows how much she counted on Swamiji's philosophy of courage to keep herself going?

One day she complained to Mme. Verdier: 'Why doesn't Swamiji do something for me? I did so much for him, and look at the situation I'm in now!' It is true that Swamiji could not make her again the sensational prima donna she had been in her heyday, but it is clear from what we know from her private reflections that he gave her courage to live and the good fortune to think frequently of him. And besides that, he really did see to her basic material needs when she had to have that help. In Mme. Verdier's files is to be found a letter from Josephine MacLeod, dated February 9, 1940, which says: 'The Maurice Bagby Musical Foundation is sending Madame Calvé \$ 50.00 a month, as long as she lives.'

* * *

As I bring to a close this study in seven chapters of Swami Vivekananda in Europe, I should like to take up again a matter treated in 'Vivekananda at the Paris Congress, 1900'¹² but left unresolved, namely: How well did Vivekananda know French? My conclusion in 1969 was that further evidence was needed before a clear answer could be given. Such evidence is now in our hands.

Swamiji himself never claimed proficiency in the French language; indeed quite the contrary. Such mastery, however, was evidently an aspiration of his, he having written to Christine from Ridgely Manor on November 4, 1899 (unpublished letter from the Sen collection):

And mind you, I must learn German. I am determined to be a French and German scholar. French I think I can manage with the help of a dictionary. If

I can do that much German in a month I will be so glad.

To Mary Hale he had written a few weeks earlier :¹³

Again I am going to learn French. If I fail to do it this year I cannot 'do' the Paris Exposition next year properly. Well, I expect to learn much French here [Ridgely Manor] where even the servants talk it.

To Mary Hale from San Francisco on March 28, 1900 :¹⁴

Harriet is going to have a good time in Paris. I am sure to meet her over there and *parler française* [français]! I am getting by heart a French *dictionnaire* [dictionary]!

Two weeks later to Nivedita :¹⁵

Glad you have returned. Gladder you are going to Paris. I shall go to Paris, of course, only don't know when. Mrs. Leggett thinks I ought to [go] immediately, and take up studying French... Finish your books, and in Paris we are going to conquer the Froggies.

As early as 1891 Swamiji is said to have gained some knowledge of French. The facts were recounted by Swami Shivananda¹⁶ and are repeated on page 274 of the *Life of Swami Vivekananda* in two volumes. Swami Shivananda said that at Porbunder Swamiji made the acquaintance of Sri Shankarrao (Pandurang), administrator of the State. He was an erudite person who had travelled extensively in Europe and had learned French and German quite well. Sri Shankarrao told Swamiji he ought to go to the West 'and explain to them our Vedic religion.'

Sri Shankarrao added : 'If one wants

^{13.} *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (hereafter, C. W.), Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, VIII, (1971), p. 472.

^{14.} C. W., VIII, p. 504.

^{15.} C. W., VIII, p. 512.

^{16.} *For Seekers of God*, Mayavati : Advaita Ashrama, 1972, p. 182.

^{12.} *Vide Prabuddha Bharata*, April 1969, pp. 192-93.

to mix with the *élite* there, one has to learn the French language. Please learn it; I shall help you.' And so Swamiji learnt that language well enough.... One day, all of a sudden, a letter of full four pages came from him. None of us could make out in what language it was written. Shashi Maharaj (Swami Ramakrishnananda) and Sarada (Swami Trigunatitananda) had a smattering of French. After a close examination they said: 'It seems to be a letter from Naren written in French.' Then we had to run with that letter to Aghore Chatterji in Calcutta. . . . He read the letter and translated it into Bengali for us. Only then did we come to know of Swamiji's whereabouts and that he had learnt French.¹⁷

We have seen just now from what Calvé wrote that in 1895 Swamiji had the reputation of speaking and writing French fluently.¹⁸

Investigation and discovery have often succeeded in confirming what up to that time was believed solely on the basis of legend. A famous example of this is Dr. Heinrich Schliemann's discovery in 1871 of the site of Troy, which he identified, contrary to more scientific thinking on the subject, on the basis of a few phrases in the *Illiad*.

The legend in this case is that Swamiji spoke French adequately and was even able to lecture in that language. This is openly stated in the *Life* when referring to his appearance at the Paris Congress, although no supporting testimony¹⁹ is furnished.

¹⁷. *Ibid.*, p. 182.

¹⁸. Contrary to this, we find Sister Nivedita writing on November 10, 1899 from Chicago to Mrs. Ole Bull: 'We spent the evening with Mme. Calvé. She says Swami [Vivekananda] *must* learn French—France is hungry for what he has to give.' *Letters of Sister Nivedita*, Comp. S. P. Basu, p. 231, (In Press).—*Ed.*

¹⁹. The only probable testimony in this connection is a news item, which appeared in the *Indian Mirror* of December 12, 1900. It reads: 'A gentleman, who was on a visit to the Math

The same was repeated by Swamiji's brother, Mahendra Nath Datta, again apparently on the basis of hearsay, for he does not offer any evidence: 'And the surprising thing is that he was able to study and master it [French] beautifully.'²⁰

Another writer on Swamiji, Manmatha Nath Ganguli, tells the same story. He seems to be giving a direct quotation from Swamiji himself, which would solve the question once and for all; but because of serious errors of fact included in the account, the accuracy of Ganguli's report is open to question.

I did not know French at that time. And they thought that my ignorance of the language would debar me from the [Paris, 1900] Parliament. But I went to France and picked up the language in about six months and then began to deliver some speeches in French.'²¹

Unsupported by proof as are the declarations given in the *Life* and by Datta and Ganguli, all three originated but a few years after Swamiji's time and hence must be

yesterday, writes to say that the Swami [Vivekananda] is not in good health, and needs complete rest for sometime. Besides delivering very impressive and eloquent lectures in French in Paris, the Swami delivered three lectures at Constantinople, and he has a host of admirers there.' Swamiji's biographers may have based their version on this news.—*Ed.*

²⁰. Mahendra Nath Datta, *Londane Swami Vivekananda*, (Bengali), Part-II, 2nd edn., pp. 158-59. (In this connection, Mahendra Nath writes: 'Miss Müller knew three languages quite well. They were: English, French and German. One afternoon Swamiji said to her, "Give me lessons in French; because if I were to go in different parts of Europe, and meet prominent people there, the knowledge of French language is absolutely necessary." Swamiji had occasions to talk with big men of various countries. Therefore it had become needful for him to know the French language; and it is a matter of great surprise that he had mastered the language very well.'—*Ed.*)

²¹. *Reminiscences*, p. 354.

treated with respect. They are in accord with and sustain the legend.

To all this we may now add other evidence—only circumstantial, to be sure, but to me conclusive, coming from Swamiji's trip to the Near East.

Neither Bois, Loyson, nor Calvé knew English. Swamiji himself stated that to talk to Bois he was forced to use French. That Loyson was ignorant of English has been shown in the chapter on Swamiji and Loyson printed in *Prabuddha Bharata*, March 1971 (pp. 113-25). Mme. Verdier told me that Calvé's English, despite her wide travels, remained sketchy at best.

Yet these three report numerous rich

conversations with Swamiji and instruction from him. These verbal contacts must necessarily have been conducted in French, and establish without question his considerable adequacy in that language by the closing months of 1900.

It is even possible that Swamiji's lecture at the American College for Women on November 2 was in French. This was the language used by the other two speakers, and in 1900 French was the preferred European language as well as the medium of instruction of higher education currently employed in Turkey.

(Concluded)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

The Choice of an Ideal (The Editorial): Every man in the heart of his heart feels an urge for unalloyed joy, absolute freedom, uninterrupted peace, perpetual life, and cessation of misery. This urge motivates him to choose an Ideal of his life according to his mental get-up and environmental conditions. One feels that by attaining the cherished goal, his inner urge will be satisfied at least to some extent; but to his utter disappointment he discovers that in spite of achieving the Ideal, his *inner craving* has not been satisfied. In this editorial an attempt has been made to show, in the light of the experience of the realized souls, that the inner urge can only be fully satisfied, if one chooses 'God-realization' as his ideal of life, and proceeds to attain it according to the path suitable for him.

Swami Saradananda to Dr. Janes: Dr. Lewis G. Janes, the then President of the Ethical Association, Brooklyn, U.S.A., was a great friend and admirer of Swami Vivekananda, and the Vedanta movement in the

West. During his stay in America in 1896-98 Swami Saradananda came in intimate contact with him and his family. In this letter, written from Morvi (Gujarat, India), the Swami is clarifying the views of Dr. Janes regarding 'Buddhism and Vedanta'.

Free Will or Predestination?—II: In this part of his lecture, the late Swami Ashokananda has mainly deliberated upon 'Predestination', and concluded: 'As long as you seek things belonging to the lower levels, which are determined, to expect to have free will is just foolishness. The lower you go, and the grosser the world in which you live and have your interest, *the more bound by law* you will become. No need to bring God into it: predestination is the predestination of law.' We are thankful to the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for their grand contribution.

Ethics of a Modern Corporation—II: In this part of his lecture Swami Ranganathananda says, '... a mere aggregation of men

does not constitute a society. *Dharma* is the value that unites man to man to form the integrated organization which is society.' About the 'Role of Labour-Management Partnership' he says, 'When we thus make the profit motive secondary and the service motive primary, we convert both the management and the labour of a corporation into ... citizens of free India engaged in a partnership within a national productive enterprise. This lecture of the Swami was very highly

appreciated by some prominent scientists.

Vivekananda in the Near East, 1900—II :

In this part of the Article, Swami Vidyatmananda tells us mainly about Mme. Calvé, and he discusses in the light of some hitherto unpublished material, about the influence of Swami Vivekananda upon her life. We are thankful to Sri Sankari Prasad Basu. of Calcutta, for suggesting some valuable corrections in this part of the article.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

SANSKRIT

PARIMALA VIMARSA : BY SRI RAMESWARANANDA PURI, Kranthi Kutir, Chovva, Cannanore, 670 006 (Kerala), 1976, pp. 43. Price: Rs. 2.50.

Among the works of Sri Sankara establishing the irrefutable and unexcelled glory of Advaita Philosophy, the most important one is his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras*. His treatment of the subject in the said commentary is subtle and profound. To make clear the meaning of it, many scholars have written expository commentaries on it. Of such, 150 have been listed in the commentary of the *Brahma-Sutras* published by Kanchi Kamakoti Pitha.

Commentaries on Sri Sankara's commentary being many, there have arisen differences of opinion on the meaning of it. Among these different schools of opinion two are important. One is the Vivarana School (Vivarana Prasthan) and the second is the Bhamati School (Bhamati Prasthan). Their difference is mainly on what is the direct, immediate means for realisation of Brahman. The accepted three means are Hearing, Reasoning and Meditation (Sravana, Manana, Nididhyasana). Sri Vachaspati Misra in his Bhamati accords Meditation the status of direct, immediate means for realisation and Hearing and Reasoning only auxiliary status leading to Meditation, Sri Prakashatma Yati, who heads the Vivarana School, gives 'Hearing' the status of direct, immediate means; and 'Reasoning and Meditation' only of auxiliary means. Like this on some other less important topics also there are differences of opinion among the scholars.

On the commentary called Bhamati of Sri Vachaspati Misra, Sri Amalananda Saraswati

wrote a sub-commentary titled Vedanta Kalpataru.

The *Brahma-Sutras* have 192 sub-titles (*adhikaranas*) and Avritttyadhikarana (sub-titled *avritti*) is only one among them.

The book under review, '*Parimala Vimarsa*' by Sri Rameswarananda Puri is a criticism of an opinion hinted at by the author of Parimala (Sri Appayya Dikshitar). Taking 22 statements (*vakyas*) from Parimala and by detailed criticism of them Sri Rameswarananda Puri has argued that the annotator has contradicted the commentary of Sri Sankara on the *Brahma-Sutras*. He has bestowed his skill in very subtle analytical thinking in establishing his point.

We have to note that the author of *Parimala* has in many other places in his said annotation very effectively refuted schools of thought opposing Sankara's and glorified his commentary on the *Brahma-Sutras*. Hence many are likely to feel that *Parimala Vimarsa* need not have made this one difference of opinion a bone of contention.

Both the Vivarana and Bhamati schools have contributed much to clarify and popularise the commentary of Sri Sankara on the *Brahma-Sutras*. If a reader feels that Bhamati is right on certain points and on certain others the Vivarana is right, is he to be blamed for that? This sort of hair-splitting argument and disputation may be a delight and pastime for pundits but may not be of much use for spiritual aspirants in general. Yet one has to admit that this book of criticism of *Parimala* reveals the author's profound scholarship in Vedanta and his skill in grasping and pinpointing subtle differences of opinion.

SWAMI MRIDANANDA

Ramakrishna Ashrama, Trichur (Kerala)

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MATH & MISSION— BHUBANESWAR

REPORT: APRIL 1971—MARCH 1975

Started in 1919 by Swami Brahmananda, spiritual son of Sri Ramakrishna, who was early attracted to the spot because of its calm, peaceful atmosphere and strong spiritual undercurrent, this Ashrama has remained an ideal place for spiritual practice. Further, as the Swami himself predicted, Bhubaneswar which was then covered with jungles infested with wild animals, has developed into a great city with a full-fledged University. The Swami stayed usually at this place till the end of 1920, in the room where his personal effects are still kept and which always attracts visitors and devotees. In 1923, an upper floor was added to the original building. Current activities of the Centre are as follows :

Spiritual and Cultural : Daily worship, prayers and religious discourses and Bhajanas are held in the temple, as well as weekly classes. Individual spiritual instructions are given by the monks to eager seekers of truth. Regular classes were also held in different parts of Bhubaneswar and Cuttack. Birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Holy Mother, Swamis Vivekananda and Brahmananda and other direct Sannyasin disciples of Sri Ramakrishna were appropriately celebrated, along with those of saints and prophets of other religions. Night-long celebrations were held for Kali-puja and Shivaratri, with worship and Bhajanas, both by monks and devotees.

Charitable Dispensary : From the inception of the Math, Swami Brahmananda himself began medical service, with the help of some of the monks, giving free medicines to labourers on the Math buildings as well as neighbouring villages. Soon the workers requested and obtained approval from the Headquarters for a permanent Dispensary, and funds for starting the modest building. Now the dispensary is housed in its separate building, under charge of a devoted Medical Officer, a retired Civil Surgeon. In the four years under review, 95871 new cases were treated (average of 23,968 yearly) with 79,087 re-visits. Average (total) daily attendance varied between 103 and 132, in the various years.

Schools : Swami Brahmananda started a small free School in the Math premises with seven poor children, which by 1933 had grown into a regular Free Primary School. An M.E. (Middle Elementary) School was added in 1963 during the Vivekananda Centenary functions; and from 1966 the

Schools share a commodious double-storeyed building. Enrolment in the Primary School has been increasing from 224 to 249 during the years under review (somewhat less than 40% of the totals being girls); the M.E. School has had between 81 and 84 boys (only).

Library : The Vivekananda Library and Free Reading Room, started in 1963 (Centenary Year), met with such public interest that by 1970 it was shifted from rooms in the Math premises to its own building, costing Rs. 75,000/-. A text-book section was added, to help poor students, and special attention has been given for children's books. Now containing 9,600 books in English, Sanskrit, Oriya, Bengali, Hindi and other Indian languages, the Library has a membership of 640; daily attendance (in Library and Reading Room) averages 78. Eight dailies and 83 periodicals and magazines are received.

The Math runs a Book-sales section, for books published by the Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. Among others, there were available thirty titles in Oriya language alone published by this centre.

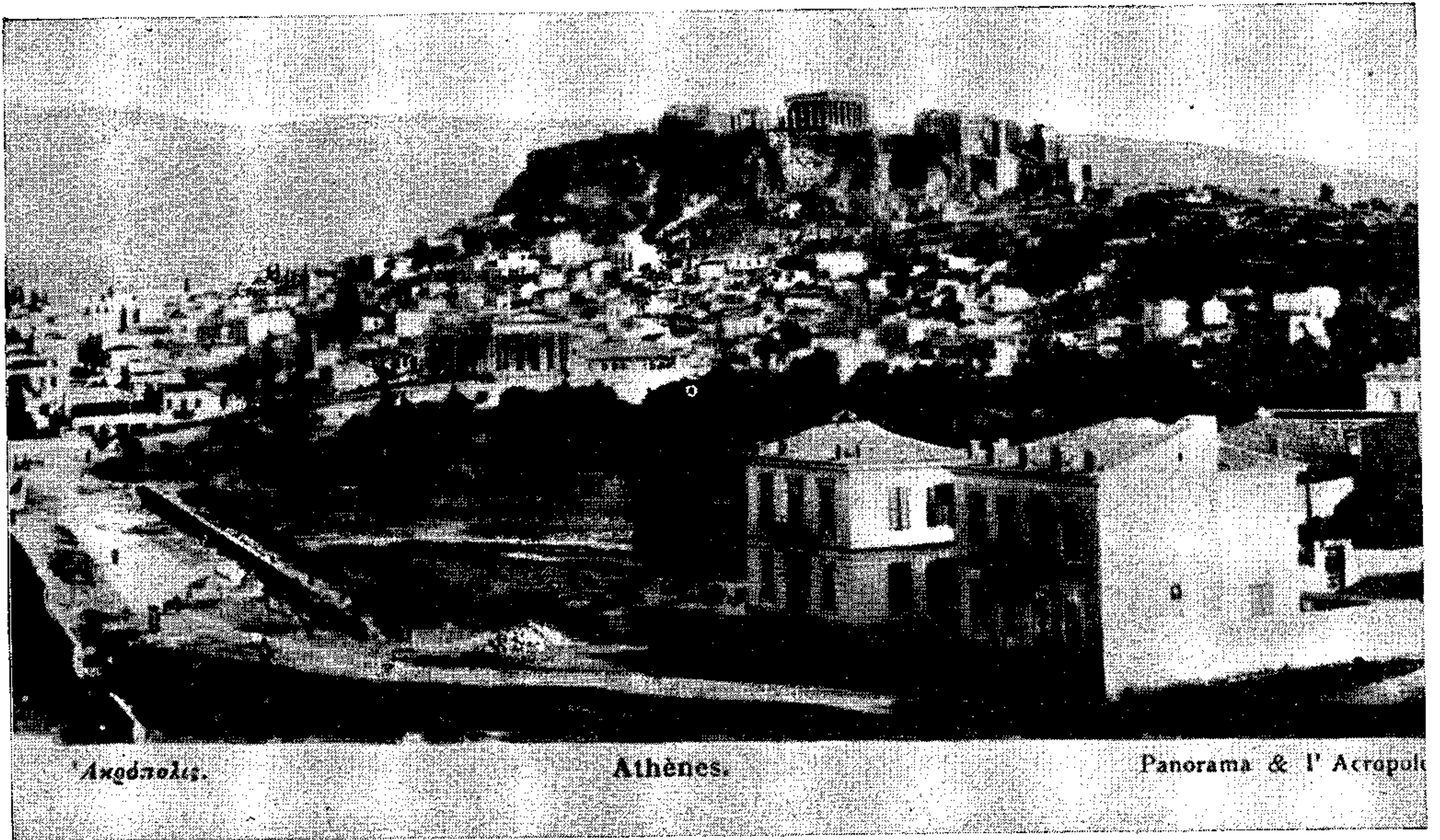
Immediate Needs : (1) For helping poor and needy students, a permanent fund of Rs. 1,00,000/-.

(2) For purchasing up-to-date books, and furniture, for the Library, Rs. 50,000/-.

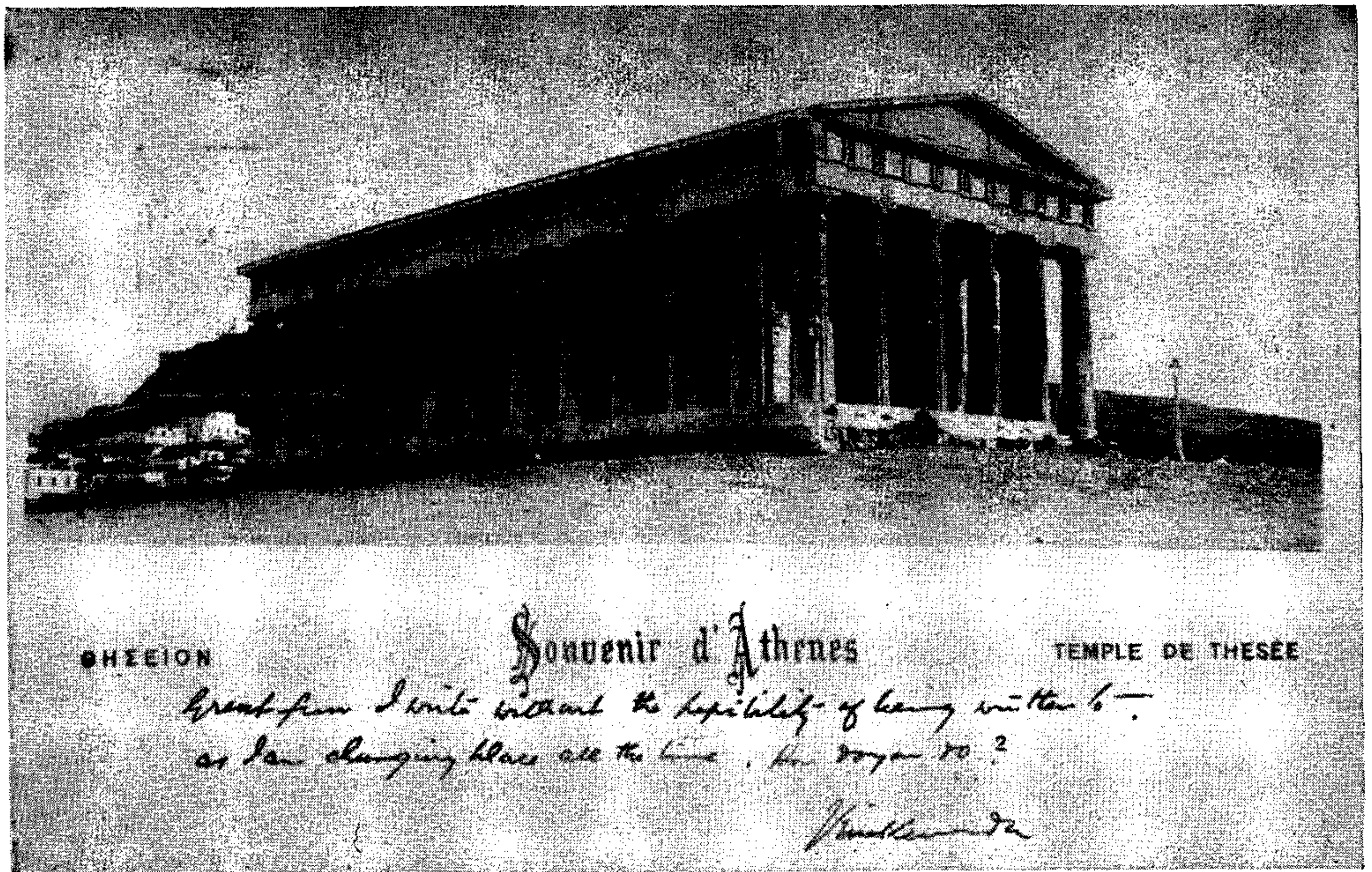
(3) For maintenance of the Charitable Dispensary, a Permanent Fund of Rs. 1,00,000/-. In this connection we may call to mind the notable Appeal issued by Swami Shivananda, President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission in 1922, which reads in part :

'Although the dispensary has made a place for itself in the locality . . . its area of usefulness daily extending, it is still labouring under several disadvantages. . . . Another most important thing in this connection is that the institution must needs have a permanent fund of its own, the income of which will be sufficient to make it independent of help from outside and stand on its own legs. . . . Therefore our appeal goes to the friends of the poor all over the country . . . to hold forth to us their hand of cooperation in our humble work by which we can, to however small an extent, ameliorate the condition of the sick and poor Narayanas around us whose worship can never fail to please the Most High.'

All donations may kindly be sent to the Secretary, Ramakrishna Math and Mission, Vivekananda Marg, Bhubaneswar 751002, Orissa. All such are exempted from Income Tax.



1. General view of Athens, about 1900. The temple Hepaistos, popularly called Theseion, is in the middle distance.



2. Picture postcard addressed to Sister Christine, postmarked at Athens, showing the temple of Hepaistos, popularly called Theseion.

3. Emma Calvé (right) and Josephine MacLeod near Cairo, Egypt, in 1900.



4. Swami Vivekananda in Cairo, in November 1900.