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CONTENTS

Integral Vision of Vedic Seers	81
About this Number	82
One Reality, Three Manifestations	
—(Editorial)	83
Sannyasa and Brahmacharya	
—Swami Subodhananda (Khoka Maharaj)	91
Yoga and Supersensuous Experience	
—Swami Yatiswarananda	95
Man Magnified	
—Swami Shraddhananda	101
Myth : Its Power and Glory	
—Swami Nityabodhananda	105
Musings of the Musafir :	
Caught for Worship in the Right Place ..	110
A New Altar for the Flame of Tibetan Buddhism	
—Swami Atmarupananda	114

CONTENTS (*Continued*)

धर्मसमन्वय : A Forum for Inter-Religious Understanding : The Symbolic Dimen- sion of Christianity	
— <i>Dr. M. Amaladoss S. J.</i>	124
Profiles in Greatness : Emerson, Author of America's Literary Independence	
— <i>Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington</i> ..	132
Kanyakumari : Vivekananda at Land's End	
— <i>John Schlenck</i>	141
Holy Places in Kashmir	
— <i>Prof. Chaman Lal Sapru</i>	146
Human Trends : Vinoba's Path of Peaceful Revolution	
— <i>Dr. Anil Baran Ray</i>	153
Reviews and Notices	155
News and Reports	159
Notes and Comments	160

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Prabuddha Bharata

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

INTEGRAL VISION OF VEDIC SEERS*

'Truth is one : sages call It by various names'

तस्माद्विराज्जायत विराजो अधि पूरुषः ।
स जातो अत्यरिच्यत पश्चाद्भूमिमथो पुरः ॥

1. From him¹ was born Virāj, and from Virāj (was born) Puruṣa.² As soon as he³ was born, he became manifested,⁴ and afterwards [created] the earth [and] then physical bodies.⁵

Ṛg-Veda 10.90.5.

* *Puruṣa-sūkta* is continued here.

1. 'From him' (*tasmāt*) is interpreted by Sāyaṇa as 'from the *ādipuruṣa* (Primal Person)', i. e. God, the Paramātmān. Western writers take 'from' to mean 'from the one-fourth' mentioned in the previous stanza.

2. 'From Puruṣa was born Virāj and from Virāj was born Puruṣa' is one of the several instances of the use of paradox in the Vedas. Compare, for instance, 'From Aditi was born Dakṣa, and from Dakṣa was born Aditi.' (*Ṛg-Veda 10.72.4*). Dr. Muir suggests that here Virāj may stand for the female counterpart of Puruṣa, as Aditi is the counterpart of Dakṣa. Sāyaṇa explains the paradox as follows: 'The Supreme Spirit by His Māyā created the Cosmos (*brahmāṇḍa*) and entered into it as the individual souls'.

3. Sāyaṇa takes 'he' to mean Virāj, others take it for Puruṣa.

4. Sāyaṇa interprets *ati-aricyata* as *vyatirikto-abhūt* 'became different', that is, 'He assumed the forms of creatures like gods, men and animals—other than Himself.'

5. The meaning given is Sāyaṇa's. Ranganātha Muni (a Śrī Vaiṣṇava commentator) renders it as, 'He (Brahmā) transcends the earth behind and in front'. Griffith says: 'He spread eastward and westward over the earth'. Macdonnell: 'He reached beyond the earth and behind and also before'. Sāyaṇa interprets *purah* as 'physical bodies'. Bhattabhāskara does it as 'days'.

ABOUT THIS NUMBER

Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna are the special manifestations of the *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* aspects of Brahman born for the welfare of humanity in the present age. This is the theme of this month's EDITORIAL.

A talk given by Swami Subodhananda (a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and endearingly called 'Khoka' by his monastic brothers) in 1897 at Madras appeared in the November 1898 issue of *Prabuddha Bharata* under the title SANNYASA AND BRAHMACHARYA, and is reproduced in the current issue.

In YOGA AND SUPERSENSUOUS EXPERIENCE Swami Yatiswarananda, past Vice-President of the Ramakrishna Order and Mission, speaks of two types of supersensuous experiences: lower psychic experiences, and higher spiritual experiences.

There is in every man an inherent urge to grow, develop, expand, because each soul is potentially divine, points out Swami Shraddhanandaji in MAN MAGNIFIED. The author is a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Order and is now the head of the Vedanta Society of Sacramento, U.S.A.

In MYTH: ITS POWER AND GLORY Swami Nityabodhanandaji makes an original and thought-provoking analysis of Dr. Jung's contribution to the study of Myth in the light of yoga psychology. The author who is the founder-president of the Vedanta Centre, Geneva, is well known in Europe for his creative work in East-West rapport, insightful philosophical observations and his books in French.

This month's MUSINGS OF THE MUSAFIR (*musāfir* means 'traveller' in Urdu), who is 'Caught for Worship at the Right Place', are on the imperative need to install a statue of Swami Vivekananda at a prominent place in Delhi, the metropolis of the nation. What could serve this purpose better than the already existing pedestal near the India Gate there, providentially

kept vacant as if for the statue of Swamiji?

In A NEW ALTER FOR THE FLAME OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM (illustrated), the reader will get a glimpse of the valiant struggle of Tibetan refugees to keep alive their culture in their adopted land. The author, Swami Atmarupananda, is now a monastic member of the Vedanta Society of Southern California, Hollywood.

In this month's FORUM FOR INTER-RELIGIOUS UNDERSTANDING Dr. Amaladoss S. J. writes about the 'Symbolic Dimension of Christianity' making out his case that Christianity can claim a divinely ordained uniqueness among world religions without competing with them for superiority. The author who is the Provincial of Jesuits in North India is a distinguished theologian, thinker and musician.

We are grateful to Dr. Donald Szantho Harrington, Emiretus Senior Minister of the Community Church of New York for allowing us to publish his beautiful sermon on the life of the great American savant Ralph Waldo Emerson in our PROFILES IN GREATNESS column.

VIVEKANANDA AT THE LAND'S END is the libretto of the cantata performed as a part of the anniversary celebration of the Vivekananda Fourth July Festival held by the Vedanta Society of New York in 1982. John Schlenck who composed it is a professional musician.

In HOLY PLACES IN KASHMIR (illustrated) Prof. Chaman Lal Sapru, Professor and Head of the Department of Hindi, Government College for Women, Srinagar, gives a brief account of the important religious centres in Kashmir many of which are not known to ordinary tourists.

Dr. Anil Baran Ray, Professor of Political Science at the University of Burdwan, West Bengal, has prepared a brief note on 'Vinoba Bhave's Path of Peaceful Revolution' for our HUMAN TRENDS feature.

ONE REALITY, THREE MANIFESTATIONS

(EDITORIAL)

Life is a continuous interaction between the individual and the cosmos, between the inner nature and the outer nature. The interaction takes various forms the most important of which is the satisfaction of human needs. Though human wants are unlimited they can be reduced to three basic urges: to exist, to know, to enjoy. Answering these, the objective world around us also shows three properties: it exists (*asti*); it impinges on our consciousness (*bhāti*); it gives joy (*priyam*).¹ This striking correspondence between the inner life and the outer world points to a single common Reality characterized by self-Existence, self-Awareness and intrinsic Bliss. The ultimate, absolute Reality is known as Brahman in Vedanta.

Furthermore, it is a matter of common experience that the three basic urges mentioned above are insatiable, and that the external world can give us only partial and temporary satisfaction. This shows that man's real nature is infinite Spirit and that his body and mind are not his real nature. It also shows that the world around us is only an appearance of true Reality. For total, ultimate, everlasting fulfilment man must transcend the external world, transcend his body and mind, and discover the very foundation of his personality, the Atman, as an inseparable part of Brahman.

In order to transcend the world the three basic urges (to exist, to know and to enjoy) should be unified into a one-pointed, intense aspiration to realize the Absolute. Secondly, the aspirant should constantly practise discrimination between the Real

and the unreal, and reject the appearance as 'not this, not this' (*neti, neti*). When, through these disciplines, he at last realizes the non-dual Absolute, he attains complete satisfaction and freedom from bondage and sorrow for ever.

However, this transcendent experience does not explain how the empirical world of appearance has come to have the three properties of existence, visibility and attractiveness (*asti, bhāti, priyam*), and how it fulfils our basic needs, though partially and temporarily, in ordinary life. In order to understand this man should return, after the highest non-dual experience, to the empirical world and realize how the one supreme Reality manifests itself in diverse ways. This return journey takes the form of the affirmation, 'this is Brahman, this is Brahman' (*iti, iti*).

Sri Ramakrishna describes the experience of the non-dual Absolute (which he calls *nitya*) as Jñāna, and the experience of the world as the glorious manifestation of Brahman (which he calls *līlā*) as Vijñāna. According to him the latter is a fuller, more integral and advanced experience. Explaining these concepts, he says:

The Jnani gives up his identification with worldly things discriminating 'Not this, not this'. Only then can he realize Brahman. It is like reaching the roof of a house by leaving the steps behind, one by one. But the Vijnani, who is more intimately acquainted with Brahman, realizes something more. He realizes that the steps are made of the same materials as the roof: bricks, lime, brick-dust... The man coming down from samadhi perceives that it is Brahman that has become the ego, the universe and all living beings. This is known as Vijnana.²

1. Cf. अस्ति भाति प्रियं रूपं नामचेत्यंशपञ्चकम् ।

आद्यत्रयं ब्रह्मरूपं जगद्रूपं ततो द्वयम् ॥

Dṛgdrśya-Viveka, 20

2. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974) p. 30.

In the Sāṃkhya-Yoga thought everything in the universe of experience is regarded as a manifestation of the three *guṇas* (*sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) of Prakṛtī, variety being caused by differences in their proportion and mode of action. On the other hand, in Vedantic thought everything is regarded as a manifestation of the three aspects of Brahman—*sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*—variety being due to the differences in the degree of their manifestation. Though Brahman is all-pervading, it is not known as such by most people because of the presence of a mysterious form of ignorance known as *Māyā* or *ajñāna*. *Māyā* has two powers: a 'veiling power' (*āvaraṇa śakti*) which hides the real nature of Brahman; and a 'projecting power' (*vikṣepa śakti*) which produces all the illusory objects of the world.

In some Vedantic treatises *Māyā* is described as consisting of three veils. The outermost veil, known as *asattāpādaka-ajñāna*, has a preponderance of *tamas*; it hides all the three aspects of Brahman—*sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*. When this veil is lifted the whole universe is experienced as *sat*, pure existence, or as an ocean of power. The second veil, known as *abhānāpādaka-ajñāna*, has a preponderance of *rajas*; it hides the *cit* and *ānanda* aspects of Brahman. With the lifting of this veil the whole universe is experienced as *cit*, pure consciousness. The innermost veil, known as *anānandāpādaka-ajñāna*, has a preponderance of *sattva*; it hides the *ānanda* aspect of Brahman. As this veil is lifted, the whole universe appears as a limitless ocean of bliss. Spiritual life is the progressive unfolding of *sat-cit-ānanda*.

This unfolding is the result of a transformation of consciousness. How this transformation takes place has been vividly described in the third chapter of the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* through the story of Bhṛgu's seeking instruction from his father

regarding the nature of Brahman. Sri Ramakrishna has illustrated the same truth in his characteristic way by punning on the names of the three great founders of Bengal Vaiṣṇavism: Advaita Gosvāmin, Caitanya Mahāprabhu and Nityānanda. He says:

Chaitanya, Consciousness is awakened after Advaita-jnana, the Knowledge of the non-dual Brahman. Then one perceives that God alone exists in all being as consciousness. After this realization comes Ananda, Bliss. Advaita, Chaitanya, Nityananda.³

Sat as the Divine Mother

In ordinary empirical life we experience the *sat* aspect of Brahman in three ways or modes: as being or existence,⁴ as unity, as power.

The most fundamental of human experience is 'I exist'. And when we look at the objective world (the external world of material objects as well as the internal world of images and ideas) our simplest experience is that of being: 'The tree is', 'the thought is', 'they are', etc. Vedānta does not accept non-being in the absolute sense. The word *asat* does not mean non-being. Even non-existent things like the horns of a rabbit or the child of a barren woman, and illusory objects like the 'snake in the rope', have some sort of 'being', often distinguished as *subsistence*. According to Rāmānuja even dream objects are real, being actual creations of the Lord. *Sat* or being includes both existence and subsistence. Advaita Vedānta distinguishes three types of *sat* or being: *pāramārthika-*

3. *ibid*, p. 212.

4. 'Being' is a wider term than 'existence'. In contemporary Western philosophy 'existence' is used to refer to a person's experience of his own existence, whereas 'being' is used with reference to all objects and contents of experience—living or non-living, real or unreal.

sattā or absolute being, *vyāvahārika-sattā* or empirical being and *prātibhāsika-sattā* or illusory being. All these are different dimensions of *sat*.

The second mode of *sat* is unity. Though the world consists of myriads of different objects, there is one fundamental unifying force holding together all beings—electrons in the atom, atoms in the molecule, cells in the body, planets in the solar system, stars in the galaxy, and so on. At the social or inter-personal level this unifying force manifests itself as love, holding together men and women in the family, group and society. In the *Viṣṇu-purāṇa* and in Bengal Vaiṣṇavism, this unifying force is known as *saṁdhinī*. Love is thus an expression of the *saṁdhinī śakti* of *sat*. In his lectures on 'Practical Vedanta', Swami Vivekananda says:

Everything that makes for oneness is truth. Love is truth... Love binds, love makes for that oneness. You become one, the mother with the child, families with the city, the whole world becomes one with the animals. For love is Existence, God Himself; and all this is the manifestation of that One Love, more or less expressed.⁵

The third mode of *sat* is power, *Śakti*. Existence is not a mere passive or static state, but a state of continuous change, and change means the transformation of energy, power. Modern science has shown that matter is a form of energy and space-time is dynamic in its nature. In India the idea that being or existence is a state of power finds expression even in the *Rg-Veda*. Describing the primordial condition of Reality before creation, the famous 'Creation Hymn' states that 'then the one breathless Being breathed by its own power.'⁶ In the Upaniṣads this power is

called *Prāṇa* (which literally means 'breath') and the whole universe is said to come out of *Prāṇa* and vibrate in *Prāṇa*.⁷ In some places this power is identified with *vāk*, the Word. Under the influence of Sāṁkhya philosophy, the concept of *Prāṇa* later on gave way to that of *Māyā* in Advaita Vedanta and the concept of *Śakti* in the Tantras.

All these three aspects—existence, unity and power—of *sat* find their highest personification and glorification in the Divine Mother. She is Brahman regarded as *sat*. Not that the *cit* and *ānanda* aspects of Brahman are absent in Her; but it is the *sat* aspect of Brahman that is Her dominant and distinctive nature, and it is more gloriously manifested in Her than anywhere else.

It is the mother who gives existence to the child. Every living being comes out of a mother, and there is no exception to this rule. Even the non-living beings owe their existence to a mother, a matrix; the Mother of the Universe. For each being has its own unique qualities (*guṇas*) and all *guṇas* inhere in the universal matrix of the Divine Mother. She is the great *brahma-yoni* (Womb of Brahman) mentioned in the Vedas, from whom originate universes and galaxies. Sri Ramakrishna had a symbolic vision of this Womb of Brahman in the form of a large triangle of living light giving birth to innumerable worlds at every moment.⁸

Again, it is the Divine Mother who holds together the whole universe in Her all-pervading embrace. It is the great Mother Heart that is the source of all unity,

7. यदिदं किञ्च जगत् सर्वं प्राण एजति निःसृतम् ।

Katha-Upaniṣad 6.2.

5. *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1976) vol. 2, p. 304.

6. आनीद् अवातं स्वधया तदेकं

Rg-Veda, 10.129.2.

8. Swami Vivekananda too had a similar experience. See, Swami Saradananda, *Sri Ramakrishna the Great Master* (1970) p. 201.

all harmony, all love. She is the great *samdhinī-śakti* of the universe.

Divine power is not a mere formless, impersonal material principle. Rather, it is a living, conscious force which can assume a concrete personal form. In India, right from prehistoric times, the personal aspect of divine power has been regarded as female, the Divine Mother. In the *Rg-Veda* she is known as Aditi, the Boundless. She is the mother of all gods who are therefore called Ādityas ('sons of Aditi'). As the following hymn shows, She is identified with the all-pervading divine Existence: 'Aditi is the sky; Aditi is the atmosphere; Aditi is father, mother and son; all the gods are Aditi, even so all men; and what is and what will be is Aditi.'⁹ As the power of Vāk, the Word or Logos, the Divine Mother is described by the Vedic sages as the creative power of the universe and the awakener of higher thoughts. In the remarkable hymn *Devī-Sūktam*, the Divine Mother as Vāk reveals Her own supreme divinity as the power of Rudras, Vasus, Ādityas and all the gods; as the support of Mitra, Varuṇa, Indra, Agni, Aśvins, Moon and Sun; as the queen of the world; as the giver of prosperity; as the wielder of men's destiny; as the all-pervading Spirit transcending heaven and earth.¹⁰ In the *Kena-Upaniṣad* the Divine Mother appears as the exceedingly beautiful (*bahu-śobhamānā*) Umā to

reveal the knowledge of Brahman even to the gods.

It is, however, in the *Caṇḍī* (*Devī-māhātmya*) and the Tantras that the motherhood of God attains its fullest development and independence. The *Viṣṇu-Yāmala* classifies all the different attributes of the Divine Mother under three aspects. The first is the *parā* (*transcendent*) aspect in which she exists as the Primordial Power (*ādyā-śakti*) pervading and sustaining the whole universe. The second aspect, known as *sūkṣma* or subtle, is the power of Vāk, the Word or Logos. In the third aspect known as *sthūla* or gross, She manifests Herself in human forms. These human forms are many, some terrible and some gentle and beautiful. The most important of these are ten, known as the Daśa Mahāvidyās. They are: Kālī, Tārā, Śoḍaśī (Tripurasundarī), Bhuvaneśvarī, Chinnamastā, Bhairavī, Dhumāvatī, Bagalā, Mātangī (Sarasvatī) and Kamalā (Lakṣmī).

The Divine Mother exercises Her power in three different ways. A unique doctrine common to the three Āgama traditions—Vaiṣṇava (Pāñcarātra), Śaiva and Śākta—is the five-fold activity of God, namely, creation (*sr̥ṣṭi*), maintenance (*sthiti*), dissolution (*pralaya*), obstruction or concealment (*nigraha* or *tirodhāna*) and redemption (*anugraha*). All these activities are carried out by the Divine Mother through Her three powers.

The first power brings about the creation, maintenance and dissolution of the universe. The whole universe is the body of the Divine Mother and it is she who undergoes these changes. In other words, these changes affect only the *sat* aspect of Brahman, the *cit* and *ānanda* aspects being immutable. This idea is expressed in the image of Kālī dancing on the chest of Śiva. A well-known verse attributed to Śrī Śaṅkara says: 'Śiva is able to create (or control) the universe only if He is united with Śakti; otherwise the God wouldn't

⁹. अदितिद्यौरदितिरन्तरिक्षं

अदितिर्माता स पिता स पुत्रः ।

विश्वे देवा अदितिः पञ्च जना

अदितिर्जातमदितिर्जनित्वम् ॥

Rg-Veda 1.89.10 (also cf. *Katha-Upaniṣad* 4.7).

¹⁰. अहं रुद्रेभिर्वसुभिश्चरा-

म्यहमादित्यैरुत विश्वदेवैः ।

... महिना सं बभूव ॥

Rg-Veda 10.125.1-8.

be able even to move.¹¹ Sri Ramakrishna explains this truth as follows:

The Primordial Power is ever at play. She is creating, preserving and destroying in play, as it were. This power is called Kali. Kali is verily Brahman, and Brahman is verily Kali. It is one and the same Reality. When we think of It as inactive, that is to say, not engaged in the acts of creation, preservation and destruction, then we call It Brahman. But when It engages in these activities, we call it Kali or Sakti.¹²

The second power of the Divine Mother is the power of delusion. At the level of the individual it takes the form of *nigraha* which means the limitation or contraction of the powers of the soul. At the cosmic level it takes the form of *tirodhāna*, the disappearance or hiding of God, that is, the inability of the soul to perceive Reality. This is what the Advaitins call *māyā*, *avidyā*, *ajñāna* or ignorance.

The third power of the Mother is *anugraha-śakti*, the power of blessing, redemption. It is the power which enables man to have true faith in God and realize the ultimate Reality. Through this power Mother liberates him from delusion, bondage and suffering. However, it is important to understand that God's grace need not, does not, always take the form of a gentle, soothing and pleasing experience. It may come hidden in suffering, frustration, misfortune and in the apparently terrible, unjust and evil events. In many people the veil of *Māyā* is so thick, and the ego so strong, that only shocking experiences can free them from the illusions and delusions they are hugging to themselves. Thus the redemptive power of the Divine Mother has two aspects, the gentle and the terrible.

The gentle aspect of this Mother Power has in the modern age found its highest expression and embodiment in Sri Sarada Devi, the immaculate consort of Sri Ramakrishna. As the Incarnation of the Divine Mother, Sarada Devi had in her person the potentiality of all the three modes of the *sat* aspect of Brahman mentioned earlier, namely, the matrix of existence, the all-holding bond of unity and omnipotent power. But she manifested in full only the gentle aspect of the redeeming power and universal love of divine motherhood, for that is the need of the age.

The birth of the Holy Mother was not accidental. It was in response to the need of the age and the fulfilment of the Divine Mother's promise given to the gods in the *Caṇḍī*: 'Thus whenever obstacles (to Dharma) caused by demons occur, I shall incarnate myself and destroy the foes.'¹³ In the present age several obstacles to Dharma have arisen the most serious of which are materialism, immorality and disharmony. Sri Sarada Devi was born to show that these obstacles could be removed without the destruction of life, simply by intensifying the current of virtue in the world. There is only one real force operating in the universe and it is the power of goodness, knowledge, *vidyā*. Evil, sin, suffering, *māyā*, *avidyā*—all these are illusions caused by the inability of the soul to open itself fully to the universal goodness of Existence,¹⁴ to the power of *vidyā*, to listen to and follow the eternal voice of the Mother, the *vāk*. The Divine Mother is the source of all *vidyā*.¹⁵ The

11. शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभवितुम् ।
न चेदेवं देवो न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितुमपि ॥

Ananda-Lahari, 1.

12. *The Gospel*, p. 64.

13. इत्थं यदा यदा बाधा दानवोत्था भविष्यति ।
तदा तदाऽवतीर्याहं करिष्याम्यरिसंक्षयम् ॥

Devī-māhātmya 11.54,55.

14. Note that both existence and goodness are denoted by the same word *sat* in Indian thought.

15. Cf. विद्याः समस्तास्तव देवि भेदाः

Devī-māhātmya 11.6.

mission of Sri Sarada Devi was to demonstrate how through illumined motherhood the power of *vidyā* could be intensified and channelled to solve the problems of individual and collective life. She just lived in silence radiating the pure rays of *vidyā*, absorbing all evil into her ever-expanding motherhood.

There is only one way to remove evil from the world and establish harmony and peace. It is to reorganize human society around the Mother ideal, to open oneself more and more to the Mother power, and to convert every action and thought into a worship of the Divine Mother. That is why Swami Vivekananda said, 'At the present time God should be worshipped as Mother, the Infinite Energy.... The new cycle must see the masses living Vedanta, and this will have to come through women.'¹⁶

Cit as the Guru

We have seen that the cause of suffering and evil is the inability of the soul to open itself to the universal goodness of Existence. The source of man's troubles lies not in the external world but in his soul. Therefore investigation into the nature of the soul was taken up in India even at a very early period in its history. Through deep contemplation the sages of the Upaniṣads made two important discoveries. One is that the real nature of the soul is pure, contentless *cit* or consciousness which is self-luminous, self-revealing and is independent of the body and the mind. Secondly, this individual consciousness is only a part of the infinite consciousness of Brahman (*prajñānam brahma*).

Though *cit* or consciousness is infinite and all-pervading, it manifests itself in different ways in different beings. In human beings it expresses itself in three ways: as knowledge, as will, as the self.

It is through knowledge that we become aware of existence. This awareness of existence is the distinctive characteristic of life. A stone exists, but is not aware of that fact. The *cit* aspect of Brahman is there even in the stone, but it is not manifested as knowledge. It is because of the presence of *cit* in it that it is able to impinge upon our minds. This mode of *cit* is called *prakāśa*, luminosity. Knowledge always means knowledge of something, that is, of existence. This revealing aspect of *cit* is called *vimarśa*. (In the Bengal Vaiṣṇava school it is known as *samvit*.) *Vimarśa* is of two kinds: lower (*apara*) and higher (*para*). Lower knowledge reveals Existence as discontinuity, multiplicity and variety. Higher knowledge reveals Existence as infinite, unbroken, non-dual *sat*.

This *vimarśa śakti* or power of revelation is potentially present in the human soul, but manifests itself in different degrees according to the stages of evolution at which people are. In ordinary people it remains in a veiled, dormant or contracted state, and needs a quickening impulse to manifest itself. This impulse comes from the Guru. Thus the Guru is the embodiment of the *vimarśa śakti* of *cit*. That is why Sri Ramakrishna used to say that Saccidānanda alone is the Guru.

However, the manifestation of the Guru power varies from person to person. An ordinary secular teacher only enables a person to get lower knowledge, whereas the spiritual teacher awakens the soul and imparts supreme knowledge. Then there are the great teachers of mankind called *yugācāryas* who appear in different epochs of history like the Vedic sages, Lao Tzu, Moses, Śaṅkarācārya and others. The function of the epochal Teacher is to prepare the ground for the mission of the Avatār of the Age, give his message a suitable philosophical foundation, and adapt it to the prevalent social conditions.

In the present age this role of the

¹⁶. *The Complete Works* (1972) vol. 7, p. 95.

epochal Teacher devolved on Swami Vivekananda. The *vimarśa śakti* or Guru power of this age found its embodiment in Swamiji. In him the *cit* aspect of Brahman found its most dynamic and effective expression. He was born to teach mankind the Dharma of the present age. During the ten years of preaching that he did, he awakened, inspired, taught and guided thousands of people, and his voice is still ringing in the souls of countless people. He himself said that he had given the world enough food for thought to last a thousand years, and 'I shall not cease to work. I shall inspire men everywhere, until the world shall know that it is one with God.'

The second manifestation of the *cit* aspect of Brahman is the will. In Indian thought will is known as *icchā*, *dhṛti* or *kratu*, but it is seldom distinguished from consciousness. For will is only the dynamic aspect of the self, the focussing of consciousness. 'That which seems to be the will is the Atman behind ; it is really free', says Swami Vivekananda.¹⁷ Will is commonly confused with a strong desire, feeling or instinct. The former is a function of the Atman while latter belongs to its outer sheaths. But since the will in most people is enslaved by lower desires and instincts, it is difficult to distinguish between them. To understand what true will is we must go deep into the soul and attain true spiritual experience which alone can free the will. The marks of a free will are detachment, fearlessness and strength.

The more spiritual is a person, the greater is his will-power. In world teachers like Swami Vivekananda will-power finds its highest and widest expression. Swamiji not only preached, but also gave a new turn to the course of history by the exercise of his gigantic will. Knowledge, for Swamiji, is not a passive experience but a dynamic force expressing itself as freedom,

fearlessness and strength. This is the central point of his message.

The third manifestation of *cit* is self-awareness. The self is the unifying centre which holds together the different parts of the personality like the body, the mind, the senses, the will, emotions etc. In ordinary people the self identifies itself with the ego, the body and the mind. Spiritually awakened persons realize it as the Atman. But in a world teacher the self identifies itself with the whole humanity. Swami Vivekananda demonstrated this truth through his life. Girish Chandra Ghosh once said that Mahāmāyā could not catch two people in Her net of delusion. One was Nag Mahashay and the other was Swamiji. The ego of the former was so small that it escaped through the meshes, whereas the ego of the latter was so big that it would not go into the net. The 'I' of Swamiji was not limited to his body and mind. It was one with the *paramāhanta* of the Divine. The motive force for his thoughts, desires and actions came not from the body-bound ego, but from the World Soul. His voice was the echo of the universal Self. He was not a mere Bodhisattva striving to liberate others out of compassion, but a perfected Buddha working as the divine instrument for *sarva-mukti*, universal redemption, which he believed was a fundamental spiritual law and the inevitable destiny of humankind.

Ananda as the Avatār

We have discussed two aspects of Brahman: *sat*, manifesting itself as existence, unity and power ; and *cit*, manifesting itself as knowledge, will and the self. Existence and knowledge are not an end in themselves ; they have some purpose, goal, meaning. They alone do not make life complete, full, *pūrṇa*. This final complement and ultimate significance of life and

¹⁷. *ibid*, p. 77.

Reality is *ānanda*, bliss. *Sat* and *cit* become meaningful only in so far as they evoke the response of *ānanda* in us. As the *Taittirīya-Upaniṣad* states, *ānanda* is the very essence of Reality, without which life would be impossible.¹⁸ Hence the same Upaniṣad speaks of *ānanda* as the ultimate principle from which all beings originate, by which they live and into which they return.¹⁹

Like *sat* and *cit*, *ānanda* too is an all-pervading principle but has different degrees of manifestation. In man the purest form of joy dwells in his Atman. That is why everyone regards his own self as the dearest thing and loves everybody else for its sake, as the sage Yājñavalkya observes in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*.²⁰ But in the state of bondage the soul of man is a limited entity, and so the inner bliss available to him is also limited. 'Real bliss is not in the limited, but in the Infinite', declares another sage in the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad*. It is the hunger for boundless bliss that impels the soul to realize God.

God in his impersonal nature as the Absolute is beyond the grasp of the ordinary mind. It can form a conception of Him only as a Person with divine attributes—the Bhagavān—who dwells in the souls of all beings as the Supreme Self. But even this aspect of the Divine is beyond the realization of most of the people. So the Bhagavān descends to the world as the Avatār assuming a human form, and lives among ordinary people revealing His divine *ānanda* and perfection through His humanity. The Avatār is thus the special manifestation of the *ānanda* aspect of Brahman. As Sri Ramakrishna says, though milk is derived from the elements present in all parts of the cow, it is available in all its purity, sweetness and

richness only in the udder. Similarly, the Avatār is the only source where divine bliss is readily available to us.

However the Avatār is not a mere passive channel of bliss; he enjoys bliss himself. God is not only of the nature of bliss (*ānandamaya*) but also the enjoyer of bliss (*ānandabhuk*), as the *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* points out.²¹ He also imparts bliss to others and teaches them how to seek and enjoy divine bliss. This power of enjoying and imparting bliss is known as *hlādinī-śakti* in Vaiṣṇava scriptures. It is by the exercise of this power that the Avatār performs his *līlā*, sport, on earth. He lives like an ordinary man, shares the joys and sorrows of other people and actively participates in the drama of life, and yet he enjoys unalloyed bliss and serves as a source of bliss to others. He may even transfer the miseries of others to his person without in any way affecting his blissful nature.

Thus the primary purpose of God's incarnation is to provide a *līlā-vigraha*, image of divine bliss, to serve as a universal focus of man's craving for joy. Since the external conditions of life constantly change, the images of former ages become inadequate to hold the attention, and draw out the faith, of people in later ages. Hence the Lord incarnates Himself again and again to wean people away from their worldly pursuits and show them the right path to the attainment of supreme bliss and fulfilment. In the present age the Lord incarnated Himself as Sri Ramakrishna for the welfare of the whole world.

It was earlier mentioned that the unity of mankind at the level of *sat* is achieved by the Divine Mother through her *saṁdhinī* power, and that this unity of the *cit* level is effected by the epochal Guru through the *vimarśa* or *saṁvit* power. The Avatār unites all mankind at the level of *ānanda*

18. रसो वै सः । . . . को ह्येवान्यात् कः प्राप्यात् ।

Taittirīya-Upaniṣad 2.7.1.

19. *ibid*, 3.6.1.

20. *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad* 2.4.5 and 4.5.6.

21. *Māṇḍūkya-Upaniṣad* 5.

through his *hlādinī* power. God's love thus manifests itself in three different ways. A person may open himself to any of these aspects and attain the highest goal of life. But the ideal of the present age is to attune oneself to all the three aspects and powers of God. This is the special feature of the avatarhood of Sri Ramakrishna.

Sri Ramakrishna had a three-fold mission on earth. One was to invoke and mobilize Mother Power for the establishment of *dharma* and harmony in the world. This he has done through the Holy Mother Sri Sarada Devi. The second mission was to release the Guru Power in order to teach mankind the way to meet the challenges of

science and technology and social changes. This he has accomplished through Swami Vivekananda. The third mission was to provide a new image of divine *ānanda* and a new ideal of life harmonizing all the earlier ideals. This he fulfilled through his own life and teachings.

The personalities of Sri Sarada Devi, Swami Vivekananda and Sri Ramakrishna represent the special manifestations of the *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda* aspects of Brahman respectively. They are the embodiments of the divine powers of these three aspects working for the welfare of all humankind in the present age. Through them the one supreme Reality shines upon the world in three glorious ways.

SANNYASA AND BRAHMACHARYA*

SWAMI SUBODHANANDA (KHOKA MAHARAJ)

Sannyāsa is the renunciation of all selfish motives and desires. Before I explain what Sannyāsa is, I should speak to you about Brahmacharya ; for unless the latter is realized, no Sannyāsa or renunciation is possible. The observance of Brahmacharya requires strict regulation of one's diet, habits and thoughts. Of all the injunctions prescribed for this stage, the greatest stress is laid by the *śāstras* upon the complete mastery of the sexual instinct. Nothing should be sensed or done by the aspirant which might directly or otherwise tend to arouse the animal in him or her. In this way one is directed to bring one's mind under full control. He who is not a slave to his senses and mind, but on the contrary has made them his slaves, is a true Brahmachārin. All the religions of the world preach this Brahmacharya and Sannyāsa, both of which have one and the same end in view, namely to lift the mind up from all sensual concerns towards

God. When the mind reaches God it enjoys divine bliss.

The lifting up of the mind can be brought about by worshipping God either with form or without form. Those who are devoted to God with form know Him as their nearest and dearest ; they enjoy His company all the moments of their lives. They play with Him, they live and move in Him. Those who worship the formless God also enjoy Him intensely, realizing Him as the all-per-vading one ; and thus they also live and move in Him. The enjoyments of both these devotees are same in their intensity, inas-much as both are supersensuous.

Unless a man rises above the allurements

* A lecture delivered at the 'Young Men's Hindu Association', Madras, in 1897 by Swami Subodhananda, a direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna, which first appeared in *Prabuddha Bharata* November, 1898 (vol. 3. No. 4).

of his senses he can never be a devotee. So a devotee's mind is far away from all worldly desires. He does not much care for his family, friends or relatives; no duties bind him to any one of them, for his mind entirely rests in and with God every moment of his life. And when he looks towards the world anytime he does not see the world of men, but rather the world of gods, for all men, women, animals, houses, trees, sky and earth, all appear to him to be filled with divinity. Let me illustrate this by narrating to you the life of a saint, for the lives of such persons are the living and concrete examples of what I have just now said. The study of such lives are more beneficial to us than the knowledge of the abstract truths themselves; for the former clearly shows to us the path which we should follow in the journey of our life. 'What a great man traced out is the true path.'¹ They, as Longfellow says, 'Leave footprints on the sands of time.'

Foot prints that perhaps another
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

When the great saint and prophet Śrī Caitanya of Nadia was travelling in Deccan he became the guest of a pious and wealthy Maratha Brahmin. This Brahmin had an only child named Gopal Bhatta whom he loved very fondly. As he was a very pious man he spent most of his time in worshipping his Iṣṭa and chanting the praises of God. He never turned out any guest from his doors and his chief pleasure lay in receiving Sādhus and Sannyāsins as his guests, feeding them sumptuously, supplying them with clothes and hearing from them instructive lectures to edify himself. But his boy Gopal had a higher motive. He was not satisfied only to hear lectures from Sādhus

or worship the *image* of God; he wanted to see the *real* God. With this end in view he always wanted to go to a solitary place and there devote his whole time in communion with his beloved. So when Śrī Caitanya was his father's guest the boy was struck with the intense devotion of the Prophet, whose eyes were like two streams flowing in tears of love. He wished to be like him, to live alone and travel from place to place as a Sannyāsin or a Sādhu, supporting himself by begging alms. Śrī Caitanya too seeing the goodness, purity, simplicity and devotion of the boy was very much attracted to him, so much so, that he praised the child before his father saying, 'This your boy will be a great devotee hereafter.' When Śrī Caitanya went away, the boy's heart followed him; but he could not make out how to carry his desire into action, as his father's fondness towards him proved a great barrier. However, one day he told his father about his intention and the father fearing lest his child should leave him secretly and betake himself to a foreign land, kept a constant watch over him, without his knowledge. But where there is a will there is a way. One midnight when all were asleep, when even the guards that were especially employed to keep strict watch over him were in deep slumber, Gopal left his home and avoiding the highway took the forest path to evade detection. He had nothing with him besides the cloth which he had on. After travelling a whole day he was overpowered with hunger and, being still a boy, began to weep and pray to his God. A little while after, he saw an old man coming towards him, who asked why he was weeping; upon which the boy said that he was hungry and the old man immediately gave him some food to eat, caressed him and told him that as his way also lay through the forest he would be his fellow traveller and that the forest was a very big one and it would take them several days to cross it. The boy was very grateful at this and what

¹ महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ।

was more, whenever he felt hungry he was sure to find some good food and sweet words from the old man. One day he asked the old man who he was and why was he taking so much care of him. The old man at once gave out that he was the very same individual whom he had been seeking after. At this the boy replied : 'He whom I seek is not old like yourself but very young and beautiful with a flute in his hand and a peacock's feather on his head. How can I believe that you are He, my own dear beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa ?' To his utter surprise and transport, the old man was at once transformed into the most lovely youth in the world and stood smiling before him as Śrī Kṛṣṇa himself. Who can describe the ecstasy which Gopal was in at the time ? After a while when his transport had abated a little, Śrī Kṛṣṇa pointed out to him a very easy way out of the jungle and vanished on the spot promising to meet him again in Śrī Vṛndāvan, filling the boy's mind with love and joy. It is needless to mention that a few months after Gopal reached Śrī Vṛndāvan and there spent his whole life in ecstatic communion with his beloved Śrī Kṛṣṇa.

Now after studying the life of Gopal Bhatta we can clearly see that he became a man-god only because he had a strong faith and an insuperable determination in him. Simple faith and strong will are the two things necessary for the making of a true man. Our Master used to say that if we wanted to pass a thread through the eye of a needle all the scattered fibres of the thread should be brought to point and then alone we could make it go through the needle, otherwise if the fibres were allowed to point to all directions they would prevent the thread from passing through the eye ; similarly if we wanted to lift our mind up towards God, we must have to bring it back from all external things and concentrate it at one point. But how to concentrate the scattered mind ? the mind which has been

distributed to wife and children, to the attainment of name and fame and to the pursuit of all sorts of sensual pleasures ? This can be effected by faith in God or in one's own Guru.

Gopal Bhatta had great faith in Śrī Kṛṣṇa and therefore it was easy for him to direct his love entirely to the most loving, kind, and beautiful shepherd boy of Śrī Vṛndāvan; even hunger and privation could not estrange his mind from the lotus feet of his Beloved. But such a faith is not ordinarily met with. Therefore for the generality of mankind faith in one's own Guru is necessary. If a man loves his Guru with his whole heart, obeys what the latter says, his mind being devoted to him, will naturally shun other attractions and thus get concentrated. This faith towards one's own Guru grows gradually in strength and so it is not advisable to lay it open to vulgar criticism when it is just sprouted ; for so long as the plant has not grown up sufficiently it should be hedged in to be protected from being destroyed by the cattle. When there is a little quantity of water in a pool we should not disturb it violently, for then it will get muddy and be unfit for drinking, and we will have to return home more thirsty than before. This our Master taught us. Therefore it is my earnest prayer to you all never to allow any indiscriminate questioning of your faith from outside, nor should you yourselves lay it bare to vulgar criticism. Faith is one's own ; no one has any right to call it into question. Every man in this world has some faith or other, which to others may appear false. Let me assure you that no sincere faith can be productive of anything but what is really good. Let me repeat therefore, do not let yours or any other's faith be made a butt of unsympathetic and disrespectful questions ; for doubt is death. The proverb says that faith is very near to Śrī Kṛṣṇa. Scepticism is far away from him. Adorn your mind with the good quality of humility, for unless you be meek and hum-

ble you can learn nothing. Our Master says that as rain water does not stand upon a high ground but always seeks the lower level, similarly those who are puffed up with vanity cannot retain any faith in them; for faith always seeks the hearts of the humble and the meek.

So long there must be quarrel between different individuals and sects as long as they do not rise up to realize the highest truth. When truth shines, the darkness of ignorance and its crew of narrowness, bigotry and fanaticism which deluge the earth with murder and bloodshed, shall all vanish. 'My God is true God, your God is false', is the talk of men groping in the darkness of ignorance. Once the late Mr. Keshabchandra Sen, the leader of the Brahma Samaj asked our Master: 'Since there is only one God how is it that there are so many sects quarrelling with one another?' To which the Bhagavan replied: 'You see, my dear boy, people always quarrel over their lands, properties and sundry other things of the world, saying, "This land is mine, and that is thine" and, in this way divide this earth in various ways by drawing lines of demarcation to distinguish their respective properties; but no one ever quarrels about the open space that is above the earth, for that belongs to none, as there can be drawn no lines on it to mark out one's property from that of another; similarly when the mind rises above all wordly concerns he can have no occasion for quarrel, for then he reaches a certain point which is the common goal of all.' When a man realizes God he cannot quarrel, but when he is below the right mark, that is, when he is distant from God, is more or less given to quarrelling. Try to rise up to that height without quarrelling, although you may have many occasions for it, and thus at last end all these disagreements by realizing universal harmony and agreement which are only to be found in God, who is both within and without you. Let us hear what a great Bengali devotee

of yore named Śrī Rāmprasād had ever been singing sweetly to all people. This great devotee never sat down to compose his songs, but when the feeling came he sang extempore most exquisitely beautiful songs redolent with the love celestial. These immortal songs are believed by many to have come from the Eternal Mother Herself, who sat enthroned in the bosom of Her child Śrī Rāmprasād and prompted him to sing. He sings: 'Worship the Mother, O my mind, in whatever way you like, never forgetting to remember the *mantra* which your spiritual father has given to you; know that you prostrate yourself before the holy Mother when you stretch yourself to rest; know yourself to be in deep meditation when you sleep; know that you offer oblation to the holy fire when you eat. Know that every sound you hear is the holy *mantra* of the Mother, for all the fifty letters of the alphabet are Her different names. Sri Ramprasad announces to all with great joy that the Mother Divine is in every being; and so, O my mind, when you walk in the streets know for certain that you are simply going round that Divine Mother.' Here the song ends. Can such a man have any quarrel with any of his fellow brothers? Such a man is a true Sannyāsin.

Once upon a time a dirty looking man entered the garden premises of the late Rani Rashmani at Dakshineswar, a village north of Calcutta. This spacious garden contains a very beautiful temple of Kālī which covers a large area. The temple servants, seeing the dirty and unclean man intruding into and polluting the temple-grounds, gathered together to turn him out after giving him a good thrashing. But our Master, who lived in that garden, seeing the man, at once found him out to be a great Yogin, a real Sannyāsin, and so he told the men not to ill treat him. They obeyed him, but looking at the dirtiness of his exterior, they did not allow him to go into the temple. After a while, standing in front the temple,

the dirty Sadhu began to chant praises of the Divine Mother so sweetly that he drew tears from the eyes of all those who a few minutes ago wanted to beat him. Then, seeing a dog eating some remnants of food that had been cast away, he went up to the dog, caressed him and spoke to him thus : 'Why friend are you eating all alone? Won't you share your dish with me?', and began to eat with the dog. As he was going away from the garden a good man went up to him and asked him with joined palms, 'O master, kindly instruct me in the mystery of true knowledge.' To which the Sadhu replied : 'My boy, when you will not find any difference between the holy water of the Ganges and the filthy water of a sewer, then alone shall you be able to comprehend what true knowledge is.' A true Sannyāsin looks upon a saint and a sinner in the same light, for he finds the same God in both of them, only in different garbs. Such a one

is called a perfect man. The characteristics of a perfect man are thus summed up by Bhagavān Śaṅkarācārya : 'The perfect man has sometimes a cloth on and sometimes none ; sometimes he covers his nakedness with the bark of a tree, sometimes with the skin of an animal, sometimes he dresses himself purely with the garment of knowledge. He sometimes seems to be a mad man, sometimes a child, sometimes a dirty being, even like a *piśāca*. Thus he walks abroad in the world at large, free as the morning air and fresh as the dew drops ; and proclaims peace and joy to all.'²

2. दिगम्बरो वापि च साम्बरो वा,
 त्वगम्बरो वापि चिदम्बरस्थः ।
 उन्मत्तवद्वापि च बालवद्वा,
 पिशाचवद्वापि चरत्यवन्याम् ॥

Vivekacūḍāmaṇi, 540.

YOGA AND SUPERSENSUOUS EXPERIENCE*

SWAMI YATISWARANANDA

In this strange period we are passing through, more and more people all over the world are showing increasing interest in the occult. Men and women frequent miracle workers and astrologers, hunt for magic charms and other objects supposed to possess healing vibrations, practise crystal-gazing and thought-reading, and talk of auras, the coloured or white light which seers discern surrounding the body. 'Can you see my aura?' they plead. 'What colour is it? Tell me, is it a bright one? What does it mean?' Many of these restless egoists are trying to get in touch with disembodied spirits through mediums or other adepts who for large sums of money offer to conduct guided tours to unearthly planes of existence. There are others who investigate mesmer-

ism, hypnotism, clairaudience, clairvoyance, telepathy and every kind of supersensory phenomenon which may lead them into dangerous waters.

These souls are in bondage, unusually self-seeking, ignorant of the true Self which can be realized only through spiritual disciplines. These over-curious and credulous people who give all their time and energy to the investigation of psychic phenomena have no enthusiasm left over for meditation and the development of higher spiritual consciousness which frees the soul from all delusion, sorrow and fear.

On the other hand, the sceptic and the

* A talk given at the Vedanta Society of Philadelphia, U.S.A., in May, 1948.

rationalist condemn all supersensuous experience. How far should so-called supernatural experiences be condemned? In the past all scientists had been sceptics. It was customary for those whom Swami Vivekananda called 'surface scientists' to ignore all supersensuous experience, branding them superstitious frauds. Further investigation however by such inspired physicists as Eddington and Sir James Jeans demonstrated that there is indeed an extra-physical factor in all matter as well as in human personality, that cannot be weighed or measured. The experiments of J. B. Rhine and other scientists of his type have established the truth of extra-sensory perception. This supports the most basic of all religious doctrines, namely, that man has a spiritual nature within the reach of his mind. What these scientists have been trying to prove on an experimental basis has been intuitively perceived through the ages by illumined souls of all countries, ages and religions.

Teachers of Vedanta went further when they declared from their own intuitive experience that what we call the individual soul is a part of the cosmic Spirit. Īśvara, Allah, Jehovah, God— call it what you will— is not an extracosmic Being beyond the clouds but is immanent in all life and also transcendent beyond all limitation. In the course of his wandering in the Himalayas Swami Vivekananda had a remarkable experience of the oneness of microcosm and macrocosm, about which he wrote in his diary : 'The microcosm and the macrocosm are built on the same plan. Just as the individual soul is encased in the living body so is the Universal Soul encased in the living Prakṛti— the objective universe.¹ On another occasion Swamiji said : 'Each man

is only a conduit for the infinite ocean of knowledge and power that lies behind mankind.'

Teachers of Vedanta explain by analogy with the help of various illustrations the relation of the individual to the Universal, although the final proof lies in direct spiritual experience. Each soul is like a wave and is only a part of the ocean of Infinity ; or the soul is like the space confined in a single room which is only part of the space within a house, which in turn is part of all surrounding space ; or the soul is like a man's energy derived from the sun as part of the cosmic energy by which we are all vitalized ; or the soul is like a single ray of light coming through a crack in a shutter which is part of the surrounding light which floods the whole universe. There is a direct and intimate relationship between the individual part and the cosmic whole, and it is the awareness of that relationship which is the foundation of a spiritual life. These analogies hold good not only for the physical level of the relationship between microcosm and macrocosm, but also for mental and spiritual levels ; for just as an individual's physical energy is like a minute whirlpool in the ocean of matter, so also his subtle or mental body is part of a vast cosmic mind, and the individual spirit is part of the infinite Supreme Spirit.

There are three dimensions of human personality : first, the physical body with its mind and senses which is a part of the cosmic body of matter ; second, the subtle or mental body which is a part of the vast cosmic mind whose nature is truly apprehended only by the deeper insight of the seer who gets glimpses of life on another plane. Thirdly, there is the individual human soul which we know to be an infinitesimal portion of the all-pervading infinite Supreme Spirit. Though the body and mind are limited, the soul is capable of infinite expansion and can become one with the universal Spirit.

1. Cf. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* by His Eastern and Western Disciples, Fifth revised Edition (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1979) vol. 1, p. 250.

There are supersensuous experiences on the physical plane, on the subtle-mental plane and also on the spiritual plane. Patañjali, the great seer of ancient India, made a special study of different types of supersensuous experiences. He tells us how, with the constant practice of concentration and meditation, extra-sensory powers are unfolded and higher forms and levels of existence beyond the reach of bodily senses are perceived. But are such experiences real?

We all know that the human mind in a morbid state can produce all sorts of fantasies that appear so real that people act upon them. There is the story of the man brought to court on a charge of drunkenness. 'What gave you the impression that the prisoner was the worse for drink?', asked the judge. The policeman replied: 'Well, sir, he was engaged in a heated argument with a taxi driver.' 'But that doesn't prove anything.' 'But, sir, there was no taxi driver at all.' Or a man sees in the dark a rope on the road and takes it for a poisonous snake. Immediately all the symptoms of terror arise in him. As long as he mistakes the harmless rope for a deadly serpent the experience is 'real' enough, but further investigation dissipates the misery of fear. Or we see a mirage of water in the desert and hasten to drink only to discover that the water is there only as a reflection, a trick of light. We can all remember acting upon such illusions only to find our bonds tightened when we long for the liberating truth.

These are supersensuous experiences on the physical plane, but we know of such experiences on the spiritual plane as well. Patañjali speaks of supersensory experiences that deal with objects existing independently but on a finer plane. In the book *Raja Yoga* Swami Vivekananda describes various manifestations of Prāṇa or cosmic energy. At the physical level it stems from the sun and is manifested in our food and in the ordinary physical activities of our bodies

like eating, breathing and the beating of the heart. At the mental level Prāṇa is manifested in thinking, feeling and imagination and also in the psychic powers of hypnotism, clairvoyance and psychic phenomena. Through special forms of concentration the yogi can attain all sorts of extraordinary powers that seem to defy physical laws. By concentrating the mind on his own inner tendencies the yogi comes to know about his past life in earlier incarnations. By concentrating on another person's mind he can read his thoughts. He can even make his own body invisible at will. Once a young man, who had been instructed by the same illumined woman who initiated Sri Ramakrishna into yogic mysteries, acquired the power of becoming invisible and could move anywhere unnoticed. But his heart was not pure and he misused his power to satisfy his lower nature. As a result he soon fell from the spiritual heights which he had attained. Swami Brahmananda used to say: 'It is much easier to attain psychic powers than purity of heart.' It is only through purity of heart that we can realize the highest Truth. By practising concentration on the sun the yogi comes to have knowledge of the various spheres illumined by the sun. This is no ordinary concentration but a kind of inner absorption that results in extraordinary powers of intuition.

Most yogis set aside the use of such powers if they come to possess them, and by constant practice of meditation on spiritual themes, and by developing purity and control of vital energy, in due course attain the highest Truth of infinite consciousness. But they naturally have a general intuitional insight into the nature of physical and subtle planes of existence. Such a seer has, as it were, a large revolving telescope in contrast to the small fixed binoculars in a sight-seer's hand.

It is a great temptation to direct this intuitional faculty toward the mind and senses in order to acquire supersensuous powers, to

learn about remote events of the past, present or future, to hear, touch, see, supernatural objects of sense. Spiritual life is full of such pitfalls. Sri Ramakrishna always warned his disciples to beware of any such powers that might come to them as a result of concentration. 'Do not waste your energy', he told them. 'He who pays heed to occult powers becomes unable to live in God.'

Once the Master called the greatest of his young disciples, Narendra who later became Swami Vivekananda, and said: 'Through the practice of severe spiritual disciplines I have acquired supernatural powers ... I am thinking of transmitting them to you. ... If I impart these powers to you, you can use them whenever necessary. What do you say?'

'Will these powers help me to realize God?', asked Narendra.

'No, they will not help you in that but they will be very useful to you when, after realizing God, you are engaged in doing His work.'

'I do not want them. Let me first realize God; maybe then I shall know whether I should accept these powers or not. If I accept them now I may forget my spiritual ideal; in making use of them for some selfish purpose I may come to grief.'²

Up to this point I have been referring only to those forms of supersensuous experience, including all that is commonly relegated to the occult, which are obstacles on the path leading to liberation. Now the question arises: Should the supersensuous spiritual experiences of the mystics also be regarded as hindrances? The answer is an emphatic NO. Instead of being obstacles, the visions of true devotees are like milestones on the way to realization of Unity with Brahman.

Extremists of the Advaita school of Vedanta, bent on the realization of the non-dual Absolute, regard all spiritual visions as

unnecessary because these also belong to the phenomenal world. But the masters of the all-comprehensive system of Vedanta value those visions and experiences which render the spiritual aspirant purer and stronger, more and more established on the spiritual realm, and finally help him to attain the supreme and blissful experience of unity with the Supreme Spirit.

Śrī Kṛṣṇa acknowledges the validity of both the path of negation ('Not this, not this') of the Jñāni, and the positive way of Bhakta stressing devotion to the personal aspect of the immanent and transcendent Spirit. 'The task of those whose minds are set on the Unmanifest is more difficult; for the unmanifest Reality is hard to attain for those who have body consciousness.'³ The path of the devotee who worships a personal God is easier for the beginner and never to be condemned. They consecrate all their actions to the immanent Deity in His universal form. They worship Him with single-minded devotion, dedicating all their actions to Him until through divine grace they, too, in due course become absorbed in the Godhead, liberated from the cycle of birth and death.

The central theme of the path of devotion as taught by all the great theistic religions and reflected in their scriptures is the redeeming, uplifting power of divine grace. Śrī Kṛṣṇa says, 'To those who are ever united to me and worship me with love I give that Yoga of wisdom by which they attain Me.'⁴ The true devotee of God makes Him the central theme of his life, directing all his mind and heart and energies to Him alone. He constantly sings and prays and consecrates all his action to the Lord. As a result, all his desires for worldly enjoyment gradually leave him. And whatever is left in him is absorbed into one-pointed devotion.

3. The *Bhagavad-Gītā*, 12.5.

4. *ibid*, 10.10.

2. *ibid*, p. 99-100.

A disciple asked Sri Ramakrishna: 'When one sees God, does one see Him with these bodily eyes?' The Master replied: 'God cannot be seen with these physical eyes. In the course of spiritual discipline one gets a "love-body" endowed with "love-eyes", "love-ears" and so on. One sees God with those "love-eyes".'⁵ The yogi's supersensuous powers of hearing, touching, seeing, tasting and smelling become dangerous only if they are turned to subtle objects of sensuous enjoyment. But if instead they are directed to the plane of spiritual consciousness and love, they will lead him to higher spiritual experiences that altogether transform his whole life and consciousness and, by a kind of luminous radiation, all those who come into contact with him.

True mystics and wise men of all religions have never sought supernatural powers. The pure joy of the constant presence of God is all they ask for. All the great mystics have declared that this perception of divine consciousness cannot be attained through the senses or the human mind, nor can it be expressed in speech. They speak of a higher power of intuition which can be developed only after purity of mind is achieved. This is a new instrument of knowledge, to be forged through the intense, constant and single-minded practice of spiritual disciplines, and absolute purity of heart. This was what Christ meant when he said: 'Blessed are the Pure in Heart for they shall see God.' This is release from bondage. 'Bondage can fall off only through the mercy of God ... and purity is the condition of His mercy. God reveals Himself to the pure heart, even in this life.'

The most important question for us is: how can this purity be attained? We recognize the necessity of pure food for the body, free from impure and harmful ingredients, containing the proper vitamins and nourish-

ment. We are beginning to recognize also the necessity of nourishing the emotions of a growing child with thoughts of harmony and faith rather than with thoughts of fear, conflict, insecurity. In the same way we can provide food for the spirit through the reading of scriptures, practice of yoga disciplines, repetition of the divine name, devotion and service. Spiritual life is a steady process of purification, and we can never over-emphasize the need for it in bringing about illumination. Followers of Orphic Mysteries, Pythagoreans, Platonists, Buddhists, Sufis and Christian mystics are in accord with the teachers of the Upaniṣads when they declare, 'He who has not turned away from wickedness and sense pleasure, who is not tranquil and recollected can never attain the Self merely through knowledge.'⁶

There is no easy path, no clinging to a grace of God that involves merely effortless ceremonies, which can lead us to true spiritual illumination. Unless there is a hunger for God deep within our own souls, a hunger constantly renewed as our faith is renewed by love, we cannot make spiritual progress. We must use our God-given intelligence and pay the cost, and we must never expect to get true realization before we have striven to our utmost capacity.

We should not try to avoid intense and continuous struggle and effort in the name of worldly duty which, as Swami Vivekananda has pointed out, often becomes a form of compulsive neurosis. For very often duty is only another name for self-interest, or the sort of vanity that makes us very busy over our neighbour's life when we should be attending to our own. For the serene mind in harmony with the universe there is a timeliness in action which leads to better service in the end, to a truer conception of where duty lies, and to spiritual progress for oneself and others. We must have that hunger for the Truth which will make

⁵. *The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1974) p. 42,

⁶. *Katha-Upaniṣad*, 2.24.

us impatient with half-truths or downright falseness of much worldly activity in the name of duty. Restless, aimless activity driven by worldly desires are a great obstacle in spiritual life.

Faithful practice of meditation helps us to conserve our energies and discover where the path lies. We must learn to go ever deeper into consciousness until the worldly ego is controlled and its energies channelled. Spiritual practice has both negative and positive aspects. It means breaking harmful habits antagonistic to spiritual life, and also forming good habits which train body, senses and mind in the direction of spiritual illumination. The Sufi mystic Bayazid, who lived about A.D. 800, said of spiritual practice :

For twelve years I was the blacksmith of my soul. I put it in the furnace of austerity and heated it red hot in the fire of combat ; I laid it on the anvil of self-examination and smote it with the hammer of reproach until I made of my soul a mirror. For five years I was forever polishing that mirror of myself with divers acts of worship and discipline in purity. Then for one year I gazed in contemplation.

Here in symbolic language is described the spiritual struggle. We must learn how to keep clear the mirror of Self, constantly polishing it and keeping it free from the mist of rationalization and the stains of selfish ego.

In some form or other, all spiritual teachers speak of four stages on the spiritual path : purification, meditation, illumination, union with God. We must learn at what stage we are, and constantly struggle to move forward. Do the best you can, conscious always of the cosmic energy at work through you. It is necessary to keep alert against all inducement to sleep during periods of meditation, following the Hindu practice of yoga without undue asceticism. Hunger and sleeplessness are distracting to the mind. The goal requires moderation, self-control and physical and emotional balance. This is what Yoga teaches us.

Hindu teachers often refer to the two types of spiritual attitude illustrated by the kitten which is carried by its mother and the baby monkey which clings to its mother. Similarly, there are aspirants who depend solely upon the grace of God to lift them to a higher plane. The other type of aspirant puts forth his own efforts to transform his consciousness and realize God. A blending of both attitudes is needed. We must struggle constantly to perfect our divine eye, and at the same time learn to be receptive to the will of God as it becomes known to us, first through our teacher and then with the help of one's own purified mind. At this point we must consider the need for a balance of the active life and the life of contemplation. Here the Gita is a valuable guide, supplemented by the works of Swami Vivekananda.

The various Yogas are adapted to different temperaments and also to the needs of the different faculties of the same mind. Vedanta lays great stress on the path of Karma Yoga, teaching us how to perform every act of work in the world in a spirit of worship, free from attachment but with faithfulness and enthusiasm for what we are called upon to do. We offer the fruits of work to the Divine Spirit, regarding our activities as a channel through which flows the energy of God in all human life. If we follow the path of Bhakti Yoga we keep uppermost the thought of serving God in man, doing good to others without any hope of return, overcoming self-interest in the service of love. For many, love of the Personal Absolute is impossible except in terms of a divine Incarnation and love of our fellowmen for His sake. For those whose outlook is primarily intellectual, there is the Yoga of knowledge, the Jñāna Yoga, that aims at the realization of the impersonal Absolute beyond all relative phenomena. Then there is the path of Rāja Yoga which teaches purity, self-control and concentration by the exercise of will power.

The highest ideal of God-realization is to

become harmoniously balanced, using all four types of yoga giving more or less emphasis to each according to one's temperament and capacity for active or contemplative living. These are not watertight compartments; they flow into one another, and are interdependent as the various parts of the body are interdependent, each contributing to a balanced whole. To live effectively we need both theoretical and practical knowledge and activity. All the various disciplines are designed to establish harmony in the human personality. Thinking, feeling and willing, each has its part to play, but there must be a motivating force behind all.

The Supreme Spirit is at last revealed not by knowledge or discipline alone but by direct experience which is identical in all illumined souls who have been able to describe the revelation. This intuitive faculty leading to the experience of God lies dormant in everyone of us, waiting for that soul hunger which alone can overcome the inertia of the body and mind. A little girl once said to her mother on being put to bed: 'Wake me up, Mummy, if I feel hungry in the night.' The mother told her, 'Don't worry, my child. The hunger itself will

wake you up.' If we have God hunger, it will awaken us and impel us to practise the disciplines, and will ultimately set us free from the bondage of life and death.

Let us live the spiritual life with whole-souled devotion, never allowing our devotion to become sentimental or our knowledge dry. Let us guard ourselves against wasting our energies in useless activity and idle curiosity about psychic phenomena. Let us never yield to vanity, the form of impatience that leads us to think too soon that we are making progress; let us not attempt to heal others before we have quite healed ourselves. The object of all spiritual discipline is to keep alert that intuitive faculty which enables us to know our real nature and to fearlessly hold to what is real, no matter what the ways of the world are. When inner freedom through spiritual realization is attained, renunciation ceases to be painful. As the realm of the superconscious becomes familiar to us, we no longer seek to satisfy desires that are not in line with our spiritual evolution. The practice of the presence of God brings us greater joy and peace than anything the world can offer, as we learn to see the Supreme Spirit shining in all living beings.

MAN MAGNIFIED

SWAMI SHRADDHANANDA

The history of mankind records numerous examples of magnified personalities—men who achieved great power, great command, and influence on others. That power sometimes had gone in the direction of disasters and evil. At other times, it had brought immeasurable happiness, peace, and strength to mankind. In our recent history we can take the case of Hitler. He was not an ordinary person, but quite

above the normal. He had developed such great power and influence that he made millions of people bow down to him. To many, this magnified personality seemed almost like a god. However, his patriotism unfortunately took a vicious direction. His power only brought untold sufferings not merely to the people of his own country, but also to those of many other countries. If that power had been directed to amity

and peace, history would have recorded a different story.

In the history of India there have been many examples of such magnified personalities who were forces of terrible evil. A typical example is *Rāvaṇa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. He was born in a very good family, but there was a strong evil tendency in his psyche. He acquired great power by performing austerities. Even though he could exercise tremendous self-control and was well versed in the scriptures, his power took a different direction—the path of greed, lust, and aggression. *Rāvaṇa* became a menace to the three worlds. The *Rāmāyaṇa* says that not merely human beings were afraid of him, but even the gods in heaven began to tremble. Eventually Lord Viṣṇu had to be born as *Rāma* to subdue this evil power *Rāvaṇa*. In the *Mahābhārata*, we have accounts of a number of tyrants, *Kaṁsa*, *Jarāsandha*, and *Śiśupāla*, who brought misery and oppression to society. So again Viṣṇu was born as *Kṛṣṇa* and destroyed them. These events happened, of course, in ancient times, but even in the later recorded history of India, we find examples of great magnified personalities who followed the path of evil—*Tamerlane* (Timur), *Chengiz Khan*, etc. They massacred thousands of people, devastated whole nations. In the judgement of history, the magnification of these tyrants was false.

On the contrary, there is the true magnification which takes the direction of human well-being. Man can grow in his moral and spiritual strength to such an extent that he becomes a tower of love and inspiration to humanity. *Jesus Christ*, *Buddha*, *Kṛṣṇa*, *Ashoka*, *Mahatma Gandhi*, *Abraham Lincoln*—these are truly magnified personalities. They belong to the whole world. Through the ages, mankind has looked upon these sublime characters with respect and have cherished their lives and achievements.

There is an inherent tendency, desire, in man to expand. This tendency for expansion is with us when we take form in the mother's womb as a tiny cell. We cannot stop at our limits. We want to grow and grow. Through days, weeks, and months, we grew in the darkness of the mother's womb. When we emerged into the world as a tiny baby—did we stop? No, because the inner voice of man says, 'I will grow, I will expand.' That is the inner voice of man. According to the *Upaniṣads*, it comes from God and represents the primordial divine Will to create, to multiply, to expand. In the beginning there was only a nondual Reality, God alone without a second. In unity there is no creation, neither expansion nor contraction. There is only pure existence, homogeneous and immutable. *Pūrṇam*, Fullness or Perfection, is its other name. In perfection there cannot be any desire or movement. When you are imperfect you want to fulfil, attain what you lack and you move about. It is because of our ignorance that we see this manifold world and seek an explanation of its creation. The *Upaniṣads* try to give a spiritual explanation. We find in the *Chāndogya-Upaniṣad* as well as in many other *Upaniṣads* that in the beginning there was only *Sat*, absolute Being, God. There was no second; only God was.¹ All the pieces of existence came from God. All aspects of existence—the existence of space, time, life, mind, matter, and so on—were involved in that infinite Existence, God, who is described as *Sat*. Then God said, 'I will be many. I will expand and spread out.'²

Man inherits this voice from God. According to the *Upaniṣads*, *Sat* projected

1. सदेव सोम्येदमग्र आसीदेकमेवाद्वितीयम् ।

Chāndogya-Upaniṣad 6.2.1.

2. तदैक्षत बहुस्यां प्रजायेयेति ।

ibid 6.2.3.

space (*ākāśa*) and then the other elements, and out of these basic materials created the entire cosmos. Another very important thing we find in this account of creation is that God was never alienated from His creation. After creating the many He entered into every fragment of the many.³ Space was projected, but *Sat* was inside space. And this is true for all created objects. Without God space cannot exist neither can time nor matter, life, mind, exist without God. Everything that is projected is intimately associated with God, so much so that if anyone wants to discover Him at any time it will be possible to discover Him anywhere. In the Upaniṣads we read that 'the Supreme Self has penetrated into all these bodies up to the tips of nails, just as a razor lies in its case, or as fire lies in its source.'⁴

The individual Self, the Atman, the soul of man, is a part of the Paramātmān, the Supreme Self. So man inherits that primordial Will of God to expand, develop, stretch forth. All the time man is singing within himself, 'I will expand, I cannot remain little. I want to expand, if possible in every direction.' But man is standing at a level of evolution where he has to choose the direction of his expansion. He cannot depend only on nature. We cannot depend on nature for the magnification and maintenance of the physical body. The body grows automatically with food, air, and water. The superior magnification of man, however, depends upon our honest will, and ardent endeavour. This effort if misdirected may make us a Hitler, or any

other maniac. The desire for expansion should follow in the footsteps of great men, moral heroes. They may not be religious people, in the limited sense; but they are men of truthfulness, honesty, compassion, dutifulness, unselfishness. We admire these great heroes. They are truly magnified personalities. By following in their footsteps and by leading a virtuous life of social service, man can rise above his normal limited personality which is satisfied with bodily comforts, intellectual attainments, and earthly possessions.

But that is not the limit of man's expansion. His self has still higher dimensions. And so he has the potentiality to expand on other more sublime levels. On the spiritual level man can become a god—pure, compassionate, holy. We adore all those who have attained this spiritual magnification—the sages, saints, and prophets. This spiritual magnification is what makes a man truly great. It is what makes human life divine and sacred.

Our scriptures say that man is not really small. That voice of God, 'I will expand', is literally true for man. There is a limit to physical or intellectual expansion; but there is no such limit in the range of moral excellence or spiritual perfection. When we come to spiritual life we find that there is absolutely no limit to expansion, because the spirit is divine and is not limited by time or space, or even by the laws of nature. This is real magnification. When man sets out to seek God, the Spirit, he finds that even this vast universe cannot bind him. He finds that there is in him a power, a faculty, by which he can rise above everything.

When we are in time and space we cannot rise above them. Expansion in time has to stop one day. Time will say, 'Now it is your ninetieth year. You cannot expand anymore. You cannot hope to live anymore. Look at yourself. All your

³. तत्सृष्ट्वा तदेवानुप्राविशत् ।

Taittirīya-Upaniṣad 2.6.1.

⁴. आ नखाग्रेभ्यः यथा क्षुरः क्षुरधानेऽवहितः स्यात्, विश्वम्भरो वा विश्वम्भरकुलाये ।

Bṛhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad 1.4.7. Also *Kausītaki-Upaniṣad* 4.20.

hairs are gray. All your muscles are slack. You cannot digest anything. So stop your expansion. You are under my control. I am all-destroying time.' Neither can man expand in space at his will. He can travel all over the world, and in imagination and poetical fancy he can of course fly like a bird. Man's expansion in the knowledge of technology has taken him to the moon, and his instruments have gone to other distant planets; but that does not mean that he has conquered space without limit. As long as man is in time-space, and had identified himself with his body and mind, he is limited. But when he comes to spiritual life, when he finds that his true nature is essentially the spirit, his expansion beyond time and space really begins. This he learns through his own experience. Through his prayers and meditation he goes deeper and deeper into his spiritual reality. He feels that even in this limited body of flesh, blood, and bone, he is the spirit—the pure consciousness within. This consciousness is not in time and space. It is not born; it does not change; it does not die. The more he goes inward the more he discovers this truth about himself. Then he feels, as one of the Upaniṣadic seers describes and says with joy, 'I am in the sun, I am in the moon, I am in the clouds.' You can divide matter, you can divide time, but you cannot divide spirit. The spirit which is below here is in continuous existence with the spirit above. The basic reality of life is absolute Existence, Consciousness, and Bliss, *sat-cit-ānanda*. This Absolute is God. As Sat—He is immortal existence, as Cit—He is pure consciousness, and as Ānanda—He is perfect joy. Every man's soul is grounded in this divine Reality. When he gets glimpses of this true nature of his, his soul begins to identify itself more and more with the absolute Reality, and the more it does so the more it expands.

This has been described in the Upaniṣads through short sentences like

aham brahmāsmi, 'I am Brahman', and *tattvam-asi*, 'Thou art That'. Etymologically the word 'Brahman' means 'the great'. God is really the greatest, for He includes everything and pervades everything. And God, Brahman, is our Supreme Self. It is possible therefore for man to expand spiritually, till he becomes one with Brahman. When one identifies oneself with one's body one is a little man subject to death. Though this man may function in a little body, inside him there is the vastness of the spirit. When one identifies oneself with the spirit there is no more any fear of death, no more pettiness, selfishness, hate, greed, and other passions which keep man limited and little. His self expands and consumes all pettiness, limitations. There now remains only the spiritual reality shining in him. That shining reality which cannot really be described in words, the Upaniṣads call *pūrṇam*—Fullness, Perfection. When this happens, man comes to his ultimate magnification. The little man has become the Infinite. Of course, he continues to function even in this little body, continues to eat, run, think, talk, and live in a house; but he lives not *as* the body but *through* the body. His soul is one with the Infinite. His heart is filled with this knowledge of Truth; he knows that he is not little anymore. Through Self-knowledge he has gone beyond the limitations of all desires, imperfections and all fear. Such is the vast possibility of man's expansion.

Man's progress on the level of body, on the level of mind, and on the level of emotions, are necessary steps; but he must go forward. In the Old Testament the voice of God says, 'Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.'⁵ At a certain stage in his life a man may have committed many mistakes and people may call him a criminal, a sinner. But that

⁵. *Isaiah* 1:8.

need not be the whole story of man. That same criminal or sinner may become transformed into a saint. Says the Lord in the Gita, 'Nothing indeed in this world purifies like the knowledge of Brahman. He who is perfected by yoga finds it in time within himself by himself.'⁶ Blessed is that man who believes this, and works for this!

We may believe in something, but we are sometimes lazy and afraid. In spiritual life we have to call up great energy and build up a strong will. Wishing for something, and attaining that something, are different. In our spiritual life we have to be very careful and alert. We are alert regarding so many worldly things, but when we come to spiritual life we are not sufficiently mindful to make spirituality real in our life. Great teachers, saints, and sages of all times tell us that transcendence, expansion, is possible for everyone. It is the universal heritage of man. Man, the imperfect, the blemished, the confused, may

rise slowly to that level where he finds his true nature. In that knowledge there is no longer any doubt, confusion or fear. Such is the hope that spiritual life provides.

Lord Jesus Christ said that even if one's faith is as little as a grain of mustard seed, it can move a mountain. The same is true of love. Normally all of our love goes to this or that thing or person. Not much seems to be left for God. But we should not be discouraged. We should start with what little faith and love we have. Such is the power of love that the more we love, the more it grows. Faith and love build up a powerful will. So we need not be afraid that we do not have adequate faith, love, and will-power for the attainment of spiritual fulfilment. That is a wrong attitude. We can start our spiritual life at any point. Even a little faith, a little love is enough. If our aspiration is genuine, we shall expand in spiritual understanding and eventually find that, even though outwardly we are limited by the body and mind, in the depth of our personality there abides the great Truth—our true Self—the God in us—man truly magnified.

⁶. न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।

तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्धः कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥

Bhagavad-Gītā 4.38.

MYTH: ITS POWER AND GLORY

(A Study of Jung's Contribution)

SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

Myth is that reality before which man stands and wonders, unable to grasp it by the intellect. (Plato)

The man of culture today surrounds the term 'myth' with a halo; he will not invest the same on terms like 'fable' or 'legend'. Thanks to the discoveries of psychoanalysis, he recognizes in myth a deeper reality than *that of history. History is captive in the*

hands of time. Again, what about the ancient ages of which there is no recorded history? The deeper layers of the psyche where unconscious perfections dwell participate in the collective unconscious common to all mankind. What is collective is naturally universal. Like a spiral whose beginning and end are unseen and lost in *the eternal, the collective unconscious*

stretches far into the past and into the future defying all time and history. Man stands wondering at his own 'depths', the depths of his unconscious which reveal two of its redeeming faces: universality and eternity.

The master-minds of the East and the West are unanimous in affirming that the modern man's anguish stems from the loss of contact with this eternal universal fount in himself. They agree to baptize this fount 'Myth'. This comes to saying that our unconscious has a mythical character.

To the question whether the play of Vṛndāvana of Śrī Kṛṣṇa actually took place or not, Swami Saradananda, the divinely gifted and inspired author of the book *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master*, answers as follows:

How can you either produce sure evidence that what we say from the Puranas did not take place? Until we get the proof that your history has undoubtedly opened the door to that very ancient age, we shall say that your doubt itself is unfounded. Moreover, even if you should ever produce such proof, no harm will touch our faith. It will not affect at all the eternal play in the eternal Vrindavan of the divine Lord.¹

If Swami Saradananda were living in our days, he would have replaced the word 'eternal' with the term 'mythical'.

The a-historical Kṛṣṇa transcends all history. So too does Christ: 'I am the alpha and the omega'.² They have no birth and no death. They are universal and hence are easily acceptable to those who are not born Hindus or Christians.

Though a-historical, they enter history. The myth of the churning of the ocean has it that Śiva drank the deadly poison to save the world from destruction. The Śiva-myth narrates that though an eternal monk, he married Pārvatī to provide a commanding

general for the army of the Devas. Śrī Kṛṣṇa's gift of love and protection to the Gopis and to all those who surrounded him was unconditional. The gods thus become archetypes³ of Love and Redemption. When an archetype enters the collective unconscious of a people, history begins. Even as the mythical gods become archetypes and enter man's unconscious, man moves up. At this stage man needs a model to inspire him, a model that helps him to 'form' himself and to accomplish himself spiritually. He conceives the mythical god as a personal God, worthy of his adoration, also as the centre of a system. The passage from myth to archetype and then on to history and to a religious system is a natural result of the power of the mythical gods entering man's unconscious. The outcome of their entry is that man begins to thirst for participation in God's programme of Love. He integrates with the 'evidence' of the intemporal love of the gods that chooses to be temporal in history. What is temporality in philosophy is the moving point of love-grace in mythology, the love which is intemporal but which accepts to become temporal to make man conscious of his intemporality or eternity.

Myth: three springs of spiritual inspiration

The fabulous accounts of the efforts of divine Incarnations to save man from critical situations inflame our creative imagination (*bhāvanā*). If Bhakti is the mother and Bhakta the child, then Bhāvanā is the mother's lap into which the mother takes the child and fondles it.⁴ Creative imagination makes twin brothers of mystical experience and aesthetic experience, aesthetic joy

3. Archetypes are primordial idea-forms bequeathed to man by divine intelligence. We shall speak of them in detail later on in this essay.

4. भवद् भावना

पर्यङ्के विनिवेश्य भक्तिजननी भक्तार्भकं रक्षति

Śivānandalahari, verse 62.

1. *Sri Ramakrishna, The Great Master* (Madras: Sri Ramakrishna Math, 1956) p. 224.

2. *Revelation*, 1.8.

being considered the 'brother' of the spiritual joy of Brahman, *brahmānanda sahodara*. Wonderment (*āścarya*) supplied by the myths adds a golden lustre to creative imagination. Wonder also effaces egoism, purifies the mind, and brings religious tears of devotion in our eyes. What else could be our reaction to the Ajāmila myth or Mārkaṇḍeya myth? Creative imagination and wonderment give us a rich harvest of religious heroes as archetypes who come to live in our deeper layers and with the help of the *samskāric* potential make our daily spiritual life worth living.

Archetypes

Here East joins West. Dr. Jung speaks of the vital role of archetypes in the transformation of consciousness. They live in our unconscious to activate and liberate the unconscious energies. The archetypes fired by creative imagination switch off consciousness. This switching off, to a large extent gives the unconscious contents a chance to develop, freed as they are from the censor of the conscious.

What are the archetypes? In one of his posthumous works, available only in French and German, Jung says:

One meets with the expression archetype already in the writings of Philo of Alexandria (1st century B.C.) who refers to the image of God in man. The creator of the world did not make the things from himself but transformed them from archetypes not belonging to his person. In St. Augustine one does not find the term as such, but the idea.⁵

Archetypes are collective representations and designate the psychical contents which have not undergone a conscious or rational elaboration. To be more precise, a distinction should be made between archetypes and archetypal representations. A pure archetype is a hypothetical model, not yet manifest, like a 'pattern of behaviour' of the biologists. It is a psychical 'situation'.⁶

Jung illustrates the nature of archetypes by giving examples:

The sun and the moon, light and darkness, water (as symbol of movement and stillness), Mother, Father, Trinity, Sacrifice as the act of giving, so vital for transformation etc. etc. What is important is to remember that sunrise and sunset, the seasons like summer and winter are not simply outside phenomena, but situations in the soul, psychical events representing in its metamorphosis the destiny of the celestial orbs or of a hero whose home is nowhere else than the soul of man. The external phenomena are 'mythisized' by us when lived intensely with the ups and downs of the soul.⁷

Archetype and myth-experience

As Jung has pointed out, archetypes are to be distinguished from instincts which are psycho-physical drives. Archetypes are children of the Spirit, whereas instincts are children of matter. They are face to face in the unconscious. An exchange between them is in the very nature of life, as also the results thereof. Archetypes supply the energy-forms for dreams, and dreams furnish material to the psychoanalyst. The repressed desires (instincts) sink into the unconscious where there is a possibility of dialogue between them and the archetypes of Space and Light. But if the person is 'blocked' inside, such a face-to-face is impossible. A conflict-situation is born and it manifests on the conscious level as neurosis.

Happily, archetypes can also supply material for dreams of patients on the road to recovery. Jung in his book, *Roots of Consciousness* gives some twenty cases of patients dreaming of the Tree of Life and Knowledge. They designed what they had seen in dream and sent the designs to him. No one design was similar to the other, which means the springs of inspiration in each case were personal. The tree is an

5. *Roots of Consciousness*, p. 14.

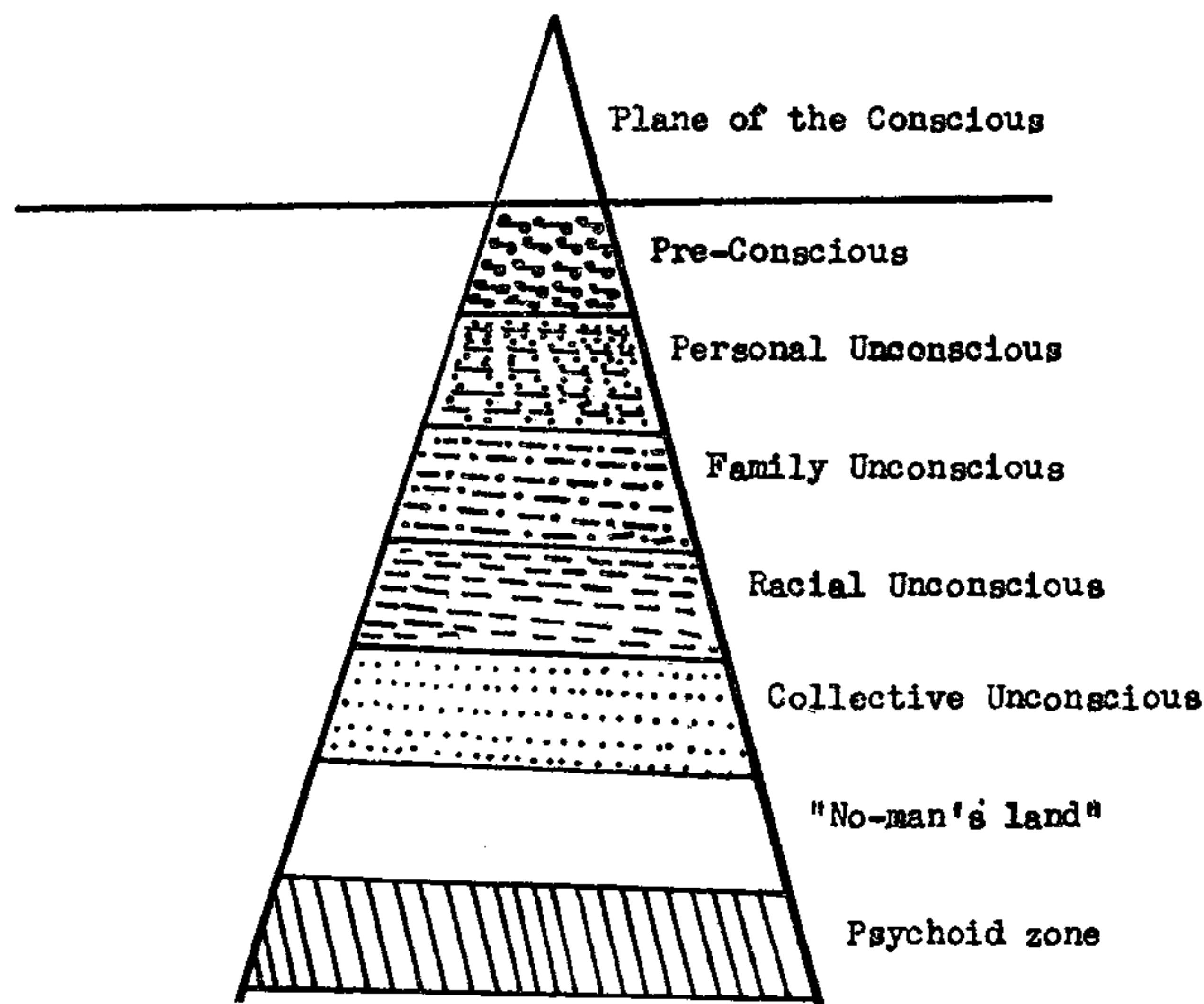
6. *ibid*, p. 16.

7. *ibid*, p. 16-17.

archetype of growth.⁸ For a patient suffering from inner stagnation and blockage, dreaming of a Tree is tending to greater inner space and dynamism. The different layers of the unconscious initiate and propel this dynamism. And more specially the psychoid, which is the psychotic capital at the base of the psyche.⁹ There is an all-out collaboration of the various levels of the unconscious to 'live' the Tree of Life and Knowledge. The Tree becomes a myth, a totality-experience worthy to be lived. Of course in the cases quoted above the experience was in dream. Dream-experience is true so long as it is lived. The psychoanalyst can, by suggestions, make the patient live a myth in the waking state and help the patient to return to normalcy. Similarly, but in a higher sense, a spiritual master can make a

disciple 'live' the myth of Śrī Kṛṣṇa or of Śiva by galvanizing his unconscious and psychoid.

At this stage it is imperative that we know the scheme of the psyche according to Jung. Jung conceives our personality as an iceberg, a small part of it only being visible, the conscious. The rest remains hidden. It is called the unconscious with various layers, the personal unconscious, the family unconscious, the racial unconscious and the collective unconscious. And at the base lies the psychoid. Jung says: The psychoid is a global concept covering the principal sub-cortical phenomena. It includes all the corporal functions of the central nervous system orientated towards the goal, namely, a primordial memory which wants the conservation of life.¹⁰



A DIAGRAMATIC REPRESENTATION OF HUMAN PSYCHE

8. We are tempted to compare the Tree with the Asvattha of the *Gītā*, 15.1-3.

9. By 'psychoid' Jung refers to the animating and directing principle at the base of our personality. We may regard it as corresponding to our total *samskāra* capital. See the author's article 'Our Three-floor Mansion' in *Prabuddha Bharata* March, 1982, p. 104-5.

All that Jung says about the psychoid makes us conclude that the psychoid is our *samskāric* capital. The *samskāras*, the residual impressions of past experiences, the psychotic potential in us, has a personal character and is the animating and direct-

10. *Roots of Consciousness*, p. 489.

ing principle. Even divine Grace which can bring about total changes in us has to take into account the maturation of *saṁskāras*.

As we said earlier, *an all-out cooperation of the various zones of the unconscious under the initiative of the psychoid is necessary to bring about a myth-experience*. There is a constant exchange between the conscious and the unconscious layers. It is the psychoid that directs this exchange. The unconscious cannot submit to the influence of the psychoid unless the unconscious has got something spiritual. Jung is open to accept the Superconscious in its Indian connotation: 'My notion of the unconscious leaves entirely open the question of the Superconscious or the subconscious, including the one or the other which are aspects of psychism.'¹¹

Rāsa-līlā : a complete myth situation

Students of the *Bhāgavata Purāṇa* easily recapitulate the *rāsa-līlā* (erotic dance) of Bhagavān Śrī Kṛṣṇa as set forth in its 10th skandha, 32nd chapter and in the hymn known as the 'Gopikāgītā' a little earlier. Describing the reappearance of the Lord after the short disappearance, which was a test to the Gopis, the author of the epic says :

Then to the Gopis Kṛṣṇa reappeared suddenly with a smiling face. He was dressed in yellow and wore a garland. The beauty of his form would have put to shame even Cupid (*sākṣāt manmathamanmathah*).

One of the commentators makes out that to meditate on this heavenly beautiful form of Kṛṣṇa is to conquer the machinations of Cupid in our hearts. The upshot of the whole *rāsa-līlā* is the transforming power of Kṛṣṇa's love. Though the Gopis at the start love Kṛṣṇa physically, Kṛṣṇa's love made them transcend the physical plane. He

restored to the Gopis the totality of Being. The Kṛṣṇa myth especially as it is present in the *rāsa-līlā* comes to us as an effective means to restore totality to the human individual. This tallies very well with a remarkable definition of myth by Jung : Myth helps man to realize his totality, and this, thanks to the mythical character of the unconscious.

To 'live' a myth situation is a perfect meditation. In meditation we install our *iṣṭa-devatā* (Chosen Deity) on the conscious plane. Our fervour of Bhakti galvanizes the layers of the unconscious where dwell the archetypes of the power and glory of our *iṣṭam*. Under the leadership of the psychoid (the *saṁskāric* capital) waves of religious emotion well up from the depths on to the conscious plane. We are overwhelmed.

Myth has become mute in the West

Jung says in his autobiography :

Our myth has become mute and gives no answers. The fault lies not in it as it is set down in the Scriptures, but solely in us, who have not developed it further, who, rather, have suppressed any such attempts. The original version of the myth offers ample points of departure and possibilities of development. For example, the words are put into Christ's mouth: 'Be ye therefore wise as serpents and harmless as doves.' For what purpose do men need the cunning of serpents? And what is the link between this cunning and the innocence of the dove? 'Except ye become as little children'.¹²

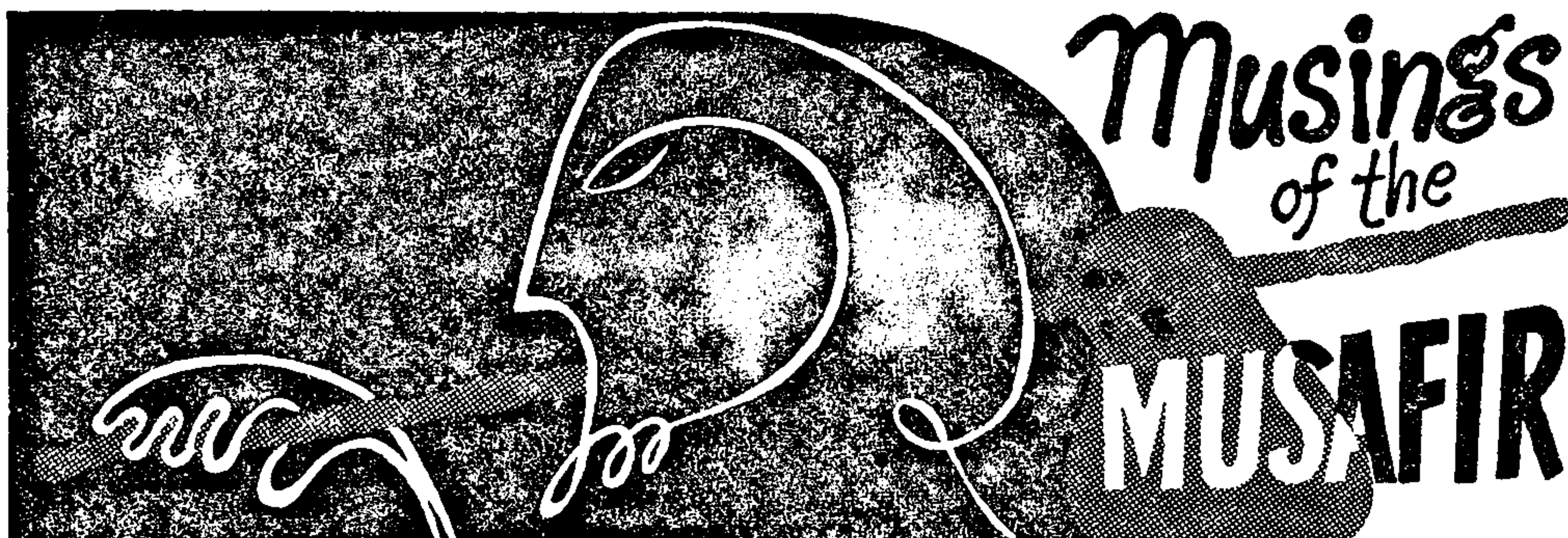
Return to primordial innocence is a spiritual rebirth so vital to our everyday life. And a bit earlier :

The Christian nations have come to a sorry pass; their Christianity slumbers and has

(Continued on page 131)

¹¹. *ibid*, p. 491.

¹². Carl G. Jung, *Memories, Dreams and Reflections* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963) p. 306.



CAUGHT FOR WORSHIP IN THE RIGHT PLACE

Date : 12 January 1983, 10.00 a.m.

Place: A park near the place where the Ramakrishna Ashrama Marg, the Panchsain Road and the Chitragupta Road cross one another in New Delhi.

Some years ago a statue of Swami Vivekananda was set up in the above park by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi. The unveiling ceremony was being postponed for some unknown reasons. The statue was kept wrapped up for a considerable time. Then, one night came a cyclonic storm. Next morning the statue was found standing unveiled. This was indeed a perfect unveiling of the statue of the 'cyclonic monk'!

This cold morning the Corporation of Delhi was celebrating Swamiji's birth anniversary, as they had been doing through the years on January 12th every year. Among the thousands of celebrations of Swamiji's birth anniversary, I thought this one was indeed unique and most appropriate. In the course of his talk the Chief Guest at the function, the Secretary of the local Ramakrishna Mission, said:

At the invitation of the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Delhi I come here every year to join you all in this celebration. And every time this one thought comes to my mind: among Swamiji's birth anniversaries

celebrated in uncounted places on this planet, this roadside anniversary of the Delhi Municipal Corporation is, indeed, a very special one. I shall go to the extent of saying that it would be natural for Swamiji to be pleased to be present here in spirit and participate in this function. If you ask me, 'Why do you think so?', I have a simple answer. Obviously this triangular park near the conjunction of three traffic-loaded roads, full of the bustle of fast moving vehicles and people at a peak hour, would appear to be not a very suitable place for this celebration. This is not the premises of a Math or a temple. Nor do we have here a well-furnished lecture hall. This is also not an exclusive assemblage of a chosen few. Here we find a flowing river of human beings on the move, and on its banks an extraordinary meeting is being held.

Swamiji spent a good part of his short life on roads. No one knows how many nights he slept under road-side trees while eating food brought by sheer chance. He had no house. But there was none who was not his own. While staying as a wanderer on roads, Swamiji demonstrated to the people the way of the free, the way leading to the supreme goal of life. Thus he became the pathfinder for all.

Please look at the scene presented here before your eyes. In this unusual festival the venerable monks, our respected Commissioner of the Delhi Municipal Corporation and the distinguished citizens of Delhi are joined by our sweeper brethren and men from the armed forces, small children and women, learned people and unlettered ones. All have come here out of their love and enthusiasm with the one objective of paying homage to Swamiji.

Swamiji was simultaneously a patriot and a universalist. His patriotism was rooted in his universalism; and his universalism was rooted in his patriotism. This is why Swamiji has a message for each and all. Now, if we would resolve today to put into practice a few of his teachings, then, to be sure, our present and future would become luminous.

Before the Swami spoke, the Commissioner of Delhi Municipal Corporation had spoken with an unusual ring of sincerity in his voice and an articulate sense of the urgency of the need for following Swamiji's teachings for personal, social and national well-being.

On the sidewalk one Brahmacharin and several dedicated workers of the Ramakrishna Mission were selling Vedanta and Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature from a mobile book shop—quite a sprightly idea.

What impressed one standing on the sidewalk as an onlooker was the dynamics of the whole celebration going so well with the spirit of Parivrajaka Vivekananda, who was always on the move rousing people everywhere with the central message of the Upanishads, 'Arise, awake and stop not till the goal is reached.'

This celebration by the side of the road alive with waves of moving people, which highlighted the message of what abides forever amidst the evanescent happenings, was peculiarly appropriate for Delhi, the epicentre of all turmoil in India's national life and the highest seat of momentous decision-making. More particularly, it was so appropriate to the spirit of Vivekananda's teaching, 'Onward forever!'

Nothing fascinates me so much as following the footprints of this leonine wandering monk Vivekananda, whom the Spanish writer Dr. Felix Marti-Ibanez called the 'Militant Mystic'. Dr. Felix had deeply experienced the fascination of the Vivekananda phenomenon, perhaps next only to Romain Rolland, among Europeans. When he was once asked, 'What do you

consider to be the most valuable thing in your life', he replied:

Life itself. Health, and dreams and love.... If what is meant by 'things', however, is something concrete in a physical form, then I would have to say books. I was actually once put to the test of what I value most. It was in February 1939, when I had to leave Spain because of the fall of the Republic and all I could take with me was what I could carry. I chose to take one book. From the thousands of books in the library, which I had so lovingly built up with my father, I selected *The Life of Swami Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel* by Romain Rolland. That uniquely magnificent mystical book inspired me through the years to dedicate my life to the service of others.¹

Walking alone on the dusty roads, hills, planes, deserts and sea shores of India, Vivekananda was seeking something which India needed, and the world needed more. In those days when he had not yet 'burst upon society like a bombshell', to quote his own words, this 'Pilgrim of India', as Romain Rolland calls him, was wandering and wondering as to how he was to fulfil the mission and carry out the mandate given to him by his Master, Sri Ramakrishna. The mission, as pronounced by Sri Ramakrishna on the first day young Naren entered his Master's room in Dakshineswar, was that he was born 'to revive the miseries of mankind'. Five years later, the mandate was given by the Master in writing, 'Naren will teach'. The mission was to be fulfilled through the mandate and the mandate was to be worked out in the mission. Sri Ramakrishna set aflame Naren's oceanic heart with love for man, which was the other name of *bhakti*, devotion to God, with which he was born. He received from his Guru the *jīva-Śiva mantra*, and the spiritual power and vision to work out the implications of this *mantra*, in the affairs of mankind and the making of history. He was so taken through the

1. *The Mirror of Souls* (1971) p. 310.

ravages of suffering that wherever suffering was it automatically became his own, through the tincture of empathy. Though already vastly learned, in his wandering days Vivekananda read anew and in depths and heights the open book of life with the eyes of a knower of Brahman, who had shed ignorance and delusion, false fears and false expectations, and in whose heart welled forth limpid love for everyone.

Vivekananda discovered India in all her dimensions, in all her glory and all her wretchedness, and what is more, discovered the mission of India to be the mother-healer and teacher of mankind, call it a conquest, if you would. However, Vivekananda's is only that kind of conquest which defeats none, but awakens, enlivens and enlightens everyone. He taught as he had realized that India was not only sound at heart, but strong enough and wise enough to teach mankind. Religion was not only not at fault, but it was in the eternal vital principles of religion alone there is succour and salvation for all. The fault was we failed to practise the true religion in life.

It was at some point during his days of wanderings that Vivekananda found that essential religion and eternal India attained at-one-ment in the world-soul which was not different from his own. After that, wherever he went, he became the awakener, who called forth with such a life-renewing power that a prostrate nation awoke and stood up to dare and do.

What was the outcome? Only a partial harvest in a sphere of Swamiji's service was announced by Chakravarty Rajagopalachari on the eve of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary, and yet it sounds so beautifully great because every word of it is true. He wrote on 27 July 1962:

Swami Vivekananda saved Hinduism, saved India. But for him, we would have lost our

religion and would not have gained our freedom. We therefore owe everything to Swami Vivekananda. May his faith, his courage, and his wisdom ever inspire us so that we may keep safe the treasures we have received from him!

The Hinduism that Vivekananda 'saved' is essential religion as such, the quintessence of all faiths. The India that Vivekananda 'saved' is not so much of a geographical entity, as the attained state of spiritual excellence with infinite possibilities for all mankind.

Rajagopalachari's handsome tribute to Vivekananda did not, however, encompass his work in the Western hemisphere. Sri Aurobindo said with masterly insight:

The going forth of Vivekananda marked out by the Master (Sri Ramakrishna) as the heroic soul destined to take the world between his two hands and change it, was the first visible sign to the world that India was awake, not only to survive but to conquer.

Swami Vivekananda was a soul of puissance, if ever there was one, a very lion among men. We perceive his influence still working gigantically, we know not how, we know not well where, in something that is not yet formed, something leonine, grand, intuitive, upheaving, that has entered into the soul of India, and we may say, 'Behold! Vivekananda still lives in the soul of his Mother, and in the soul of her children.'²

The Delhi Municipal Corporation has honoured itself in honouring Vivekananda. However, I venture to think that the Government of India and the Indian nation need and should install Vivekananda's statue more centrally in Delhi, to evince its appreciation of Vivekananda's central role in creating the history of modern India.

The city of Bombay had the right instinct of honouring itself by installing Vivek-

2. *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* (Pondicherry: Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972) vol. 17, ch. 9, p. 332.

ananda's statue in front of the Gateway of India.

The people of Government of West Bengal honoured themselves by erecting a statue of Vivekananda in the city of his birth.

The city of Delhi will do well to honour itself by the installation of a magnificent statue of Parivrajaka Vivekananda in front of the India Gate. Such an installation will be a source of inspiration and enlightenment for all, generation after generation. The unique thing about the great Swami is that because he had 'nothing to do with nonsense of politics', to quote his own words, people of all political views find it possible to cherish love and regard for him.

Explaining the rationale of this phenomenon, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru said:

Rooted in the past and full of pride in India's heritage, Vivekananda was yet modern in his approach to life's problems and was a kind of bridge between the past of India and her present.... So what Swamiji has written and said is of interest, and must interest us, and is likely to influence us for a long time to come. He was no politician in the ordinary sense of the word and yet he was, I think, one of the great founders—if you like, you may use any other word—of the national modern movement of India, and a great number of people who took more or less an active part in that movement on a later date drew their inspiration from Swami Vivekananda. Directly or indirectly, he has powerfully influenced the India of today. And I think that our younger generation will take advantage of this fountain of wisdom, of

spirit and fire, that flows through Swami Vivekananda.

Parivrajaka Vivekananda standing on the present empty pedestal before the India Gate will be the silent thundering call to the nation: 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached'.

I am not unaware of the fact that there had been a proposal to fix a statue of Gandhiji before the India Gate. But now that the statue of Gandhiji's Dandi March, made by the celebrated sculptor Devi Pradsad Roy Chaudhury, has been fixed in a magnificent manner at Wellington Crescent, the place near the India Gate would appear to have been providentially preserved for the fixing of the Parivrajaka Vivekananda. If there were any way of contacting Gandhiji for his personal view in the matter, I am absolutely sure, Gandhiji would decline to endorse the people's or the Government's proposal for fixing another of his own statue in that place. I am not indulging in any kite-flying, for did not Gandhiji say during one of his visits to the Belur Math in 1923:

I have gone through Vivekananda's works very thoroughly, and after having gone through them the love that I had for my country became a thousandfold.

Now it is for the people of India, the Members of Parliament and the Government of India to consider whether or not these musings of the Musafir make any sense.



A NEW ALTAR FOR THE FLAME OF TIBETAN BUDDHISM*

SWAMI ATMARUPANANDA

I stepped down from the bus into a misty, overcast dawn, the September air still but chilly. As the bus disappeared up the mountain I realized that this was the wrong stop. This wasn't the main bus station for the Himalayan town of Dharamsala but a secondary stop. So together with my bags I began to follow the road up the mountain, through town.

Not knowing how far I had to go made it seem awfully long, but finally the bus station came into view at the top of the town. There I was glad to find many Tibetan faces—mostly faces of Tibetan monks and nuns. Seeing a Westerner in Tibetan monastic robes, I approached and asked, 'Is this where I catch the bus to the Tibetan settlement?'

'Yes, get the bus to Macleodganj,' he answered in a Dutch or German accent.'

'Do you know of a good place to stay?' I asked.

'Oh, no problem! There are lots of places, and lots of people already there. You'll have no trouble; it's a great place.'

Encouraged after a discouraging overnight busride of fifteen hours from Delhi and a long, tiring walk up the mountain, I purchased my ticket and soon was on my way to Macleodganj. The bus wound its way up and along the mountainside another ten kilometres before we reached our destination. We were let out in a cluster of tall deodar trees at the edge of the small village.

Having lived in the Himalayas for five years, I was used to beautiful scenery, but what I saw now was truly magnificent. Dharamsala, also called Lower Dharamsala, lay at the base of the first line of mountains that rise out of the plains of Himachal Pradesh. Macleodganj, or Upper Dharamsala, was high up on the side of the same

mountain at an elevation of 6,050 feet. There being no other mountain before Macleodganj, it overlooked the vast plains of North India far below. At first the next mountain rising still higher behind Macleodganj was hidden by clouds; but after a while the clouds broke revealing fresh-fallen snow on the bare stone towering above us. Far below, the green plains; high above, the white snow against the massive, sky-scraping stone; and around a Himalayan forest, now lush green from the recent monsoon.

Not knowing what to do or where to go, I began to walk around the town, which had basically two short, parallel streets and one perpendicular at the beginning of town. After walking down each of the streets two or three times, I felt oriented (though others watching must have thought me desperately lost, walking as I was down the same street several times with all my luggage in hand).

There were a number of Tibetan-run hotels, all of them cheap and simple, some cleaner than others. I put up at the Rainbow Hotel next to the bus-stop, where I got a double room on the roof for Rs. 15 a night, with a view of the town and surroundings from the terrace.

Once having secured a room, I made my way to the Dalai Lama's temple. The path led along a paved road that wound through forest, about a ten-minute walk from the village on a gradual downhill

* The photographs used for illustration were taken by Mr. Edwin Bernbaum of Berkeley, California, through whose courtesy they are reproduced here. The author owes a debt of gratitude also to Miss Ann Myren of Alameda, California, and to Mr. Simon Luna of the Dharmadhatu Meditation Center, Austin, Texas, for much patient help in locating the photographs.

slope. First to meet the eye at the end of the road was the Phendey Lekshed Ling monastery and monastic school, including a debating school. Above and just beyond the monastery was the temple, and beyond that was the Dalai Lama's estate.

Tibetan temples differ in several important respects from those of the Hindu. The basic differences arise from the fact that, in the Hindu tradition, worship is a private affair whereas in the Tibetan it is often led by a congregation of monks. The inner sanctum of a traditional Hindu temple is very small, allowing room only for the priest and maybe one or two assistants. Devotees file before the sanctum to have *darśan* or sanctifying sight of the deity, and then pass on. At most they may give the priest some flowers or incense or food to be offered on their behalf.

But, though Tibetan monastics and householders normally have their own small, private shrines, their public temples tend to be large and spacious, allowing a number of monks to gather for special ceremonies. The image is not protected in a cavelike sanctum but is at one end of the usually large hall. Furthermore, though Tibetans don't share a refined sense of personal purity with the Hindu, they do keep their temples immaculately clean and beautifully adorned in every detail.

The temple I now approached was a handsome building, spacious, beautifully painted, yet surely austere and simple by the standard of Tibet before the Chinese occupation. It was raised above the surroundings, and encircled by a wide platform for circumambulation. Along the outer walls on three sides were lines of large bronze prayer wheels which the devout caused to rotate by a push of the hand as they circumambulated the temple.

Inside, the main deity was Amitābha Buddha, his statue tall and imposing. Over to the left side when facing the main

image was a small, fenced-off chapel housing a statue of the eleven-headed, thousand-armed Avalokiteśvara, or Chenrezi as Tibetans know their tutelary deity. Chenrezi is the bodhisattva of compassion, who has vowed to assist all sentient beings to *nirvāṇa*, not entering final peace himself until all others have gone first. His eleven heads symbolize simultaneous perception of all suffering everywhere in the universe; and his thousand arms symbolize his innumerable simultaneous acts to free all beings from pain and delusion.

Tibet has often been castigated for making a farce of 'true' Buddhism. Tibetan Buddhism is thought to be a degenerate school of superstition in which practically every tenet taught by the Buddha has been perverted beyond recognition. Close study, however, reveals a surprising fact. For all its bizarre external appearance, Tibetan Buddhism is firmly grounded in the basic principles of Mahāyāna Buddhism. And Tibetan monks, far from being superstitious primitives, are often possessed of profound philosophical minds and deep psychological insight. Fortunately, there is a growing recognition among present-day scholars that Tibetan Buddhism is not a contradiction of the Buddha's teachings, but an evolution. Not the *only* possible line of evolution, certainly, but one of the many which came as Buddhism adapted itself to various races and cultures.

Among the supposed 'perverse superstitions' prevalent in Tibet is the belief in and worship of numerous gods and goddesses and various orders of supernatural beings.

It is well known that the Buddha did not teach the existence of a creator god who must be supplicated by the faithful for the sake of their salvation. He taught that the universe is not created by the hand of a god or gods but that it arises by a chain of causation which rests ultimately

on ignorance; and the way to enlightenment is destruction of ignorance, not the grace of a god. Then why the worship of, not one, but a whole pantheon of deities by Tibetans?

First of all, Tibetan deities are not creator gods or goddesses, eternally separate from their worshippers. Rather they are celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who personify mystical energies that lead one to enlightenment, energies which ultimately are not separate from their worshipper.

The ultimate Reality in Mahāyāna Buddhism is known as the Void. The Void and the world of form or relativity, however, are not two but one. Mind, when quiescent, is the Void; when disturbed, it creates/perceives the world of form. (In a similar vein Swami Vivekananda once said that 'the Many and the One are the same Reality, perceived by the same mind at different times and in different attitudes.'¹) Furthermore, the individual mind and cosmic Mind are not ultimately different.

The relationship of celestial Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to Reality is beautifully expressed in one of John Blofeld's books through the words of Mr. P'an, one of his Chinese Buddhist friends:

The Great Void and the realm of form are *not two*! There is no going from the one to the other, only a transmutation of your mode of perception. Mind is like a boundless ocean of light, or infinite space, from which streams forth Bodhi, a marvellous energy that produces in us an urge towards Enlightenment... From Bodhi emanate particularised streams of liberating energy—the energies of wisdom, compassion, of the pure activity needed to combine them, and so forth. These, in turn, subdivide and thus become more tangible to minds deluded by the false notion of self-existing egos and self-existing objects. In some marvellous way, these streams and substreams become embodied in forms like those which divinities are thought to have, the

primary streams as what we call celestial Buddhas, the secondary streams as what are called celestial Bodhisattvas.²

As an example, Amitābha Buddha, who is highly popular in the devotional schools of Buddhism, embodies the primary energy of compassion. Avalokiteśvara is a secondary emanation of the energy of compassion who, the scriptures declare, was born from a ray of light that issued from Amitābha's right eye. Tārā, the most popular and beloved of Tibetan deities, is a tertiary emanation who was born of a lotus in an ocean of tears shed by Avalokiteśvara in sorrow for the world. 'Secondary' and 'tertiary' are misleading terms, however, for each of these is sometimes raised to the highest level and praised as the source of all the Buddha's and Bodhisattvas:

Homage to Aryā Tārā, at whose lotus feet
The gods and non-gods make worship.
Homage to Tārā, mother of all Buddhas,
Who heralds freedom from limitation.³

It would be a mistake to think that these deities are mere contrived symbols used to educate those who can't grasp abstract truths. No, as with the gods and goddesses in the Hindu tradition, they are no more contrived than you or I or the world around us. Within the world of form they seem to have a life of their own and are as real as the world itself, perhaps more real, for they belong to a higher plane of truth: only in the Void do all such distinctions as higher and lower lose meaning. Therefore there is a genuine devotional element in Tibetan Buddhism.

Going back outside of the temple, I made a circumambulation and gave a push

2. John Blofeld, *Bodhisattva of Compassion* (Boulder: Shambhala, 1978), p. 22.

3. The First Dalai Lama, *Six Texts Related to the Tara Tantra*, trans. Glenn H. Mullin (New Delhi: Tibet House, 1980), p. 27.

1. *Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1977), vol. 8, p. 261.

to the prayer wheels, then sought a place on the wide platform circling the temple from which to view the enchanting scenery.

On leaving the temple I passed among the monastery buildings again. Phendey Lekshed Ling is a monastery of the Ge-lug sect, youngest of the four major sects of Tibetan Buddhism.

Buddhism was, perhaps, first established on a strong footing in Tibet by the great Indian Tāntrik mystic Padmasambhava in the late eighth century. 'Perhaps', because there is some doubt as to just how much he did to establish Buddhism in Tibet.⁴ In later centuries, however, his legend assumed great importance. There is no doubt that he was a powerful missionary of remarkable spiritual and psychic attainment. The oldest sect of Buddhism, the Nying-ma, descends directly from him. The abundant legend which grew around his name, however sought to demonstrate the antinomian nature of his character. That is, it often described him as drunken and unchaste in an exaggerated effort to demonstrate that the man of enlightenment is beyond all dualities, including good and evil, and acts in a realm of freedom from all social compulsion, though the legend also emphasized that even his so-called immoral actions sprang from wisdom and compassion and actually brought blessings to all sentient beings in their train. Unfortunately, this legend was usually taken in a literal rather than mythological or psychological sense, leading to degeneration.⁵

In spite of this, the Nying-ma-pas—as

followers of the sect are called⁶—have preserved an amazing wealth of yogic knowledge and have continued to produce men of great character and enlightenment. They do have monks, but most of their lamas are married. (It is a common mistake to assume that monks in Tibet are allowed to marry. This is not true. The misunderstanding arises from the fact that 'lama' is believed to be the Tibetan equivalent of 'monk'. But it isn't. It corresponds to 'guru'. Just as among Hindus gurus may be lay or monastic, so in Tibet with the lamas. Monks in Tibet are expected to abide by their vows; if they marry, they are no longer considered monks. The confusion is worse confounded by the fact that all monks are referred to as lama out of respect, though technically it applies only to respected teachers.)

The Ka-rgyu lineage traces its origins to the great Indian yogi Tilopa and his disciple Naropa. Naropa taught Marpa the Translator (1012-96)—an illumined Tibetan yogi remained a householder. Marpa brought a number of Buddhist texts from India to Tibet, where he translated them from Sanskrit into Tibetan. His foremost disciple was Milarepa (1040-1123), sometimes considered the greatest saint in Tibetan history. Milarepa was celibate, and since his time perfect preservation of sexual energy has been considered essential for anyone wishing to master the difficult yogas taught by this lineage.

In 1040, Atīśa of the famous Vikramaśīla monastery arrived in Tibet from India at the invitation of the kings of Gu-ge, western Tibet. He was an important reformer who improved the moral standard of the monastic order by insisting on strict celibacy and discipline and by discouraging magic which had become so prevalent

4. Helmut Hoffman, *Tibet* (Bloomington: Research Center for the Language Sciences, no date), p. 129.

5. Tibetans, like the Hindus, freely mixed mythology with history, rarely recognizing the distinction. It is of course possible that the legend has some element of truth, for Padmasambhava was a Tāntrik,

6. The Tibetan particle *pa* seems to serve a function similar to the Hindi word *wālā*, giving the sense of 'one belonging to' or 'person of'.

through the influence of the original Bon religion of Tibet as well as through the magic displays of the Tāntrik Padmasambhava. In time this reform became the Ka-dam school, which in turn was to give way to the Ge-lug school.

The Sa-kya school was founded by Konchog Gyalpo who was born in 1034. This sect was very important in the organization of the Buddhist order and in the consolidation of secular power.

A man of great importance in Tibetan religious history was Tsong-kha-pa, born in Amdo, Tibet, in the year 1357. By nature he was strictly disciplined, of pure character, and possessed of great spiritual and intellectual power. He carried on the reform begun by the Ka-dam-pas and founded the Ge-lug sect. Tsong-kha-pa didn't neglect the Tantras; rather he 'showed a special tendency to purify Tantrism and to prevent evil men from exploiting the study and practice of the tantras to satisfy their lower instincts.'⁷ Even the purified Tantras, however, he allowed to be practised outside of the monasteries only. The Ge-lug-pas have been noted for their depth of scriptural knowledge, keenness of intellect, and strictness of discipline. Before their final ordination as monks, followers of the sect must pass about twenty years in study.

In time the Ge-lug-pas became the dominant sect in Tibet, and practically the only sect in Mongolia. The line of Dalai Lamas belongs to this lineage. And from 1642 when the Fifth Dalai Lama was given temporal power over Tibet, the sect has been both spiritual and temporal leader of Tibet.

These four sects—the Nying-ma-pas, Ka-rgyu-pas, Sa-kya-pas and Ge-lug-pas—follow the same basic philosophy, though some tend more towards Yogācāra (like the Sa-kya-pas) while others stress

Mādhyamika. Important distinctions, however, lie in their particular lineages of teachers, their tutelary deities, and their body of spiritual techniques rather than philosophy. The Nying-ma-pas are more Tāntrik in emphasis, the Ka-rgyu-pas emphasize yoga, the Ge-lug-pas stress intellectual development and dialectical enquiry into truth in addition to meditation. Even these distinctions are not absolute.

Though Macleodganj has monks belonging to different traditions, the Ge-lug-pas are by far predominant, Macleodganj being the seat of the Dalai Lama's government in exile. Phendey Lekshed Ling is the largest monastery there. As of 1981 it had eighty-five monks.

Now as I walked among the monastic buildings it looked as though the monks were getting ready to eat lunch, which reminded me of the time.

Returning to the village I roamed the streets again until settling on a restaurant for my own meal—Om Restaurant run by Tibetans, serving Tibetan and Chinese food. There were several other Tibetan restaurants in town, and that is what I wanted, but this one had the not-so-Tibetan advantage of cakes freshly baked by an Englishwoman living above town. And here I was to come for most of my meals during the rest of my sojourn. Each restaurant in Macleodganj had its own atmosphere and character. At Om no alcohol was served, the people were friendly, the atmosphere good, and the food also good, though sometimes you would be served only thirty to forty minutes after ordering. Tibetans are normally meat eaters, but Om had a fine selection of vegetarian food as well.

I found Tibetan food to be very good, especially their much-maligned butter tea. This latter is a salted emulsion of butter in tea. It's actually more like a vegetarian bouillon than what Indians or Westerners consider tea, for it is salted rather than

⁷ Hoffman, *Tibet*, p. 165.

sweetened and has butter rather than milk or lemon. No, contrary to popular belief, Tibetan tea need not be made with rancid butter: the butter used at Macleodganj is fresh. It doesn't float on top of the tea because it is completely emulsified with the help of a special churn used only for the purpose.

As I now discovered, Tibetan cuisine shows much Chinese influence. The food is even eaten Chinese style with chopsticks. This isn't surprising, for Tibetan culture in general has been heavily influenced by both China and India. India, because the form of Buddhism prevalent in Tibet came from there rather than China. In fact, early in the history of Buddhism in the Land of Snows there was a great debate to discover whether the Indian or the Chinese form of Buddhism was more acceptable. The Indian representatives won, and thenceforward Tibet made India rather than China her guru in matters religious. So Tibetan religious thought and culture have come predominantly from India. But many other aspects of Tibetan culture have been heavily influenced by China. For, though the Tibetans are a distinctive race, they are closer racially and linguistically to the Chinese than to Indians. It is therefore only natural that they should have been very open to Chinese cultural influence. In view of recent events in Tibet, however, it is important to emphasize that no matter how much it has borrowed from India and China, Tibet has its own distinctive race, language, culture and history.

After lunch I looked at the shops and scenes around Macleodganj. Though small, the town never ceased to fascinate: it was so full of colour and life. You could easily imagine yourself in Tibet rather than India, for the town's population was Tibetan, with a handful of Indian shopkeepers and a number of Western visitors.

As in most Asian communities today,

the Tibetan men generally wear Western clothes, or at least a compromise between Western and Tibetan, while the women dress traditionally. Though I didn't see any of the elaborate, top-heavy headgear which women used to wear in Tibet on special occasions, they do all wear the customary dark, sleeveless dress over a colourful blouse. And whereas Indian women wear their hair in a single braid down their back, Tibetan women have two long braids.

Contrary to the usual in Asia, Tibetan women enjoy a high degree of independence. They are genuine partners with their husbands, taking part in all sorts of work. This shows in their uninhibited, confident behaviour and bearing.

The Tibetans are a charming people, both physically and temperamentally. Every Westerner I've known that has had any contact with them has become a staunch admirer. The best corrective for the common belief that Tibetans are a bizarre race of mystery mongers is to meet them, for they are down-to-earth, practical, hospitable, and friendly, bearing a never-long-suppressed smile.

Tibetan children are especially beautiful. They combine the same strands of innocence and mischief as all children do, but in their case both strands seem equal and intensified to the nth degree, producing a most lovable result. In the morning I had heard about eighty-five small children shouting out their lessons from the Tibetan Day School. This institution, which was located below the street in the slope side of the mountain, held children from kindergarten through Class III. As I watched them coming en masse, they looked like angels just waiting for a chance to pull the most devilish pranks.

Seeing the smiles and the almost carefree spirit of the people as I walked around, it was hard to imagine that these

were the same people who had suffered one of the greatest tragedies possible to man: genocide and the loss of their homeland.

That night after supper at Om, I went to my unheated room to retire. Realizing for the first time that there were no sheets, blankets or quilts on the wooden cot, I put on all the clothes I could and crawled under what I couldn't, for autumn nights are cold at 6,050 feet.

The next day I spent in further exploration. Late in the afternoon I saw a number of women sweeping the road that leads to the temple and the Dalai Lama's residence. Since the other streets in Macleodganj were in much worse need of cleaning, I knew this wasn't just a routine. Then some women began to paint with whitewash a decorative border along both sides of the road.

The mystery was solved the following morning: the Dalai Lama was to perform a special *pūjā* (ritual worship) at the Gaden Choeling nunnery, and would be driven back to his quarters by jeep along that road. By the time I found this out he was already in the midst of worship at the convent. So I made my way there, hoping to get a glimpse of him. Along the way men were burning small bunches of deodar (Himalayan cedar) branches, whose white, fragrant smoke served in popular belief to purify the Dalai Lama's path. Crowds of men, women and children were standing on the road outside of the convent, because rumour had it that the Dalai Lama would shortly be visible as he went from one part of the convent to another. There was a sense of excitement and anticipation in the air as the crowd waited.

As I mentioned before, Tibetans don't share the same highly refined sense of personal purity with the Hindu. Standing beside me in the crowd was a middle-aged lama, and in front of him was a woman

holding her infant child. The kindly, intelligent-looking lama would hold up his rosary for the baby to grab at, trying to coax the child into playing with it. As the child would reach for it, the lama would lift it just beyond the child's grasp. After playing this game for a while, he let the child grab it and the child proceeded to stuff as much of it as possible into its toothless mouth. The lama thought this was great fun, and the baby's mother certainly felt her child blessed to have a holy man's rosary in its mouth.

Quite suddenly my attention was diverted from the rosary-eating child as the whole crowd began to vibrate with excitement—the Dalai Lama was walking between buildings, perhaps fifty yards from the road. People ran excitedly in different directions to get a view of him through the trees. They saluted him as he passed, and in a moment it was over. The crowd dispersed, and I was left amazed at how genuinely happy the people had been just to get a glimpse of their leader.

It might have been two hours later that people were again congregating, this time at the edge of town, where the road from the convent met the road going to the Dalai Lama's quarters—the area that had been swept, decorated, and purified with cedar smoke. More and more people crowded together to see the Dalai Lama ride by on his way from the convent to his quarters. No one knew for sure just when the *pūjā* would be over at the convent; as it turned out, we had quite a long wait.

After what seemed an eternity the clouds broke, releasing a torrent of rain; people stood back against the buildings and under anything that offered a little shelter from the downpour, but they didn't leave: nature couldn't chase them away. Suddenly, a wave of excitement passed over the end of the crowd towards the

convent and quickly spread over everyone. It was obvious that the Dalai Lama was coming. What I saw now was a most amazing sight. The people were trembling with excitement as a jeep sped past, the Dalai Lama barely visible in the back, waving his hand and smiling at the crowds that had gathered to salute him. It was over in five seconds. I've never seen anything like the reverence, adoration and prayer with which these people surround the living symbol of their faith. Later when I read the Dalai Lama's memoirs it wasn't difficult to visualize the scene when he said about his life in Tibet that 'the moment I prepared to go out, the word always went round and the whole of Lhasa turned up and lined the route to see me.'

Earlier I had asked an American in Tibetan monastic robes about arranging an audience with the Dalai Lama. Learning the procedure, I went to the Security Office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Macleodganj and signed up for a public audience. Whenever enough names should accumulate on the list, I was told, an audience would be arranged.

It doesn't take long to get sufficient names, because everyday busloads of people—mostly Westerners—pour into Macleodganj, which has become one of the most popular places to visit among foreigners in India. Most just come for a few days, but there are some that stay for months and even years. Some of those that stay long are serious students of the dharma—lay students as well as monks and nuns.

On the fourth morning of my stay I was told that an audience had been arranged, that I was to go at noon to the large gate opposite the temple which opens into the Dalai Lama's estate.

This was welcome news. The Dalai Lama was, before the Chinese occupation,

the temporal and spiritual leader of Tibet. Now he continues to lead and inspire the Tibetans in exile all over the world.

Among leaders of the world, he is unique. For he is considered not a mere mortal but the fourteenth in a succession of incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, the celestial Bodhisattva of compassion and tutelary deity of Tibet. The name of his palace in Lhasa is the Potala, that being the name of the deity's mythological home.

Though the lineage itself began in the fourteenth century, in 1642 the Fifth Dalai Lama received temporal power over the whole of Tibet. Whenever the reigning Dalai Lama would die, he would take birth in a new human form, so the belief went. Various occult as well as natural means were devised to find and test the new incarnation who, once confirmed, would be taken to Lhasa and educated until old enough to rule the government.

After the Thirteenth Dalai Lama passed away in 1933, the search for his new incarnation was begun. The story of how the present Dalai Lama was found at the age of two, though too long to narrate here, is fascinating.⁸ By late 1939 the now four-year-old boy was taken to Lhasa. Whether or not there is any truth to the belief that he is the fourteenth in a continuous line of incarnations of Avalokiteśvara, one must admire the system that can produce such an outstanding leader. From the time he was an infant he received the most careful training and solicitude imaginable, and the whole nation bowed in reverence before him as a divine being. Yet, far from spoiling him, this left a man of deepest sincerity, compassion, purity and unusual openness of manner.

⁸. Two beautiful accounts are found in: His Holiness, the Dalai Lama, *My Land and My People* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1962); and Noel Barber, *From the Land of Lost Content* (London: Collins, 1969).

Chiang Kai-Shek's government, even before the Communists came to power in China, denied in principle Tibetan autonomy, claiming that Tibet formed part of the Chinese nation. This, in spite of the fact that the native Tibetan government had been performing the functions of a sovereign state: issuing passports, signing international agreements, etc. After assuming power the Communists made the same claim over Tibet, and gradually began to do something about it.

Because of increasing Chinese interference and oppression in Tibet, the Dalai Lama was asked to take charge of the government from the regent while still a boy of sixteen—two years before his scheduled assumption of power. Alarmed at the prospect he protested, but finally 'I saw that at such a serious moment in our history, I could not refuse my responsibilities. I had to shoulder them, put my boyhood behind me, and immediately prepare myself to lead my country, as well as I was able, against the vast power of Communist China.'⁹

Because of his religious training he was opposed to all forms of violence. Besides, he knew that his country could never succeed at confrontation with the immense Chinese army. So for more than seven years he tried a policy of compromise and cooperation with the forces of occupation. By early 1959, however, it was obvious that his life was in danger. The Chinese weren't interested in compromise: they wanted control. His government told him time and again that he must go into exile, for if anything were to happen to his person, Tibet as a cultural entity would, they feared, be finished. Yet everything in his training told him that he could *not* die, that his body was a mere temporary vehicle for his indestructible spiritual being. That

being the case, he wanted to remain by his people in their suffering. So again and again he refused. He even wanted to go unaccompanied to the Chinese military headquarters in Lhasa and throw himself on their mercy, hoping thereby to spare his people bloodshed, though he knew that it might well be suicidal. His advisors naturally refused to allow it.

Finally, on March 17, 1959, when he saw that he would have to bow to his people's wish, he left Lhasa under the cover of night, in a blinding dust storm, disguised as an humble soldier. After a journey of two weeks through unimaginably difficult terrain over the roof of the world, sometimes negotiating passes of more than 19,000 feet, he crossed to safety in India.

It is true that there had been problems in Tibetan society. Tibet's was still a feudal society, with all the unjust distribution of wealth and power that feudalism implies. But it was also one of the most religious countries in the world: the whole of society was oriented towards religion, and every aspect of life was coloured by it. This had a moderating effect, reducing the oppression usually found in feudal societies, because Tibetan Buddhism stressed compassion above all other virtues.

Due to the central positions of religion in Tibetan life, monasteries enjoyed prestige and power. Almost every family would give at least one or two sons to the monastic life, and it is estimated that about ten percent of the population was monastic. This had led to some abuse of power: much of the wealth of the country was controlled by the large monasteries, while the common people were reduced to a sad state of poverty. The Thirteenth Dalai Lama was a very farsighted man who, it is said, predicted that if the wealthy families and the monasteries did not do

⁹. Dalai Lama. *My Land*, p. 83.

something to raise the lot of the common people, it would result in disaster. He instituted several reforms, and the present Dalai Lama, once he assumed power, recognized the social problems and began to seek various reforms. For he too had deep sympathy for the poor. In his memoirs he writes:

I have always been glad that I come from a humble family of peasants. ... I have always felt that if I had been born in a rich or aristocratic family I would not have been able to appreciate the feelings and sentiments of the humble classes of Tibetans. But owing to my lowly birth, I can understand them and read their minds, and that is why I feel for them so strongly and have tried my best to improve their lot in life.¹⁰

But he had no time to effect the reforms he sought.

This is only the political and economic side, however. For the vast majority of the people, in spite of their poverty, had the deepest love for their country and its institutions, especially their monasteries. After the Dalai Lama fled his capital and was making his way to India, Lhasa witnessed a popular uprising in which men, women and children of all social strata—even the outcasted butchers—fought the occupying forces, though it was obvious from the start that they could never defeat the vastly superior Chinese army. So the uprising ended with thousands of Tibetans fleeing after the Dalai Lama into exile in India.

¹⁰. Ibid., p. 18.

True to its long history,¹¹ India gave refuge to the Dalai Lama and the thousands that followed after him. In time he was allowed to make Macleodganj, or Upper Dharamsala, the seat of his government-in-exile. Large tracts of land in various parts of India were given for resettlement of the refugees, and Macleodganj, though remaining small, naturally became the focus of them all. About 2,000 monks, nuns, and lay people came to make it their home in order to live in close proximity to their beloved leader.

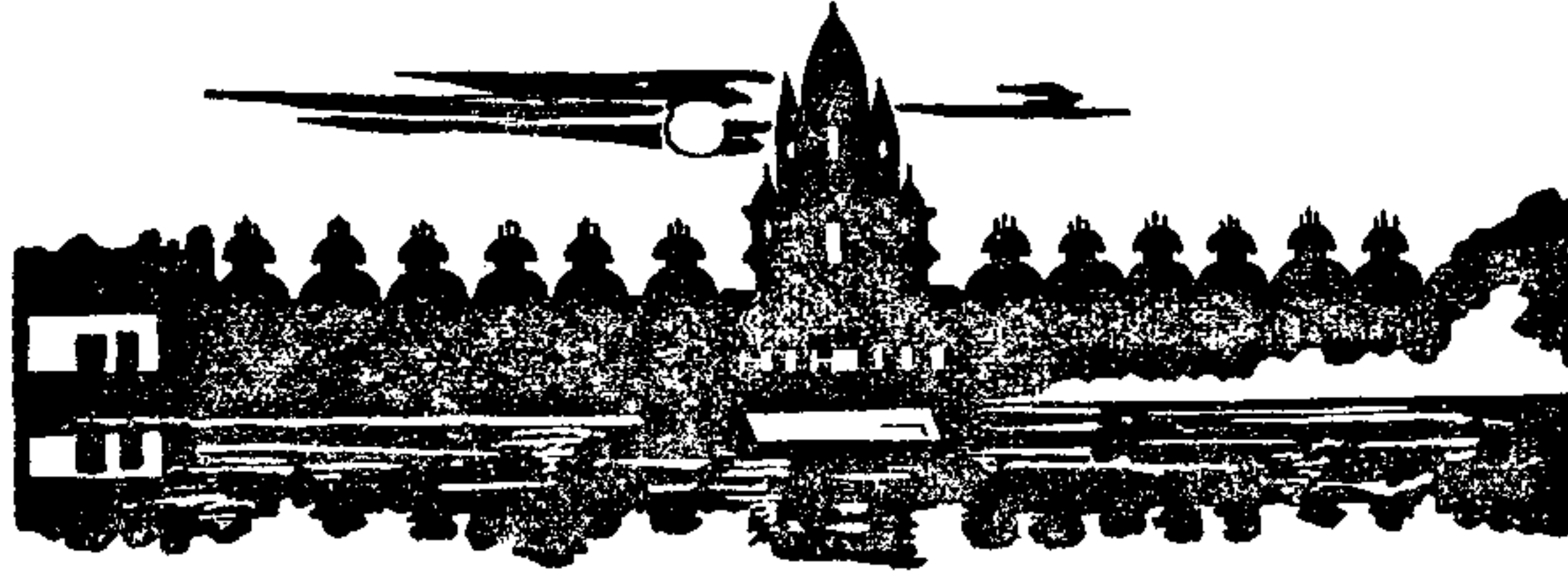
As of 1980 a total of 48,927 refugees had been settled in India. Another 11,698 were yet to be settled. Thousands more had settled in Nepal and Bhutan. And many have gone to Europe, America and other countries, forming a true diaspora or 'dispersion' involving a total of about 1,00,000 Tibetans.

Since the beginning of their exile, the Dalai Lama has untiringly sought to preserve Tibetan cultural traditions and values among the refugee communities spread over the world. He hopes that one day he and his people may safely return to their homeland.

I was glad now that I would get a chance to meet the man about whom I had heard so much since I was a child, even though the meeting would only be in a brief public audience.

(To be continued)

¹¹. There are several outstanding examples of persecuted groups like the Parsis and Jews finding refuge in India due to the natural and philosophic tolerance of the Hindus.



THE SYMBOLIC DIMENSION OF CHRISTIANITY

DR. M. AMALADOSS S. J.

[The twenty million Christians of India are as much a part of the life and culture of the nation as the Hindus and Muslims are. Inculturation—giving an indigenous body to the soul of Christ's message—is one of the two problems that Indian Christian theologians are now trying to solve. The other problem, which arises from the religious pluralism of the land, is to orientate Christian monotheism and revelation to the religious beliefs of other religions. A solution to this problem from the semiological point of view is attempted in the following article, which originally appeared in the *Indian Theological Studies* vol. XIV No. 1, and is reproduced here by permission—Ed.]

Indian (Christian) theology is not primarily a translation in Indian idiom of an eternal and unchangeable body of truths. Theology is essentially a reflection over the Word of faith. An Indian theology would be a reflection on the Word in the context of India today, its preoccupations and its problems. Words like 'adaptation', 'inculturation' and even 'incarnation' do not bring out the creative and dynamic aspect of theologizing in the Indian context: 'adaptation' seems to imply something pre-existent that could be suitably dressed up, with minor alterations, in a new situation; though 'inculturation' seems to indicate a more dynamic process, culture is a vague term and often evokes an image of the archaic; 'incarnation' describes very well the principle, but does not bring out the continuing aspect of the action. A friend has suggested: 'contextualization'. The word is barbarous. But it seems to bring out the main thrust that should animate Indian theologians. Context would include, besides culture, the socio-economic-religious situation in an existential sense.

One element in the Indian context that has engaged the attention of theologians in India increasingly in recent years is the fact of religious pluralism and the need to find a meaning for it in the plan of God in the light of the Word. The plurality of religions was not a problem as long as Christianity was opposed to other religions as truth to falsehood or as legitimate to illegitimate. The problem would still be not so acute if one sees in the other religions only some good and holy elements that need to be rescued, so to speak, and assimilated. While these elements are acknowledged and 'judged' from one's own point of view the religions themselves can be conveniently ignored. The problem of religious pluralism becomes actual only when it is acknowledged that God communicates himself to man, not only in, and almost in spite of, other religions, but also through them, so that they can be really spoken of as ways to salvation. Such an understanding of other religions has grown in the recent past and has come to be

widely accepted by theologians in India today.¹

Faced with this problem of the pluralism of religions two easy solutions seem unacceptable to me. One cannot adopt an agnostic attitude to other religions and behave as if they did not exist. No committed believer in any religion would either accept to look on all religions as different ways to the same goal, just as all the rivers lead to the same ocean. A third approach to a solution, generally accepted by Christians, has been the use of categories like less perfect—more perfect; promise—fulfilment, implicit—explicit etc. A certain sense of the superiority of Christianity has always accompanied this approach, as if salvation is surer and easier in Christianity than in other religions. I find this approach unacceptable. Religion is ultimately dependent on personal relationships—of man with God and with other men. Many from the East and the West will reach God's kingdom before the 'chosen' people get there—this is true of the new as of the old testament. 'Choice' by God is not a guarantee but a mission. However, it is not my purpose here to examine and criticize in detail the categories used by the third approach. Rather, I shall present my own approach and, perhaps, make a few critical remarks at the end if they are still needed.

The symbolic dimension

I think that the notion of symbol is very helpful in explaining this and other similar problems. Let me first describe what I mean by the term symbol and then

show how it can be useful in understanding situations like the one described above.²

As soon as we hear the word symbol a host of images spring before our mind's eye. We see first of all *mathematical symbols*: for example, $x, y, 2$. These stand for some known or unknown quantity. They stand for anything at all: persons, money, values, things, time etc. Secondly we have *linguistic signs*. These are conventional signs but not as arbitrary as mathematical symbols. In English the word 'cow' refers to an animal of a certain type. If one speaks English one has no choice except to use that word. But in French one will say 'vache'. There is no particular reason why that animal should be a 'cow' or a 'vache'. These terms are applied to the same type of animal by two different groups of people who refer to them in this way by a convention accepted and learnt when the language is learnt. When we say that smoke is a sign of fire we are speaking of an *index*, which is still another kind of symbol. Smoke is caused by fire. There is a material connection between smoke and fire: where there is smoke, there is fire. Therefore smoke indicates—points to—fire. That is why we call it an index. We also have *poetic symbols*, which are based on metaphoric relationships. If we say that fire is a symbol of love, it is because fire and love share a common quality, namely ardour. What makes fire a symbol is this quality, or way of being, identified by a man with

1. J. Neuner (Ed.), *Christian Revelation and World Religions* (London: 1967);

J. Pathrapankal (Ed.), *Service and Salvation* (Bangalore: 1973); D. S. Amalorpavadass (Ed.), *Research Seminar on Non-Biblical Scriptures* (Bangalore: 1974).

2. Cf for what follows J. R. Pierce, *Symbols, Signals and Noise: The Nature and Process of Communication* (New York: 1971); R. Barthes, *Elements of Semiology* (London: 1967); A. J. Greimas, *Du sens* (Paris: 1970); J. Kristeva, 'Le geste, pratique ou communication?', *Langage* 10 (1968), 48-64; G. Mouniny, *Introduction a la semiologie* (Paris: 1970); F. de Saussure, *Cours de la linguistique generale* (Paris: 1968); M. Amaladoss, 'Religious Rite as Symbol', *Jeevadhara* 5 (1975) 319-328.

imagination. All these types of symbols and signs are used in the process of communication between men. Our normal talk about symbols, even in theology, hardly ever goes beyond these types.

The symbolic actions

Yet there are a host of symbols that are very different. They are not merely communicative like the symbols listed above and sometime self-expressive like the poetic symbols. They are concrete and experiential. Let me take an example. I meet a friend on the road. I salute him with a *namaste*. It is a gesture that indicates an attitude of welcome, especially if it is accompanied by a smile. Suppose I hold his hand and press it—that is, shake hands: the pressure of my hand not merely communicates a message, but makes him *experience* welcome—feel the pleasure I have in seeing him again. More than that, it is a mutual, shared experience and expression of joy and love. It is not merely an intellectual experience, but a human one, including the physical dimension. We are not merely telling each other of our joy; we are not merely feeling it; we are not only expressing it in words and signs. We are linking it in a human way that involves our bodies too.

Let me briefly analyse this symbol. First of all it is not merely a symbol, but a *symbolic action*. It communicates a message of love and welcome. But it also *does* something more. It creates in both an experience. It creates an atmosphere of welcome, love etc. This is a simple gesture. But all social and religious rituals are such symbolic actions. Thus a banquet celebrates and creates community. A rite of initiation effectively makes one a member of the group. The rites accompanying a funeral reiterate social and kinship ties. The symbolic action is a *human* action. Man is a spirit in a body—or rather

enfleshed spirit. Whatever he does and experiences finds bodily expression. It is then that he finds a total way of being and acting. Language in itself abstracts, alienates. In universalizing its concepts it disembodies them. But symbolic action enfleshes meaning; it concretizes concepts; it makes communication into a human experience. It is from this point of view, for instance, that we should find a new dimension in the mysteries of the incarnation—enfleshing of the Word—and of the Eucharist—the Lord becoming present to us in His body.³ I shall say more of this later. The symbolic action is also a communal action. It is an action of a community that actualizes and concretizes interpersonal relationships. The person who is being initiated into a community enters into a set of new relationships with the others in the community of which he becomes a new member. He takes on a certain number of duties and obligations towards the group. These new relationships are ritually expressed and lived in the symbolic action.

What does this symbolic action symbolize? A great many things. I would like to mention here four of them, the last of which is the most important for my purpose, but which can be fully grasped only in the context of the others. The first dimension that a symbolic action evokes is the actual life-situation of the community and all the social and cultural inter-relationships it involves. The ritual of marriage re-affirms kinship ties through the manner in which the various relatives contribute to and take part in the celebration. A rite of initiation, besides making one a new member, gives some idea of the kind of group of which he is becoming a member and the type of structure and

3. Terry Eagleton, *The Body as Language* (London: 1970); Sam Keen, *To a Dancing God* (New York: 1970).

interrelations that exist in it. The special teaching offered and the rituals see to this. A similar analysis of all the rituals may be made. Every ritual reflects in some way the social and cultural structures that animate the community that celebrates it.⁴

The second dimension that a symbolic action evokes is not contrary, but complementary, to the first. Rituals often manifest elements of anti-structure. For example, the image of the community that an observer would get while looking at certain types of rituals like pilgrimages to Pandarpur or Sabarimalai, the Holi festival, the Eucharist etc. is not the image of the community as it is and hence a faithful reflection of the current structures that make it function in view of the proximate goal it has set itself. It is rather the image of the community as it ought to be, or is called to be or would like to be. On these occasions taboos of all sorts, distinctions of caste and status seem to disappear and the idea of universal brotherhood seems to be asserted and lived ritually and experientially. This seems to be a clear affirmation of a dimension of reality that is ever present, though prevailing needs and structural distinctions make us forget it. There is also an element of hope in the future realization of this ideal community.⁵

It is in this context that a third dimension comes in, in the case of religious symbolic actions. The affirmation of an ideal community is made in terms of a religious faith, which makes the rituals open out to a transcendent dimension. Religious faith not only affirms this com-

munity as a future ideal but aims at creating it here and now. An example would make the elements of this third dimension clear. Initiation rites in most societies not only make the individual a member of a community; they also confer on him fellowship with the gods. Baptism not only makes the recipient a member of the Church, but also a child of God through a rebirth in the Spirit. Similarly the Eucharist is not only a symbol of community and brotherhood lived and manifested in a common meal; it is also a communion with God and a sharing of his divine life which brings together the community sharing the meal. It is this religious dimension that is often the basis of the anti-structural elements spoken of in the previous paragraph.

The fourth dimension of meaning of communal symbolic actions, and the most important one for my purpose here, is its representative character. Let me start with an example. A man and a woman, happily married, love each other. This mutual love animates their whole life. It finds expression in a variety of ways: a loving look, a caressing touch, an affectionate word; in the work the man does for supporting himself and his family and in the household jobs that occupy the woman; in their companionship, mutual appreciation, self-sacrifice for each other etc. etc. There are a thousand ways in which love is manifested, expressed and experienced. All these are symbolic. But the act of love is something special. It is a pure and simple expression of love. It is not love expressed through some other type of activity. It is love itself in act. It involves the whole person, body and soul—a total self-gift. It is 'sensible' because it involves all the senses. In it love acquires a visibility and becomes tangible. It is representative: it is not the only act expressive of love, while other acts are not so expressive. It expresses it in a particular way: it is some-

4. C. Levi-Strauss, 'Introduction a l'oeuvre de Marcel Mauss', *Sociologie et anthropologie* by Marcel Mauss (Paris: 1968); Mary Douglas, *Natural Symbols* (Pelican: 1973).

5. V. Turmes, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (London: 1969); Idem., 'Pilgrimage and Communitas', *Studia Missionalia* 23 (1974) 1-23.

how related directly to love itself. Yet it has no claims to exclusivity. It sensibilizes an experience that is ever present in every little act. Love expressed in an act of sacrifice or experienced in a moment of separation may be deeper and stronger. The act of love need not be the high-point of the experience of love. It need not be superior to or more authentic than other expressions of love. But its expression is specific, in the way described above. Let me retain then two characteristics of this special symbolic action. (1) It gives a particular expression to an experience that is constant, and extends beyond the particular act both in space and in time. In this it is not exclusive, but representative. (2) Secondly, at the level of expression, though there may be a thousand ways of expressing love in symbolic actions, this is a particular, specific one. This specificity is in the order of expression and not in the order of intensity of experience. Both these characteristics make it symbolic of all the other symbolic expressions of love. Like the tip of the iceberg indicating the great mass submerged below the water level, it points to, in its visibility, a reality that may be lived and expressed in a great variety of ways, more or less adequate from a symbolic point of view.

Sacraments as symbols

The sacraments are precisely the kind of symbolic actions I am talking about. Normally when we talk of them as symbols we think mostly of the spiritual dimension. Recently we have started talking about their social or communitarian dimension. I think we should now begin talking of their place in the totality of Christian life. Taking the sacrament of initiation as an example it is not enough to look upon it as a symbol of rebirth in the Spirit, making one a son of God. It is more than an

admission into the Church, the body of believers in Christ. It is a living expression of a reality of rebirth, of dying and rising that is happening continuously throughout one's lifetime. This continuing renewal finds living expressions in his life in a multitude of ways. All these actions are symbolic. The rite of initiation symbolizes and indicates all these by visibilizing symbolically the process of rebirth as such and not as indicated by some other reaction.

This dimension comes out much more clearly in the Eucharist. The Eucharist symbolizes communion of life. It is a sharing in the life of God given to us in Jesus Christ. This sharing unites all those who participate in it into a community. Communion in love and life either with God or with others is not an exclusive feature of the Eucharist. We can express our love for God and unite ourselves to Him in a variety of ways through prayer and good works. But in the Eucharist God comes near to us in His own incarnate body. We have remarked above that it is through the body that the closest union can be achieved, between human beings. In the Eucharist God comes to us in a body, and that too as food, so that a real and total assimilation and identification is possible. Similarly our love for our neighbour may find expression in the samllest act of love, of help, of service. But what union can be closer than the union of two in the love and life of God himself—like two branches of the same vine? Thus we see that the Eucharist is a special way of living and expressing a reality that is coextensive with Christian life. Note that I am not saying that our union with Christ and with the other is deeper and more intense than in other circumstances of life. Christ may be encountered as intensely and authentically in a poor and a suffering person as in the

Eucharist. But the way in which the encounter takes place is different in each case and the way of the Eucharist stands apart. The Eucharistic banquet is a symbolic expression of communion pure and simple, not mediated by any other symbolic action. Helping some one in need, for example, is directly symbolic of an attitude of service, which indicates or involves love. But sharing a meal—not feeding a hungry brother—is simply an expression of fellowship, communion and love. This is why, it can be symbolic of all other ways of expressing love, more or less indirectly. The love is the same; but the ways in which it finds expression are many and one of them is particular, unique, specific. The perfection of love or the intensity of the experience does not depend on the ways in which it is lived and expressed. An experience through a more expressive symbol need not necessarily be a deeper experience. I am repeating this idea because of the constant tendency in the past to confuse levels of experience and expression and to be liberal with value judgements like more—less, perfect—imperfect, present—absent etc.

Symbolic dimension of Christianity

It is in the context of the notion of symbolic action and its various dimensions of meaning that I would like to understand the problem of the pluralism of religions. No serious theologian today would think of Christianity as the only true religion while the other religions are false. No true believer would look upon Christianity just as one among many religions. I would be also hesitant to assent that in the order of life and experience Christianity is better, more perfect, superior, easier, more effective etc. I think that the specificity of Christianity lies in its symbolic character with regard to other religions.

In the light of what I have been saying above regarding symbols and symbolic actions, this brief affirmation regarding the symbolic character of Christianity with regard to other religions should be expanded and understood in the following manner. The saving act of God or God's loving self-communication to man has no limits either in space or in time. It is universal (1 Tim. 2,4). The Spirit of God is present and active everywhere and at all times. The liberation achieved by Christ's resurrection is for all men. This liberation is actually operative in the world through a whole variety of symbolic actions. Some of these may belong to different religious traditions. Others may be 'secular': action for human development and liberation are recognized today as integral aspects of evangelization (cf. Mt. 25, 31-46). Christianity, from one point of view, is one of the symbolic ways through which God's love becomes present to man and active in man. It has no claims to exclusivity. Many non-Christians are saved in and through their religions. Let me clarify, in passing, that the saving act is one and the same; only the symbolic mediations of this action are different. While the symbolic action that is Christianity is not exclusive, it remains something special. This speciality is made up of two factors. First of all the saving presence of God in Christ and in the Spirit becomes visible and tangible not merely in some indirect, though symbolic, way. It becomes visible and sensible in them, directly. Every way is symbolic, because it is human. But the symbolization in Christianity is direct while in other religions it is indirect. The distinction is applicable within Christianity itself. It is the same Christ one encounters when one gives a cup of water to a thirsty person and when one participates in the Eucharistic banquet. But Christ is not present to him in the same way. In both

cases his presence is symbolic—mediated by symbol. In the first case it is the thirsty person. In the second case it is the sacrament of the body and blood of Christ and the community. But in the second case Christ is present in a unique way. He is there himself, with his body. He is not more present here than elsewhere. But the mode of his presence is different. That is why within Christianity itself the sacraments, and especially the Eucharist, are specific symbolic actions—they are Christianity-in-act. The same distinction holds good between Christianity and other religions. If we look only upon the symbolic actions of ordinary Christian life, these are not very different from similar symbolic actions in other religions. What is specific to Christianity is the direct, though still symbolic, way in which the mystery of God's self-communication in Christ and the Spirit becomes present to us. It would perhaps help to look back to the analogy of the act of love to understand what I am trying to say.

The second of the two factors that make up the specificity of Christianity is related to the first. Because of the special direct relationship that exists between experience and expression in the symbolic action that is Christianity, it becomes symbolic of all other not so direct (symbolic) expressions of the same experience. The mystery that is present everywhere and at all times, finding expression in a multitude of ways, has become itself visible, tangible, sensible.

To repeat again what we have been saying in other contexts: *this specificity of Christianity does not by itself make it a better, superior, surer, or easier way to God.*

There is nothing new or original in saying that Christianity is sacramental or symbolic. What is new is the use of this concept to understand and explain the

relationship of Christianity to other religions. Normally the term sacrament is used only to explain the relationship through symbolic action between God and man. I am using the same term to explain the interrelationship between different symbolic actions expressive of the same experience, one of which stands apart from the others at the level of experience.

Christ as symbol

What I have said here about Christianity has christological implications. I cannot go into them here in great detail. But a few indications would not be out of place. When we usually speak of Christ as sacrament we think only of his symbolic mediation of our relationship to God. Christ is the sacrament of God. Many nuances will now have to be introduced. 'Christ' is no longer a simple concept. We speak today of the historical Jesus and the Christ of faith; we talk of the Christ of history and the cosmic Christ or the Christ of mystery. All these terms refer to the same person, but not to the same dimension of his personality and action. When we normally speak of Christ in relation to Christianity we speak of the Christ who was born in the flesh, living today. How does he relate to the cosmic Christ? He is the same person, to be sure. But we have to do with two different dimensions linked in some way to the two natures of traditional theology. The relations between these two dimensions will remain as much a mystery as the relation between the two natures, namely the mystery of the incarnation itself. But in the light of my argument above regarding the Eucharist and Christianity, correspondingly I would say that the Christ of history is the symbol of the Christ-mystery. The word symbol, of course, is to be understood in the rich sense I have given to it above. In the life

and action of the man Jesus the mystery of Christ present and active everywhere and at all times (Eph. 1,3-10) becomes visible, tangible, sensible. It is a living expression of the Christ-mystery—a particular and specific expression. The unknown Christ is active everywhere and manifests himself in a great variety of symbols. But he becomes humanly and bodily present and active in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, therefore, is symbolic not only of man's relationship to God, but also of the multitudinous other expressions of the same mystery everywhere and all times.

Conclusion

In a situation of religious pluralism we were first accustomed to speaking in terms of true/false, presence/absence etc. Then we began speaking in terms of more/less, perfect/imperfect, preparation/fulfilment etc. These approaches do not really take into account all the facts. I am suggesting the category of symbol. Taken in a purely objective, physical sense, the

concept of symbol is empty and can be of no use in this context. But understood in a human and personal way as symbolic action, it seems to suggest a new way of posing the problem and of looking for solution. I think that the term symbolic action translates into contemporary terminology the idea of 'first fruits' in the Bible. This relationship needs to be explored. The close relationship between Jesus Christ, Christianity and the Eucharist in terms of expression—experience is also remarkable. We cannot really speak of the one without the other. The symbolic dimension with its stress on expression goes beyond a mere cognitive differentiation in terms of explicit/implicit, known/unknown. The tradition of scholasticism has been too much occupied with essences and has not paid sufficient attention to different ways of being, of living and of experiencing. Once the importance of the ways of experiencing a reality is understood no one would ask, 'if salvation is available to every one why should any one be a Christian?'

(Continued from page 109)

neglected to develop its myth further in the course of the centuries. Those who gave expression to the dark stirrings of growth in mythic ideas were refused a hearing; Meister Eckhart, Jacob Boehme and many others who have remained obscurantists for the majority.¹³

Jung pays high encomiums to the East and specially to India. But he feels that the West has its own spiritual heritage and, instead of copying the East, must evolve its own Yoga. Speaking of Yoga, Jung says:

In the East, where these ideas and practices originated and where an uninterrupted tradition extending over some four thousand years have created the necessary spiritual conditions, yoga is, as I can readily believe, the perfect and appropriate method of fusing body and mind together

so that they form a unity that can hardly be doubted. The Indian can forget neither the body nor the mind, while the European is always forgetting either the one or the other. The Indian not only knows his own nature, but he knows also how much he himself is nature.... When the yogi says, 'prāṇa' he means very much more than mere breath. For him the word prāṇa brings with it the full weight of its metaphysical components, and it is as if he really knew what prāṇa meant in this respect. He does not know it with his understanding, but with his heart, belly and blood. The European only imitates and learns by rote, and is therefore incapable of expressing his subjective facts through Indian concepts... I do regard this spiritual achievement of the East as one of the greatest things the human mind has ever created.¹⁴

^{13.} *ibid*, p. 306.

^{14.} Carl G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, Pp. 533, 536, 537.



EMERSON, AUTHOR OF AMERICA'S LITERARY INDEPENDENCE

DR. DONALD SZANTHO HARRINGTON

As Thomas Jefferson was the principal drafter of the American Declaration of Independence, Ralph Waldo Emerson was the author of America's literary and intellectual independence, and a major force behind the movement for religious reformation in this land.

Emerson's life falls simply and naturally into four parts :

(1) A period of preparation, including his early Unitarian ministry, stretching for twenty nine years, from 1803 to 1832.

(2) The period of his definitive work, as a scholar, essayist, poet, public lecturer, controversialist, conversationalist, philanthropist, gentleman farmer and friend to the friends of man, a period of eighteen years, from 1832 to 1850.

(3) The third period continued and developed the second in that he continued a heavy schedule of writing, publishing and lecturing, but became far more of an activist, especially in relation to the crusade to abolish slavery. This was from 1850, with the passing of the Fugitive Slave Law, through the period of the Civil War and the era of Reconstruction, down to 1872.

(4) The fourth and last period was one of clear sailing and slow decline, in which he was universally lauded and loved as the

Oracle of America, the Sage of Concord, from 1872 to 1882 when he died at the age of seventy-nine.

Now let us examine these four periods of his life more closely to find the events and ideas which gave his life its formative and lasting force.

Background

Ralph Waldo Emerson was born in Boston on Election Day, May 5th, 1803. His father, Rev. William Emerson, who was the minister of the First Church in Boston, and a Unitarian, was also a man of considerable public involvement, member of the School Committee of Boston and half a dozen other organizations of public welfare, as well as Chaplain of State Senate and Council, and along with this editor of a magazine; *The Monthly Anthology*. Hurrying home from the Governor's House, he discovered that his wife, Ruth, had given birth to their fourth child, whom they named Ralph Waldo.

Emerson's mother was a woman of some family distinction. As a child George Washington had bounced her on his knee when a visitor at her father's home. The William Emersons lived adequately, but not well, and always had financial problems.

But Ralph was sent to Boston Latin School to start his education.

In 1811 disaster struck the large family in the sudden death of the father, and thereafter mother and children either boarded with relatives or friends, or for a time Ruth ran a boarding house to keep them all together. His aunt Mary Moody Emerson spent considerable time with them, helping out with the work, and used the opportunity to impress upon young Ralph the importance of maintaining an independent, critical spirit, questioning all things. She was later to feel that she had succeeded all too well. He became far more intellectually radical than she desired. But the early years were not easy for them. One winter Ralph and Edward had to share a coat.

In 1821, young Ralph graduated from Harvard College, thirtieth in a class of fifty-nine. He was not elected Phi Beta Kappa till seven years later, when he received the degree as an honorary degree. While at Harvard, however, he had not only absorbed the traditional subjects, but read widely and became deeply interested in the religious books of India and China. This was partly through the influence of Aunt Mary Moody Emerson as well. He also had begun to read some of the higher criticism of the Bible and to be sceptical of its supernatural claims.

Harvard Divinity School

For the next four years he taught school, his health being not very robust. The whole family, like so many in those days, suffered from incipient tuberculosis. But he became more and more interested in becoming a minister like his father. In 1825 he entered Harvard Divinity School, and in 1826 was licensed to preach, preaching his first sermon on October 15, 1826, at his Uncle Dr. Samuel Ripley's church, the old First Parish in Waltham, which just happens to be the church indeed the very building in which

I grew up as a child. My great grandfather Charles was one of Samuel Ripley's parishioners.

Ellen Tucker

In 1827, while visitor-preaching at Concord, New Hampshire, he met a lovely seventeen year old girl, Ellen Tucker, and they fell in love with each other. But he had not yet finished school, and she was ill with consumption. They decided to wait to be married while he finished school and she recovered her health. They saw each other frequently, and wrote constantly.

In 1829, he was ordained and called to be minister of the Second Church (Unitarian) in Boston, and, like his father before him, invited to become Chaplain of the Senate to serve on the School Committee, both of which responsibilities he accepted. At this time he wrote in his journal: 'I fear nothing now except the preparation of sermons! The prospect of one each week for an indefinite time to come is almost terrifying.'

In 1830, he married Ellen, whom he idolized and worshipped, but within just four months she died. He was utterly stricken and inconsolable, but paradoxically Ellen was the means of his leaving the ministry and taking up the role of free lance lecturer, writer and gentleman farmer, for she left him an inheritance which, while not great, none the less gave him income equal to half to two thirds of his regular salary as a minister. Thus Ellen was many times, a blessing to Emerson all the rest of his life. She gave him his first love, and a degree of financial independence, without which it might have been impossible to do what he did, or to make the contribution he was to make.

Early sermons

In his early sermons, Emerson tried out on his congregation the great themes which were to characterize later on his public phil-

osophy and famous essays and lectures—transcendentalism, self-reliance, self-reverence, compensation. In a sermon against false pride, he said, 'The good man reveres himself, reveres his conscience, and would rather suffer any calamity than lower himself in his own esteem.' In another, he said, that the moral sense perceiver of right and wrong, was a sovereign part of man's nature and existed in the mind independently of his experience. In another he declared that heaven is not in the future, but right here and now. Jesus, he said, derived his authority from truths he uttered. The humblest person teaching the same truths, he said, would be vested with the same authority.

These were far from orthodox Christian, or even orthodox unitarian, ideas, but his people were excited by them. 'A trust in yourself,' he said, 'is the height, not of pride but of piety, an unwillingness to learn from any but God himself.' But for the self to be trusted, like this, its origin must be perceived, its origin in deity.

He called in for his witnesses not only great Christians, but, many non-Christians, saying their authority derived from the divinity of all men. 'Moses and Socrates and Confucius and Fenelon', he said, 'think the same thing. Justice, love, purity, truth are intelligible to all men, and have a friend in the bottom of the heart of every man.' His people, though astonished, heard him gladly.

Emerson leaves the ministry

All the more sad were they when he began to show a restiveness with the ministry. He disliked having to consider whether he might be going too far when he spoke his whole heart to his congregation. He saw harsh resistance to the new Transcendentalist ideas. In his Journal he noted that he found little love, 'at the bottom of these great religious shows; ...' 'Calvanism stands,' he wrote, 'by pride and ignorance;

and Unitarianism stands by the opposition of Calvanism.' He wanted something fresh and new and positive that he felt burning within, and somehow felt imprisoned in the institution of the church. In September of 1832, against the advice of both his mother and Aunt Mary, he told his congregation he could no longer administer the rite of the Lord's Supper, and as he felt they wished to continue the practice of it, he resigned his pulpit. This was not really an abandonment either of the church or of the pulpit, for he continued to preach at other churches as a supply preacher for the next eight years, and remained an interested, if irregular, Unitarian churchman for the rest of his life. But it did end his active leadership of a parish, and brought to a close the first period of his life.

Essayist and lecturer

The second period, from 1833 to 1850, during which Emerson would do his greatest work and make his irrevocable contribution, was begun with a year in Europe, during which he met and began life-long friendships with many of the great men and women of England and the Continent, especially Wordsworth and Carlyle. He travelled everywhere, saw everyone worth seeing, but came home convinced that America must create out of her own life and indigenous materials a literary culture of her own. He was determined to be a leader in this. It provoked one of his most familiar poems :

Goodbye, proud world! I'm going home;
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.
Long through thy weary crowds I roamed;
A river-arc on the ocean brine,
Long I've been tossed like the driven foam;
But now, proud world! I'm going home....
Oh, when I am safe in my sylvan home,
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome;
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,
Where the evening star so holy shines;
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,
At the sophist schools and the learned clans;

For what are they all, in their high conceit,
When man in the bush with God my meet?

Coolidge castle

Not too long after his return, he moved with his mother out to Concord town where his father's family had come from, and where his uncle, Dr. George Ripley, was the Unitarian Minister. At first they boarded with his uncle at the Old Manse, but later he was to buy the old Coolidge farm down on the road to Cambridge, which I have driven past many a time and visited myself—it is still there—where he established himself in a kind of ideal existence as a gentleman farmer, scholar, lecturer, spending his mornings in the study and his afternoons in his garden, or planting fruit trees, or conversing with visitors, or walking through the woods to Walden Pond or along the banks of the Concord River with his literary friends. The old Coolidge Place became familiarly known in later years as 'The Bush' (where man and God may meet), or perhaps more commonly as *Coolidge Castle*, because so many visitors came to partake of its open and warm hospitality, sometimes being put up at Emerson's expense for weeks.

Now the stream of his thought, fed by daily experience and contemplation, by wide reading, correspondence and conversation, became a rushing river. His method was to jot down his ideas and reaction at random in his Journal each day, then translate these into lectures or essays as required. With ever-increasing invitations to lecture at lyceums all over New England, and ever-increasing popularity, his intellectual current gathered force and power.

Lydia Jackson and bereavement

Some years earlier, he had noticed while preaching at a Congregational Church in Boston, an attractive young woman who

seemed to be listening to every word he spoke. Later he saw her again in Plymouth at the Lyceum, and again on Sunday at the Unitarian Church. Lydia Jackson was introduced to him, and he found himself looking for excuses to go to Plymouth. He proposed by mail, was accepted by mail, and they were married in 1835. Waldo and Lidian, as he insisted upon calling her, were kindred spirits, and she, a generous-hearted and practical, as well as highly intelligent young woman, was for him a perfect help-mate, lover and home manager.

But these were not years without sorrow, for in 1834 his brother, Edward, died, and in 1835 his favourite, younger brother, Charles, whom everyone in the family thought of as the one most full of promise of them all, died, both of consumption.

Almost as if to assuage his grief, there came along in 1836 his first born son, 'Little Waldo', as they called him. Lidian wrote to her sister: 'I feel as if a volume might be filled before one could duly set forth all that this child is to him, both as possession and hope.' When little Waldo died five years later of scarlet fever, Emerson was inconsolable. But in 1839, his first daughter had been born. Lidian insisted upon naming her Ellen, after his beloved first wife, which says a lot for Lidian! In 1841 a second daughter, Edith, was born. And in 1844, another son, whom they named Edward Waldo. All of these were to live rich and full, long lives.

On Nature and Man

Now Emerson's ideas began to have real impact. His first book, which appeared in 1836, on Nature, began with a natural science approach, but moved quickly to affirm the divine in nature and human nature; the first edition sold out in thirty days.

Self-reliance and non-conformity were the great themes; and the need for free and

independent thought, and the concept of truth as always becoming.

Trust thyself; every heart vibrates to that iron string. Accept the place of Divine Providence has found for *you*, the society of your contemporaries, the connection of events. Great men have always done so, and confided themselves childlike to the genius of their age, betraying their perception that the absolutely trustworthy were seated at their heart, working through their hands, predominating in all their being. And we are now men, and must accept in the highest mind the same transcendent destiny; and not minors and invalids in a protected corner, not cowards fleeing before a revolution, but guides, redeemers and benefactors, obeying the Almighty effort and advancing on Chaos and the Dark.

Whoso would be a man, must be a non-conformist. He who would gather immortal palms must not be hindered by the name of goodness, but must explore if it be goodness. Nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind.

What I must do is all that concerns me, not what the people think. This rule, equally arduous in actual and intellectual life, may serve for the whole distinction between greatness and meanness... It is easy in the world to live after the world's opinion; it is easy in solitude to live after our own; but the great man is he who in the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude.

Taking this rule seriously, one might at times appear inconsistent. Some called Emerson inconsistent, and indeed he was, frequently so. But he had the answer to such complaints: 'A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds,' he said 'adored by little statesmen and philosophers and divines. With consistency a great soul has simply nothing to do. Speak what you think now in hard words, and tomorrow speak what tomorrow thinks in hard words again, though it contradict everything you said today.'

To every human being he said, be your own, unique self, not someone else. Aim high!

Our culture has truckled to the times—to the senses. It is not man-worthy. If the vast and

spiritual are omitted, so are the practical and the moral. It does not make us brave or free. We teach boys to be such men as we are. We do not teach them to aspire to be all they can. We do not give them a training as if we believed in their noble nature. We scarce educate their bodies. We do not train the eye and the hand. We exercise their understandings to the apprehension and comparison of some facts, to a skill in numbers, in words; we aim to make accountants, attorneys, engineers; but not to make able, earnest, great-hearted men. The great object of education should be commensurate with the object of life. It should be a moral one; to teach self-trust; to inspire the youthful man with an interest in himself; with a curiosity touching his own nature; to acquaint him with the resources of his mind, and to teach him that there is all his strength, and to inflame him with a piety towards the Great Mind in which he lives. Thus would education conspire with the Divine Providence. A man is a little thing whilst he works by and for himself, but, when he gives voice to the rules of love and justice, is Godlike; his world is current in all countries; and all men, though his enemies, are made his friends and obey it as their own.

There comes a moment in the education of every man when he becomes convinced that envy is ignorance, that imitation is suicide, and that he must take and be himself for better or for worse.

Two greatest addresses

Emerson's two greatest addresses, the ones which establish his reputation as a great literary figure and controversialist were the Phi Beta Kappa address in Cambridge in 1837, and the Divinity School address at Harvard Divinity School in 1838.

In the first, he declared America's literary independence of Europe, and called for a truly American literature. He tied scholarship and literary craftsmanship to life, and most specifically American life and experience: 'Our day of dependence, our long apprenticeship to the learning of other lands draws to a close,' he proclaimed. 'Let the single man plant himself indomitably upon his instincts and there abide, and the huge world will come round to him.' Oliver

Wendell Holmes called it 'Our intellectual Declaration of Independence.' James Russell Lowell described the scene: 'What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what enthusiasm of approval, what grim silence of foregone dissent.'

In the Divinity School address, he scandalized the professors by claiming that the Gospel writers had failed to understand what Jesus was saying and doing, namely illustrating that the divine can become incarnate in man. The world, he said, was a marvel of perfection, but when the mind revealed the universal laws, the world shrank into mere illustration and fable of this mind. The perfection of the laws suggested that only one world, one mind was everywhere active, the supreme law. Perception of it awakened in the individual the religious sentiment, divine and deifying. Jesus understood this, experienced it, and said, 'I am divine; through me God acts; through me speaks.' But this doctrine was distorted by those who came after him who thought he was saying that he was Jehovah come down out of heaven. They made Christianity into a myth, not a doctrine of the soul.

The address was followed by a great hue and cry. Uncle Samuel Ripley, commenting on the criticism of Emerson, said: 'The whole band of clergymen have raised their voice against him, with a very few exceptions; and the common people, even women, look solemn and sad, and roll up their eyes... "Oh, he is a dangerous man"; the church is in danger; Unitarianism is disgraced; the party is broken up...' Emerson met their taunts and cries with equanimity, suggesting that all innovators face this kind of response and indicating that they sounded all ridiculously stale and old to him. 'I have a great deal more to say that will shock you out of all patience,' he said.

Lectures and essays

These years were crowded with important

events in Emerson's life. He lectured to wider and wider spheres, travelling farther and farther away from Concord.

In 1841 the first volume of his essays on Self-Reliance, Compensation, Love, Friendship, The Oversoul, etc. appeared; and in 1844 the second volume. In 1842 and 43 for a time he edited the Dial.

It was during this period that he made the long-lasting friendships which were to have such a deep effect upon his own thought and life, especially with Bronson Alcott to whom he was devoted despite his idiosyncrasies, the young poet Ellery Channing, who never lived up to his promise, Henry Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, and the Englishman Carlyle.

He turned his mind to social questions, studying Fourier, and visiting Brook Farm and Fruitlands. But social issues never took a primary place in his interest. He wanted 'a more fundamental reform,' a new man.

In 1845 he let Thoreau build a cabin on land which he had bought on the north shore of Walden Pond, one of his unknowing, great gifts to mankind, for out of Thoreau's residence in that cabin came *Walden*.

His poems

Emerson wished with all his heart to be a poet, but prose was his medium. As Margaret Fuller said: 'His powers are mostly philosophical, which is not the truest kind of poetry.' Speaking of his poems, she said, 'They want the simple force of natural passion, and ... fail to wake far-off echoes in the heart.'

None the less, many of his poems are perfectly superb in style and expression.

Emerson at this time of his life was described in his lecturing as standing tall and thin, 'a luminous, friendly expression revealing an unusual combination of sensitiveness and self-control' on his face. 'His voice, his delivery, his very carelessness of his audience, his indifference as to whether

they understood him or not, seem to become endeared to one as forming part of the individual Emerson, whose thoughtful pathway lies alone through the mental world.'

Again to Europe

In 1847, he spent another year in England and on the Continent, this time lecturing and being lionized everywhere he went. He met Dickens, Tennyson, Macaulay, George Sand, Leigh Hunt, Thackeray, de Toqueville, Matthew Arnold, Arthur Hugh Clough, and many others. Sixteen years later Matthew Arnold wrote him: 'I look back with great satisfaction to have made your personal acquaintance while you were here ... and I can never forget the refreshing and guiding effect your writings had upon me at a critical time of my life.'

Shortly after Emerson's return to Concord, his mother died at the age of eighty-four, having lived with him all of his married life. It says a lot for their relationship, and the kind of multi-generation family they maintained at Coolidge Castle, that he noted in his diary after she was gone that there was one less room to go for sane society in this house.

The abolition of slavery

In 1850, the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law aroused Emerson to more concerted social action than he had ever thought he would permit himself to be involved in. He had considered group action likely to undercut the integrity of the individual soul. But he could not abide slavery, nor Daniel Webster's compromise with it. 'I will not obey it, by God,' he said of the Fugitive Slave Law. Of slavery, he said in an address to his townsmen, 'Root it out, burn it up, pay for the damage, and let's have done with it.' Buy the freedom of the slaves, he counselled, whatever the cost, and let us 'Dig away this accursed mountain of sorrow once and forever out of the world.'

He lectured against slavery as far as Missouri and down into Kentucky. He wrote Theodore Parker in 1855, 'We all love and honour you here, and have come to think of every drop of your blood and every moment of your life as a national value. Ever new strength and victory to you!'

He met John Brown and presented him to his townsfolk at Concord. After his arrest, he predicted that 'His martyrdom, if perfected, will make the gallows as glorious as the cross.'

Commendation of Walt Whitman

It was in 1855, also, that he received a copy of an unknown young poet's just published work from New York, Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass*, and gave it high praise. This praise from the famed sage of Concord helped Whitman substantially to make his way as a poet, and he was forever after grateful to Emerson for it.

Throughout the Civil War, he spoke and worked for the Union cause, and in 1862 went to lecture in Washington, D.C. and was taken to see Lincoln twice, by both Secretary Seward and Senator Sumner. He rejoiced in Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation.

1869 found him teaching a course at Harvard, and in 1870 he went by train all the way to California.

In 1872 Coolidge Castle burned, but most of his books and papers were saved, and also most of the furnishings of the house. People spontaneously sent money, more than eighteen thousand dollars, and the house was rebuilt.

This brings us to the fourth and last period of Emerson's life. While the house was being rebuilt, he went once more to Europe and all the way to Egypt, travelling with his daughter Ellen, who had become almost his secretary-companion. But he was beginning to suffer lapses of memory, and was glad when the time came once more

to return home. A grand reception awaited his return. The streets of Concord had been especially decorated and garlanded. Green arches had been set up, and the railroad train bringing him from Boston tied its whistle down all the way in from Walden Pond to the Concord station to announce his coming. He slipped back into the old, happy life very easily in his new, rebuilt farm-home.

Now, he was coasting. People came to meet him by the hundreds, some just to sit for a while in his benevolent presence. He was the Sage of Concord, the American oracle. He continued to do some lectures, but had frequent lapses when he couldn't find his place. But still the demands for him poured in, and, with Ellen's help, he tried to respond. It was enough, many said, if he would only come himself and read to them the words long since familiar. But he was finding it harder and harder to continue.

In 1879 and 1880 he attended the Annual Meetings of the Unitarian Association at Boston, probably because Ellen wished him to do so. In 1881 he gave his last public lecture to the Massachusetts Historical Society, on Carlyle.

Robert Collyer, Minister of our own church here in New York City, visited him that year, and said that he communed with him as with 'one in a dream'. Whitman came, and John Burroughs, to sit for a while in his presence.

At the end

In April of 1882, while out on one of his long daily rambles, he was caught in a sudden shower and wet through. He came down with pneumonia and his tired, old body, almost in its eightieth year, could not throw it off. At the end, the image of 'little Waldo', forty years dead, seemed to come back to him, and his last words were, 'Oh, that beautiful boy!'

As the word of his passing spread through Concord town, the people poured into the streets, and the church belled seventy-nine times, once for each year of his life. The following Sunday, after a memorial service at the Unitarian Church, his neighbours followed the casket with his body to its resting place beside Hawthorne and Thoreau and others of the famous whom he had eulogized, in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery on the high ridge watching over the town, where it remains today, marked by a large granite boulder.

Emerson's message

The elements in Emerson's message that come through unerringly still today are his emphasis upon absolute individual freedom of belief, and the integrity of the individual conscience in its search for truth and right. He would have approved of a poem E. E. Cummings, contemporary Unitarian poet, wrote, called *Be Yourself*.

to be nobody but yourself
in a world which is doing
its best day and night to
make you everybody else
means to fight the hardest
battle which any
human being can
fight and never
stop fighting.

Yes, Emerson would have agreed with that.

He professed a discipleship to advancing truth. 'Truth' he once said, 'never is; it is always becoming.'

He believed that all men could know God by direct, personal experience, by virtue of their moral nature, and indeed can know him in no other way: 'There is no screen or ceiling between our heads and the infinite heaven, so is there no bar or wall in the soul, where man, the effect ceases, and God, the cause begins. The walls are taken away. We lie open on one side to the deeps of spiritual nature, to the attributes of God.'

He was master of the thought-provoking aphorism. Oracular, arresting aphorisms rolled off his tongue as easily as do epithets from the tongues of many. They twinkle out of his essays like stars on a midsummer night :

A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere.

An institution is the length and shadow of one man.

Life wastes itself whilst we are preparing to live.

The religions of the world are the ejaculations of a few imaginative men.

Men of character are the conscience of the society to which they belong.

The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.

Every man takes care that his neighbour does not cheat him. But a day comes when he begins to care that he does not cheat his neighbour... Then he has changed his market cart into a chariot of the sun.

That is always best which gives me to myself.

With each new mind, a new secret of nature transpires ; nor can the Bible be closed until the last great man is born.

Great men exist that there may be greater men.

No questions are unanswerable. Whatever curiosity the order of things has awakened in our minds, the order of things can satisfy.

The truth takes flesh in forms that can express it.

By the permanence of Nature, minds are trained alike, and made intelligible to each other.

The end pre-exists in the means.

In sayings such as these, Emerson taught the great principles of the unitary character

of life and the universality of truth, and thus laid the foundation for the Unitarian Universalist movement of our own day.

At the end of his Divinity School address, Emerson counselled the young theologs as to what they should do.

Now let us do what we can to rekindle the smouldering, nigh-quenched fire on the altar. The evils of the church that now is are manifest. The question returns, what shall we do? I confess, all attempts to project and establish a Cultus with new rites and forms, seems to me vain. Faith makes us and not we it, and faith makes its own forms. ...Rather let the breath of new life be breathed by you through the forms already existing. For if once you are alive, you shall find that they shall become plastic and new. The remedy to their deformity is first, soul, and evermore, soul. ...What hinders that now, everywhere, in pulpits, in lecture rooms, in houses, in fields, wherever the invitation of men or your own occasions lead you, you speak the very truth, as your life and conscience teach it, and cheer the waiting, fainting hearts of men with new hope and new revelation?

I look for the hour when that supreme Beauty which ravished the soul of those Eastern men,... shall speak in the West also.... I look for the new Teacher that shall follow so far those shining laws that he shall see them come full circle ; shall see their rounding complete grace ; shall see the identity of the law of gravitation with purity of heart ; and shall show that the Ought, that Duty, is one thing with Science, with Beauty, and with Joy.

His advice and hope are equally sound for us, and all of us, and set a mark for us to aim for.

KANYAKUMARI: VIVEKANANDA AT LAND'S END

JOHN SCHLENCK

[Background: After travelling the length and breadth of India for three years as a mendicant friar, Swami Vivekananda arrived at Kanyakumari, the southernmost tip, of the country, in late December, 1892. This place of pilgrimage contains a temple to Goddess Kanyākumārī, an aspect of the Universal Mother. About 1/4 mile from the shore, twin rocks jut out from the sea. After worshipping at Mother's temple, Vivekananda swam through the turbulent, shark-infested waters to the further of the two rocks. This rock is now known as Vivekananda Rock and is capped by a beautiful memorial temple to the great Swami. He remained for three days and nights on the solitary rock, meditating intensely on the condition of India—her present degradation and the misery of the people, her past glory and future potentialities. In this meditation his ideas for the regeneration of the nation took shape, ideas which eventually found concrete expression in the Ramakrishna Mission. At the same time, he decided to accept the advice of several of his followers to go to America the following year to attend the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago. He would seek material aid for his country while sharing India's spiritual wealth with the Western world.]

The text is given on the following pages. The composer feels strong parallels between Vivekananda and some of the Hebrew prophets, and so has drawn from Biblical as well as Indian sources.]

1. THE CRY OF THE PEOPLE; THE DIVINE RESPONSE

Full chorus

Tamaso mā jyotirgamaya. (From darkness lead me to light.)
Out of the depths we cry to Thee.
Out of the darkness lead us to light.¹
Kyrie eleison. (Lord have mercy.)²
Lead us from darkness to light.
Lord have mercy on us.
Lead us from bondage to freedom.
Out of darkness lead us forward into Thy light;
Out of bondage lead us forward to Thy freedom.
Lord have mercy on us!
The world is burning in misery! Can you sleep?³

Men's chorus

I have seen the affliction of my people and have heard their cry.
I know their suffering, and have come down to deliver them.⁴

1. *Bṛhadāranyaka-Upaniṣad* 1.3.28.; *Psalm* 130:1.

2. *Psalm* 51:1 (in Greek—used in traditional Christian services).

3. Swami Vivekananda's letter to Sister Nivedita, 7.6.1896.

4. *Exodus* 3:7-8.

2. PRAYER AT MOTHER'S TEMPLE

Women's chorus

(First alone, then in counterpoint with first two lines of next solo section)
Devī Kanyākumārī Nārāyaṇī namostute. (Salutation to Thee, O virgin Mother Kanyā.)

Śaraṇāgata dīnārta paritrāṇa parāyaṇe, sarvasyārtihare devi nārāyaṇī namostute.
(Thou art full of eagerness to save the poor and the afflicted who take refuge in Thee. Salutation to Thee, O Divine Mother who removest the misery of all.)⁵

Solo

O Divine Mother, who art ever eager to save the poor and the afflicted who take refuge in Thee, I bow to Thee, O power of mercy.

Who else but Thou, dispeller of poverty, pain and fear, hast an ever sympathetic heart to help all beings?⁶

O Eternal Mother, who takest away the misery of all Thy children, I bow to Thee, I give my life.

Men's chorus, then full chorus

Yā devī sarvabhūteṣu śaktirūpeṇa saṁsthitā, namastasyai, namastasyai, namastasyai, namo namaḥ. (Salutations again and again to the Divine Mother who abides in all beings in the form of power.)⁷

Solo

(In counterpoint with previous choral section.)

O embodiment of energy, fill me with energy.

O embodiment of strength, bestow strength upon me.

O embodiment of power, grant power unto me.

O embodiment of courage, inspire me with courage.

O embodiment of fortitude, steel me with fortitude.⁸

3. SWIM TO THE ROCK

Full chorus

Plunge into the dark waters, noble hero!

Into the tumult and danger, go alone,

Without fear, to seek your destiny.

Swim out to the far rock, great soul,

To look back at the scarred and sacred land :

See it whole and know its destiny.

5. *Caṇḍī* 11.12.

6. *ibid*, 4.17.

7. *ibid*, 5.32-34.

8. *Śukla Yajur-Veda Samhitā*, 19.9.

Plunge into the great waters of your heart,
 Into the turmoil of pity and despair ;
 Find there the key to unlock man's destiny.
 Plung deep into the fathomless Alone ;
 Touching the core of infinite mercy,
 Come forth transfigured, to fulfill your destiny.

4. MEDITATION

Solo

Why has the sacred land become as a burning ground ?
 Why have strength and wisdom yielded to desolation ?
 Why do ignorance, hunger and weakness reign everywhere ?
 Yet, beneath the dust and ashes, living treasures endure.
 Why do the descendants of saints and sages starve and cower in wretchedness ?
 Why do the guardians of religion oppress the people and atrophy in their own narrowness ?
 Why do separation, jealousy and hardheartedness reign everywhere ?
 Yet devotion and kindness dwell even now among the poor.
 Where have gone the fearlessness of the Vedas, the heroism of the Epics, the liberality of Kṛṣṇa, the compassion of Buddha and Caitanya ?
 Where are manliness, sympathy for the poor, sacrifice for the common good ?
 Where are they gone, where are they gone in this living death ?
 Yet these very qualities I have seen fully manifest in this age, in my master, Sri Ramakrishna.
 Because the nation closed in on itself, smug in its own conceit, not caring to give or learn ;
 Because its great treasure of divine knowledge was locked up in books and monasteries ;
 Because the people have lost confidence in themselves and in their heritage, and blindly imitate foreign ways ;
 Stagnation, decay and hopelessness reign everywhere.
 Yet in my master I have seen the living glory of the nation ; in him flow living waters of truth for all mankind.
 Can the holy land once more open its doors,
 To give generously of its own treasure,
 To receive with wisdom treasure from abroad ?
 Can the divine heritage be released from its prison
 And spread broadcast to every town and village,
 Even to the humblest cottage ?
 Can the lost confidence of the people, in themselves
 And in their heritage, be restored, so that once again
 They walk erect in strength and pride ?
 O God, my master, my Divine Mother,
 Hear my prayer, show me my path.
 I do not want my own bliss or freedom ;

I do not care for a religion
 That cannot put bread into the mouth of the hungry
 Or wipe away the widow's tears.⁹
 I only crave for guidance and strength
 To serve your living images,
 To right the wrongs inflicted on your people for ages.
 How long, O Lord ?¹⁰

5. REVELATION

Men's chorus

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,
 And before you were born I consecrated you :
 I appointed you a prophet to the nations.¹¹

Full chorus

Arise, shine, for your light is come :¹²
 Preach good tidings to the meek, bind up the broken-hearted,
 Open the prison of them that are bound, comfort all that mourn,
 Give unto them beauty in place of ashes,
 The oil of joy in place of mourning,
 The mantle of praise for the spirit of heaviness :
 And they shall build up the old wastes,
 They shall raise up the former desolations.¹³

Men's chorus

Prophecy unto them,
 'O ye dry bones, hear the word of the Lord :
 "Behold, I will lay sinews upon you, and will bring up flesh upon you, and put
 breath into you, and ye shall live." '¹⁴

Full chorus

' "O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your
 graves, and shall put my spirit into you, and ye shall live." '¹⁵
 He who burns with the bliss and suffers the sorrow
 Of every creature within his own heart,

9. *Letters of Swami Vivekananda.*

10. *Psalm* 13:1.

11. *Jeremiah* 1:5.

12. *Isaiah* 60:1.

13. *ibid*, 61:1-4.

14. *Ezekiel* 37:4-6.

15. *ibid*, 37:12,14.

Making his own each bliss and each sorrow—
I hold him highest of all the Yogis.¹⁶

Solo

(Mostly paraphrased from letters and poems of Swami Vivekananda, and from 'The Voice of the Mother' by Nivedita, a compilation of Swami Vivekananda's utterances.)

Sacrifice...

Out of the bedrock of sacrifice
Rise the twin pillars of renunciation and service.
These must be the ideals of the nation—
Renunciation of self and service of man,
Of man as God's living image—
For the deliverance of the nation,
For the liberation of all humanity.
Let the flame of self-sacrifice
Consume our youth with a passion beyond control of thought.
Let them thirst for renunciation as others for enjoyment.
Forgetting their own bliss and freedom,
Let them count labour and suffering and service
As sweet instead of bitter.
Seeking no mercy for themselves,
They shall bear great vessels of mercy to others.
They shall form a living bridge
For the multitude to cross over into joy and freedom.
They shall go from village to village,
Worshipping God in his living images—
Serving God the ignorant, God the hungry, God the poor and the sick,
God's living presence in every human form.
When these living images of God
Are again made strong in body and mind,
Tell them of their divine heritage,
Of the freedom and fearlessness of the soul,
Of the Oneness of all existence.
Teach them how to manifest their divinity
In every movement of life.
Here before us is God's living presence,
Visible, real, omnipresent.
Rejecting these living Gods, where shall we worship?

Full chorus

Before I formed you in the womb I knew you
And before you were born I consecrated you;

¹⁶. *Bhagavad-Gītā* 6.32.

I appointed you a prophet to the nations.¹⁷
 Go forth from your country and your kindred
 Unto the land that I will show you.¹⁸
 Go forth across the sea and over the mountains
 Unto the new land that I will show you.
 I will bless you and make your name great;
 Through you may all the families of earth find blessing.

17. *Jeremiah* 1:5.

18. *Genesis* 12:1-3, slightly revised.

HOLY PLACES IN KASHMIR

PROF. CHAMAN LAL SAPRU

The scenic beauty of Kashmir is famous all over the world, and attracts every year thousands of tourists who seek relaxation, enjoyment and the charms of nature. Few people outside the State, however, know that it also abounds in a number of pilgrimage centres. Indeed, a popular Sanskrit verse says, 'All the holy places of the world are found in the region of Kashmir.'¹ Living as they do in geographical isolation from the rest of India, Kashmiris have learnt to keep the roots of their culture alive by identifying their rivers, lakes and places with the holy *tīrthas* of the mainland. Thus they see the Ganga in their own Gangabal, and Prayaga in the *saṅgam* (confluence) of their own rivers the Vitastā (more commonly as the Jhelum) and the Sindhu at Shadipur.

From Vedic times to the twelfth century of the present era, Kashmir was one of the important centres of Hindu culture, religion and philosophy. The vitality of the past still survives in the faith, traditions and ways of life of Kashmiri Hindus. Every

Hindu who believes in the Sanātana traditions worships God in the form of *Pañcāyatan*, the Five Deities (literally, the 'five abodes') namely, Gaṇeśa, Śiva, Viṣṇu, Devī and Sūrya. We have in Kashmir temples and *tīrthas* (holy places) dedicated to all these deities and also to Avatārs like Śrī Rāma. Let us first note some of the important places of pilgrimage associated with these deities before taking up a general survey of the holy places in Kashmir.

Gaṇeśa

Gaṇeśa is worshipped as the *ādi deva* (First Deity) in all Hindu rites. He is the son of Śiva, and is considered to be *siddhidātā* (the boon-giver) and *vighnahartā* (destroyer of obstacles). In Srinagar we have a prominent temple of Gaṇeśa in the heart of the city. It was formerly under the management of the Dharmarth Trust, but is now managed by a local managing committee. An annual festival on Vaiśākha Śuklā Caturdaśī is held in the premises of the temple, and a *mahāyajña* by the Brahman Maha Mandal is performed on the Prahma Jayanti day. There is a legend that during the period of the Paṭhan rulers,

1. पृथिव्यां यानि तीर्थाणि तानि कश्मीरमण्डले ;
Nilamata Purāṇa (An ancient work popular in Kashmir)

several hundred years back, the original idol of Lord Gaṇeśa had been submerged in the Vitastā by the Pandits to save it from desecration. During the Dogra rule the idol was reclaimed by the devotees and installed on the Vaiśākha Śuklā Caturdaśi in the temple. This ancient idol is placed in the outer temple by the side of the Śiva *lingam*, and two bigger and more attractive idols, most probably donated by Dogra rulers, are in the main temple.

There is another important temple of Lord Gaṇeśa at the foot of the hillock of Hari Parbat which every Hindu considers it his sacred duty to go round everyday. Lord Gaṇeśa's temple is the first amongst the shrines strewn on this hillock.

Even the holy pilgrimage to Sri Amarnathji starts with the worship of Śrī Gaṇeśa at Ganeshabal near Pahalgam.

Śankara or Śiva

There is hardly any place of worship in Kashmir where you will not find a *Śiva lingam*. In the world-famous cave of Amarnath an ice *lingam* is formed to full size on the fifteenth of the bright half of every month, (Pūrṇimā), and is an object of reverential attraction to the devotees of all faiths. This holy place is visited on the Śrāvaṇa Pūrṇimā every year by thousands of pilgrims from far-off places. The pilgrimage starts from the Dashnami Akhādā of Srinagar in the form of a procession. The Mahant (abbot) of the Akhādā carries the holy silver mace of Lord Śiva and is followed by hundreds of Sādhus. They reach the cave on the fullmoon day of Śrāvaṇa, which coincides with the popular Rakṣā-Bandhan festival of North India. Among the great men who have visited this holy cave, the names of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramtirtha are worth mentioning. Swami Ramtirtha composed beautiful verses in praise of the Lord. Swami Vivekananda had a profound mystical ex-

perience in the cave. Afterwards he said to his European disciples, 'The image was the Lord Himself. It was all worship there. I never have been to anything so beautiful, so inspiring.'²

Another beautiful stone-temple of Lord Śiva is situated on a hill in the Srinagar city commanding a magnificent view. The temple is managed by the Dharmarth Trust. The hill, known as Gopādrī in ancient Sanskrit texts, had the shrine of Jyeṣṭha Rudra on it. It is believed that the great Ācārya Śrī Śaṅkara on his visit to Srinagar, meditated on this hill which now bears his name. Swami Vivekananda has given the following description of the temple: 'Look! what genius the Hindu shows in placing his temples! He always chooses a grand scenic effect! See, the hill commands the whole of Kashmir.'³

The snow-clad peaks around the valley bear one or the other name of Lord Śiva, like 'Mahādeva', 'Harmukha', etc. It was under the Mahadeva peak in the picturesque range of Harwan that the famous Śiva-Sūtras (the basis of Śaiva philosophy) were composed. Devotees visit this place particularly on the same day on which the pilgrimage to Amarnathji is undertaken. They also visit the following places of worship connected with Śiva on the same day: Dhyaneswar in Bandipur, Thajwor in Bijbehara and Harishwar in Khonmoh.

There are numerous temples of Śiva in the whole valley. Among them Sadashiva temple in Purushyar and Someshwar temple in Habbakadal find mention in the famous histories and Purāṇas of Kashmir.

Viṣṇu

The only holy place connected with Lord Viṣṇu in Kashmir is Vishnu-Pada or

2. His Eastern and Western Disciples, *The Life of Swami Vivekananda* (Calcutta: Advaita Ashrama, 1974) p. 592.

3. *ibid*, p. 583.

Kaunsar Naga. This is a big lake situated at a height of more than 14,000 feet in Anantnag district. The lake is shaped like a foot and it is believed that Lord Viṣṇu had placed his holy foot in the place where the present big lake is found.

Devī or Divine Mother

We have numerous places of pilgrimage dedicated to the Divine Mother in Kashmir of which Ksheer Bhawani, Sri Sharika Mandir, Mahakali Mandir (in Srinagar and Vadora), Jwala Mukhi (in Khrew), Shailapuri (in Nagabal, Baramulla), Baladevi, Sri Vaishnodevi and Sarthal Devi (in Jammu region) are well known. The most important among them all is of course Ksheer Bhawani.

The temple of Goddess Mahārajanī, known as Ksheer Bhawani, is situated about 14 miles away from Srinagar at the village Tulamula in the famous Sindh valley. The road leading to Ksheer Bhawani has also a spiritual significance. While going to Ksheer Bhawani first we reach 'Vicharnag' (the lake of discrimination). Then we reach 'Tyangal-bal' (the hill of burning charcoals) and Kavaj-var (the fire of cremation ground) and Amar-her (the immortal staircase). These two names denote renunciation. The third place is Aanchar Lake, which derives its origin from Aachar (righteousness). After going through these places we reach the cherished destination, the holy place of the Divine Mother, the abode of love, pure and divine, and be with the Divine Mother.

An old Sanskrit text called the *Bhṛngeśa Samhitā*⁴ carries a chapter known as 'Rajanī-Prādurbhava' which gives a description of the origin of this temple. Rāvaṇa, the demon-king of Lanka, in order to attain unlimited power worshipped Mother

Mahā-rajanī. The Divine Mother after being moved by the immense *tapas* (penance) performed by Rāvaṇa, bestowed upon him many boons. Soon after, Rāvaṇa began to lead a life of luxury, and after forcibly taking away Sītā, prepared himself for a battle with Lord Rāma. After watching the misbehaviour of Rāvaṇa, the Devī asked Hanumān to take Her to Satisar (Kashmir) along with 360 Nagas. Hanumānji installed the Devī at the Tulamula village in Kashmir Valley. Here the Devī is being worshipped as 'Ksheer Bhawani' or Goddess Rajanī. Only flowers, milk and sweets are offered to Her.

The Brahmins of Tulamula have been described in *Rājatarangini* as full with spiritual powers. For quite sometime in the past this important *tīrtha* remained under flood waters, and it was only after a pious Brahmin Sri Krishna Pandit had a vision of it that the place was rediscovered. He was a great devotee of the Devī and composed the famous hymn the *Rajanī Stotra*. Later on a beautiful marble temple was erected in the centre of the 'Kunda' (spring) by the Dogra rulers. This spring changes colours and is shaped like 'OM' in the Sharada script. Every year an annual festival is held on Jyēṣṭha Śuklā Aṣṭami at this holy place.

During his stay in Kashmir Swami Vivekananda visited this holy place twice or thrice. Soon after he had had the stupendous vision of Mother Kālī at a solitary place near Srinagar, Swamiji went to Ksheer Bhawani on September 30, 1898. There he lived a life of intense *tapas* and devotion to the Mother for a week. His biography gives the following details of his stay.

Before this famous shrine of the Mother he daily performed Homa, and worshipped Her with offering of Kheer (thickened milk) made from one maund of milk, rice and almonds. He told his beads like any humble pilgrim; and as a special Sadhana, every morning he worshipped

4. This text, source of many other 'Māhātmyas', is not extant now.

a Brahmin pandit's little daughter as Uma Kumari, the Divine Virgin. He began to practise the sternest austerities....

When he returned to Srinagar, he appeared before his disciples a transfigured presence, writes Nivedita. ... 'No more "Hari Om!" It is all "Mother" now' he said, sitting down. 'All my patriotism is gone. Everything is gone. Now it is only "Mother! Mother!"... Mother said to me: "What, even if unbelievers should enter my temples, and defile my images! What is that to you? Do you protect Me? Or do I protect you?" So there is no more patriotism. I am only a little child.'

One day at Kshir-Bhawani he had been pondering over the ruination and desecration of the temple wrought by the Muslim invaders... It was then that he had heard the Mother speaking as above... In his meditation on the Terrible, in the dark hours of the nights at Kshir-Bhawani, there were other visions that he confided only to one or two of his brother-disciples...

At the same shrine, in the course of worship one day, the Swami was brooding with pain on the dilapidated condition of the temple. He wished in his heart that he were able to build a new one there in its place... He was startled in his ruminations by the voice of the Mother Herself, saying to him, 'My child! if I so wish I can have innumerable temples and magnificent monastic centres. I can even this moment raise a seven-storeyed golden temple on this very spot.'⁵

Sun temple at Martand

Only five miles away from the town of Anantnag on the way to Amarnath, is a village known as Mattan or Bhawan. In ancient scriptures the name of this place is given as Martand (the sun). Here is a beautiful spring and a small rivulet flowing nearby known as the Chaka. On the banks of the Chaka thousands of devotees from northern India perform *śrāddha* to their deceased ancestors in *adhikamāsa* months on Vijaya Saptami. About 2½ km. from the spring are the ruins of a magnificent

temple dedicated to the Sun known as Martand. The temple in Indo-Greek architectural style was built by Lalitāditya, a great king of Kashmir. Swami Vivekananda visited this place at least three times.

Other shrines

The two prominent places of pilgrimage of Muslims and Sikhs are Hazratbal and Chhatipadshahi. The Hazratbal shrine on the Dal lake facing east is known as the Second Mecca. The holy relic of Prophet Muhammad is preserved here. The Chhatipadshahi is a Gurdwara near Hari Parbat which had been visited by the sixth Guru of the Sikhs. Once upon a time the region of Kashmir was an important centre of Buddhism, the influence of which is seen in some temple sculpture. At present Buddhism is the dominant religion of Ladak which is now a part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir.

It shall be noted that in this article we are dealing with only the holy places in Kashmir proper. Those in Jammu and Ladak have their own distinctive features and have not been included here. Let us now have a bird's-eye view of the innumerable holy places found all over the valley of Kashmir.

SOUTHERN KASHMIR

Amarnath

The natural cave with its huge ice Śiva Lingam is the most famous centre of pilgrimage in Kashmir.

Vetha-Vatur

Here is the source of river Vitasta. Annual pilgrimage to this place is performed on the thirteenth day of the dark half of the Bhādra month.

⁵. *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, p. 598, 599-600

Khana Barni

Dedicated to Divine Mother, it is near Qazigund.

Kapal Mochan

Annual festival on Śrāvaṇa Śuklā Dvādaśī is held here and devotees perform *śrāddha*. It is situated near Shopian.

Manzgam

A temple in the forest, dedicated to Mother Rajna. Annual festival is held on Jyēṣṭha Aṣṭami.

Anantnag

This holy spring after which the town as well as the district is named, is famous for its crystal-clear water. Annual festival of Ananta Devata is held on the fourteenth day of the dark half of Bhādra month.

Thajiwore

It is situated near Bijbihara. An old Śiva temple is found here and the annual festival is held in Śrāvaṇa Pūrṇimā.

Gautama Nag

It is situated at about 4½ km. away from Anantnag.

Lokabhawan

Annual festival is held here and a *mahāyajña* performed. It is 11 miles from Anantnag.

Uma Nagari

A temple and a spring of Goddess Umā is found here. Annual *mahāyajña* is performed here.

Nagadandi

Sri Ramakrishna Maha Sammelan, managed by the Vivekananda Rock Memorial Committee of Kanyakumari, is situated here. An ancient spring and a few idols of some ancient temple are found here. An annual festival is held on the day Chhari (Amarnath pilgrimage) starts. It is 3 km. away from Achhabal.

Gosayeen Gond

An attractive neat and clean Ashram is found here. During Amarnath Yatra a number of devotees visit this Ashram and stay and meditate for a few days.

Vishnu Pad

Known also as Kaunsarnaga, it is about 14 miles away from Aharbal fall; the journey to it is hazardous.

Jwala Mukhi

This *tīrtha* dedicated to Goddess Jvālā (Flame) is situated about 20 km. from Srinagar in Anantnag district. A temple of Jvalaji is situated on a hillock there. Annual festival is held in Jvālā-Caturdaśī (fourteenth day of the dark second half of Āṣāḍ).

Kurukshetra

It is near Pampore (famous for saffron, where the great mystic poetess of Kashmir, Lalleshwari of Lalded, lived). Festivals are held here on the occasions of solar and lunar eclipses.

Baladevi

This famous *tīrtha* is dedicated to Bala Bhagavati (Tripurasundarī). She is the family deity of the Dogra rulers, and the temple is managed by the Dharmarth Trust. This place of pilgrimage is situated in Balahama near Pampur.

NORTHERN KASHMIR

Koti Tirtha

It is situated on the right bank of the Vitasta (Jhelum) at Baramulla. It is believed that the holy waters of one crore *tirthas* reach here through the Vitasta and is therefore considered very sacred.

Shailaputri (Devibal)

This *tirtha* is situated on the left bank of the Vitasta at Baramulla. This is a miniature Ksheer-Bhawani.

Nandkeshwar (Seer-Jagir)

A famous temple of Śiva known as Nandakeśvar Bhairava, situated on the left bank of the Vitasta at Sopore. The annual festival is held on Jyeṣṭha Amāvasyā here.

Nandkesawar (Sumbal)

An ancient place for worship of Nandakeśvar Bhairava situated in Sumbal village.

Gophabal

Situated near Langet, Handwara.

Bhadrakali

This Tirtha dedicated to Goddess Kālī is situated in a thick pine forest near Vadipora (Handwara).

Takar (Gushi)

Situated near Kupvara, this *tirtha* is dedicated to the Divine Mother (Mahārajanī).

Chandigam

Situated in the picturesque valley of Lolab in Sogam. A monastery of Sannyasins belonging to the Niranjani Akhada has been established here.

Gosayeen Teng

Situated on a hillock at Baramulla. Some springs dedicated to Bhagavān Śrī Rāmacandra are found here.

Sharadaji

Now in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, and situated on the bank of Kishanganga, it was a famous centre of pilgrimage throughout the country before partition. It is considered to be a *siddha pīṭha*, like the Sharika Chakreshwar temple on Hari Parbat. It was once upon a time a great centre of learning, and students as well as scholars from far off places used to come here. Some monuments still exist there. The place was for centuries associated with the culmination of Hindu religious scholarship and authority which even the great teacher Śrī Śaṅkara had to acknowledge.

DISTRICT SRINAGAR

Shankaracharya Hill

A beautiful Śiva temple exists on the hillock called Shankaracharya Hill. Annual festival on the day of Amarnath Darśan is held here.

Hari Parbat

A hillock in Srinagar city, it has many temples around it. The main temple is of Goddess Śārikā, the presiding Deity of Kashmir. Annual festivals on the first Navarātrī and Āṣāḍha Navami are held here. This is considered a *siddha pīṭha*, a place of awakened Divine Presence.

Ksheer Bhawani

Twenty kilometres away from Srinagar, it is a spring in which a temple has been constructed dedicated to Mother Rajanī. Annual festival is held on Jyeṣṭha Aṣṭami.

Gangabal

A lake situated near Harmukh peak ; it is the most beautiful lake in Kashmir. Annual festival is held on the Ganga Aṣṭami in Bhādra month. People immerse the ashes of their dead relatives here and also perform śrāddha. The journey to this place is most hazardous but is much rewarding.

Guptaganga (Nishat)

Just adjacent to the Nishat garden. On the Vaiśākhi festival devotees come from all over Kashmir to have a dip in the spring here. A Śaiva Math is also attached to it where Sunday classes on Śaivism are conducted by the well-known teacher Swami Lakshman Joo.

Jyeshtheshwara

A temple of Jyeṣṭhā Devī is located in between Shankaracharya Hill and Chasma Shahi. A pilgrimage to this place on Thursdays in the month Jyeṣṭha is considered auspicious.

Gangajatan

Situated in the tehsil of Badgam. On Ganga Aṣṭami day people come here to have a dip. It is almost a dry spring but on this particular day, at a particular hour, water gushes out and devotees have their holy bath.

Badipur

Situated in the tehsil Chadura near Nagam, it is a miniature Ksheer Bhawani. Annual *mahāyajña* on Vaiśākha Śuklā Aṣṭami is held here.

Mahakali Asthapan

Situated by the side of the famous

Khanaqah of Shah Hamdan ; it is believed that a magnificent temple of Mahā Kālī once existed here. The annual festival is held here on Pauṣa Kṛṣṇa Pakṣa Aṣṭami.

Vaskur

Dedicated to the mystic poetess Rūpa Bhavānī, considered to be an incarnation of Goddess Śārikā. Annual festival is held here on Sahib-Saptami, the seventh day of the dark fortnight of Māgha.

Vichar Nag

Situated on Srinagar-Leh Highway at a distance of about 10 km. from Srinagar. The annual festival is held on Caitra Amāvasyā the last day of the Kashmiri calender.

The famous Kashmiri Pandit, Shirya Bhat, responsible for the change of heart of Sultan Zainulabidin, later known as Budshah (the Great Monarch), lived here.

JAMMU

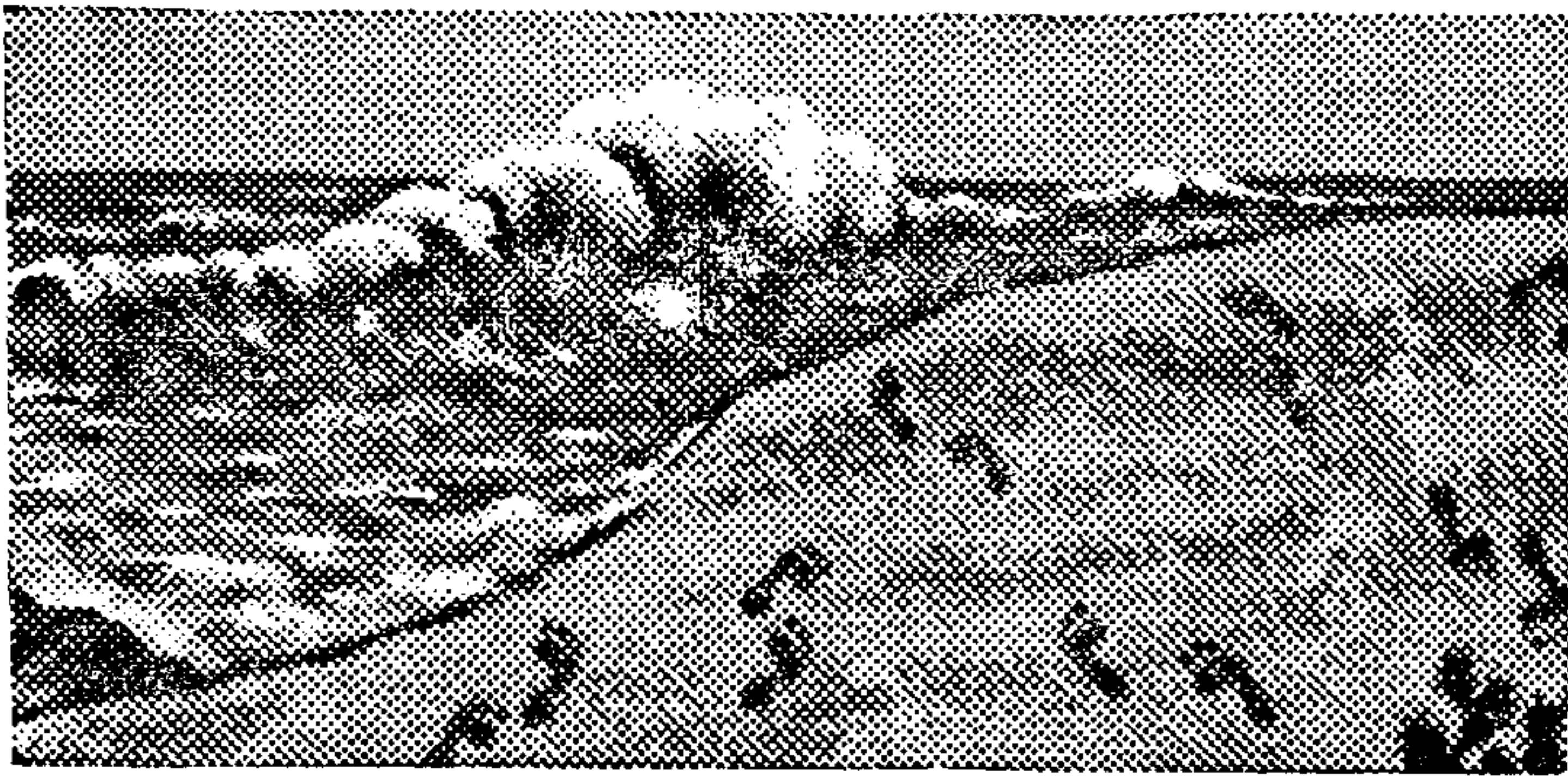
Vaishno Devi

This is as famous as Amarnathji and Ksheer-Bhawani of Kashmir. Thousands of pilgrims, mostly from northern India, visit this place. The Divine Mother in her Vaiṣṇavī form is being worshipped here. The main temple is 11 km. above Katra, a town on Jammu-Srinagar National Highway. Devotees prefer to visit the shrine on Nava-Rātra days.

Sarthal Devi

It is situated in Doda district of Kishtwar. There is a popular belief that Mother Śārikā (Hari Parbat) shifts during winter to this place.

There are many other places of pilgrimage in Jammu region such as Burha Amarnath, Sudh Mahdev, etc.



HUMAN TRENDS

VINOBA'S PATH OF PEACEFUL REVOLUTION

DR. ANIL BARAN RAY

In the wake of posthumous award of 'Bharat Ratna' to Acharya Vinoba Bhave, it will be worth while to take note of his contributions towards the betterment of our life and culture. This article makes the point that Acharya Bhave, as the prefix to his name so rightfully depicted, was, above all, a teacher who taught his countrymen, indeed, the whole world about the ways of achieving a new social order.

Training in non-violence

Before he became a teacher himself, he did his homework with no less a teacher than Mahatma Gandhi. Having trained him in Satyagraha and Non-violence, the master was full of admiration for his pupil: 'He is, next to me, the best exponent and embodiment of non-violence. I use the words "next to me" because he has taken the cult of non-violence from me... he has greater power of concentration than myself. His antipathy of war is born of pure non-violence.' Bhave's first-ever chance to apply his master's principle into practice came when he was sponsored by the master as the 'first Satyagrahi' to offer non-violent resistance to the British in the campaign of October, 1940.

Perception of the problem

The experience thus gained must have instilled the necessary confidence in him to carry on the non-violent struggle absolutely on his own during the communist-led peasant uprising of 1949 in Telengana in Andhra Pradesh. Gandhiji was no longer there to physically guide him, but then the disciple made Gandhiji's principle his own and as such felt the constant 'presence of Bapu' in the mission that he undertook in Telengana. Though the Telengana uprising was quickly suppressed by the government, Bhave realized that physical suppression could not extinguish the spirit of unrest. The roots of the problem lay in the inequality of land distribution. While a few had too much of land in their possession, the rest had too little. Inequality bred discontent, and the discontent uprising. The solution lay in the equitable redistribution of land in such a way that the common good—the welfare of all—was served thereby.

Solution

How would he accomplish such a mission? He would undertake a walking

campaign and persuade the rich people who had land in excess of their requirements to make a sacrificial gift of their excess land to the landless. What does the possessor of property get in return? He gets the love, affection, feelings of brotherhood and friendliness and, above all, that sense of satisfaction, that *ānanda*, which comes out of a gift lovingly made. Let those who *have* look upon those who *have not*, just as a mother looks upon her child. Does not she feed the baby before she feeds herself? Does not she starve before she allows the baby to starve? Or for that matter, what does a father do when another son is born to him? Does not he bequeath to that son the share of the property? Is there any coercion in the sacrifice that a father or a mother makes for the sake of his or her child? None whatsoever. He or she does it for the pleasure of it. Let Bhoodan (landgift) be conceived in that spirit. Let rich people contribute their mite for the worship of Daridranārāyaṇa (God as the poor) just for the joy of it, for the fact that it is a genuine *yajña* (sacrifice) for a worthy cause. Once such spirit of motherly love and fatherly affection seizes the possessors of property, a new society will be born—a society free from exploitation, a society wherein each will contribute to the welfare of all, and in the process will contribute to his own enrichment. Man has got to realize that God pervades this universe. He is integrally related to his fellow human beings. By contributing to others he realizes his own self. Once such sense of *self-realization* dawns upon people, Sarvodaya, the uplift-of-all-by-each becomes a reality. The Sarvodaya of Vinoba's conception is thus nothing but the dedication of one's all for the well-being of all.

Revolution

What Vinoba Bhave sought to accom-

plish was a revolution in social life through a transformation of individual life. His ideological revolution was not, however, meant only for his fellow countrymen. It had a loftier conception of showing a new way to the whole world. As he says,

'People talk of the Russian revolution. America presents an example of a revolution of another type. But looking at these countries, I find that neither type of revolution is in accordance with the genius of India. They are not in accord with our traditions and culture. I firmly believe that India should be able to evolve, consistent with her ideals, a new type of revolution, based purely on love. If people begin to donate lands of their own free will, readily and generously, the whole atmosphere will undergo a sudden change in the twinkling of an eye, and India might well show the way to a new era of freedom, love and happiness for the whole world.'

Was Vinoba Bhave taking too facile a view of human nature? Did he fail to take account of the lower and baser elements of human nature in his overenthusiasm to emphasize the higher and the better? Critics castigating his philosophy of Sarvodaya as utopian have taken stands like that. But it should be noted that Vinoba Bhave did not regard human being as all 'reason' and 'spirit'. All that he said was that man was not all 'appetite' either. Man could be cured of his hunger for material possessions, he could be taught the lessons of *aparigraha* (non-possession), he could be instructed to enjoy with renunciation. His nature could be *elevated*. That was all Bhave said. To quote him, 'There are good and evil thoughts in the minds of everyone. And when a good thought enters the mind, it starts a struggle with evil thoughts. Ultimately, the good thought wins.'

Of course, the psychological change of the kind conceived by Acharya Bhave cannot be brought about by war and violent revolution. It can be accomplished only by the methods of teachers such as Buddha, Christ

and Gandhi. Acharya Vinoba Bhave was in line with these great teachers.

Conclusion

He wanted to better the world and men. And if the world is not any better today, if the acquisitive instinct of modern man has overtaken the rational and spiritual elements in him, if he runs madly after that which Maitreyī, the wife of the sage Yājñavalkya

in the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka-Upaniṣad*, despised ('What am I to do with that which would not enable me to realize the Supreme?'), the fault lies not in the teaching of the Acharya but in our inability to follow him properly. Acharya Vinoba Bhave said: 'Where there is an ideological revolution, life marches towards progress.' Viewed in that perspective, we should all ask ourselves: are we really making progress today? Are we marching forward?

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

POINTERS FROM NISARGADATTA MAHARAJ: BY R. S. BALSEKAR. Published by Chetana Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay-400 023. 1982. Pp. 223. Rs. 70.

Nisargadatta Maharaj (who passed away in September 1981) was a notable figure in the illustrious line of Indian householder saints who never stepped into limelight. Indeed he saw no reason why he should come out of his state of absorption in the Awareness which alone was real to him and dissipate himself in the seeming flow of forms and movements that is this world. His talks to the devotees who gathered in his small room in one of the lanes in Bombay were issued some years ago under the title *I AM THAT* and they attracted considerable attention both in India and abroad. This reviewer was agreeably surprised to find these volumes on a private book-shelf in Amsterdam.

The contents of the present book are of a different nature. They are philosophical expositions, at the level of the intellect, of the fundamental ideas and perceptions of the saint. To the actual events and teachings of the last three years of Maharaj, Sri Balsekhar has added his own reflections and observations.

In this approach, Awareness is the only truth. It is 'that state of absolute perfection when consciousness is at total rest and is not aware of its own *beingness*.... When consciousness, which is impersonal in rest, manifests itself by objectifying itself as phenomena, it identifies itself with each sentient object and thus arises

the concept of a separable personal individual "I" which treats all other phenomena as its objects, and each sentient being becomes the subject vis-a-vis all other sentient objects, although all are really objects appearing in consciousness.' (p. 195).

Consequently, it is argued, there is no rebirth, there being nothing to take birth. There is no soul, what is there is only the ego-formation which stands dissolved by the death of the body. Questions of suffering, progress, ethics lose their relevance in this perspective. All the same there are, in these pages, observations of importance for the spiritual seeker.

'Silence is total absence of word and thought... only when thought ceases, and conceptualization and objectivization are also suspended. When conceptualization ceases, identity, which is the basis of conceptualization, cannot remain, and in the absence of identity there is no bondage.'

Maharaj had been struck with a fatal disease in his last days. When devotees were concerned about the course of the illness, he remarked, 'My relative absence will be my absolute presence, and the moment of "death" will be the moment of the highest ecstasy, the last sensorial perception of the psychosomatic apparatus.' (p. 151)

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LETTERS OF SWAMI RAMDAS VOL. 1. 1982. Pp. 190. Rs. 11.

HINTS TO ASPIRANTS: BY SWAMI RAMDAS. 1981. Pp. 225. Rs. 5. Both published by Anandashram, Kanhangad, Dt. Cannanore (Kerala) 670 531.

It is always a spiritual education to read anything from the pen of Papa Ramdas. His writings are direct and communicate his own indubitable experience. The first book, containing his letters from 1928 to 1931 to various correspondents, from different areas of life, throw interesting light on the vicissitudes that his ministry underwent during those early years. His spiritual composure and trust in the wisdom of God when his Ashram was desecrated by vandals are an example. His counsel to aspirants on how to square the demands of worldly life with the requirements of the spiritual is practical. He identifies himself with each person to whom he writes and his letters reflect a love that is divine.

The other book is a compilation from his letters with a view to helping spiritual aspirants. He speaks of four kinds of sadhana: company of holy men; repetition of the divine Name; study of scriptures; meditation on divine attributes (p. 74). He points out that to remain a bachelor is not enough; one has to practise the discipline of Brahmacharya in thought, feeling and action. Pranayama shall not be overdone. Deep breathing is all right to promote steadiness of mind but *kumbhaka* becomes dangerous when overdone (p. 196). One must be humble. Feeling of superiority builds up the ego and is suicidal for the seeker.

'Concentration precedes meditation, and perfect stillness of the mind follows meditation... for developing concentration, the practice of fixing the mind on any of God's many Avatars or on the sound of His name, is the easiest way.' Swamiji lays great stress on *nāma japa* and the cultivation of love. He does not deprecate Jñāna but points out that ultimately Jñāna melts into Love.

Both the books are helpful companions to the seeker.

SRI M. P. PANDIT

SPIRITUAL SWEET FRAGRANCE: BY MAJOR K. S. ABDUL GAFFAR SAHEB. Published by Sri Ramana Arunachala Sadhanalaya, LIG 41, Malmaruti Extn., Belgaum (Karnataka). 1980. Pp. 120. Rs. 20.

The author of this book has had varied experiences in the national movement, administration, army and yogic mysticism. He is disarmingly free from all constraints, religious, social or grammatical. Here in this volume he gives an interesting account of his career, his entry into spiritual life, his major experiences and the poems he has been inspired to write.

He did not feel drawn to have the *darsan* of Sri Ramana Maharshi during the lifetime of the sage even though he was very near Tiruvannamalai at that time. It was some ten years after the passing of Bhagavan that he read Mr. Osborne's book on the Maharshi and got interested. 'One day before I slept I asked Bhagavan to give me *darsan*. He gave it to me in the dream. Bhagavan a tall person with loin cloth and stick in the right hand moving on the side of a road. Beside him was a cart full of Light. The cart had four wheels. No one was there anywhere near by to ply it. It is moving on its own, besides Bhagavan.' He decided that Bhagavan was his Guru and started to practise meditation on the teaching that 'there is a Right Heart in everyone of us and in it is the cavity in which, there is Light, this is Brahman.' Whatever the author's understanding of it, his night-long meditations had a spectacular result after eight years. Let him speak: 'Many were the experiences of fires ranging to the head and sweeping all over the body... Suddenly the fires set ablaze to the entire body and they rushed with fierce tongues from the sides to the head above and on reaching immediately both the sides fires converged with force and dipped into the cavity of the Right Heart and the *so'ham sphuraṇa* started working.'

The Major has since retired from the army and settled down to pursue his path and share his experiences with all who are interested. More books are to follow. The sincerity of the author is indeed touching.

SRI M. P. PANDIT

THE BLOOM OF INNER GLORY: BY N. N. RAJAN. Published by the author, Ramanagar, Sri Ramanasramam P. O., Tiruvannamalai-606 603. 1977. Pp. x+84. Rs. 3.

Sri N. N. Rajan who had the good fortune of coming into direct contact with Sri Ramana Maharshi for a long time, has portrayed in this book the spiritual genius of the Maharshi in a scholarly way. The appearance of sages

like Sri Ramana Maharshi on the world scene helps to uplift human experience to a higher dimension and serves to bring a new era of hope in times of crisis when human values are at stake. Sri Ramana Maharshi was not merely a beaconlight to the suffering humanity but an illumined soul, a siddha purusha, speaking from direct knowledge and spiritual experience, 'a man beyond description in his expression of dignity, greatness, self-control and calm strength of conviction.'

The book under review is a brief but useful documentation of the life and teachings of Sri Ramana Maharshi presented in a way which elicits our respect to the great Master. Sri N. N. Rajan deserves our congratulations.

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LIVING THE LIFE: BY B. P. WADIA. Published by The Indian Institute of World Culture, 6 B. P. Wadia Road, Bangalore-560 004. 1981. Pp. 156. Price not mentioned.

Sri B. P. Wadia belonged to a wealthy Parsi family and was one of the founders of the United Lodge of Theosophists in India which has branches in Bombay and Bangalore. The former publishes the well-known journal *Aryan Path* and the latter manages the Indian Institute of World Culture. The book under review is published by the Institute to commemorate the birth centenary of Sri Wadia. It contains thirty articles written by the author during his anonymous editorship of the *Theosophical Movement*, a monthly magazine started in 1930 and which is still being published regularly.

Each article in this volume is complete in itself but the reader notices a thread of continuity from the first article to the last. The first eleven articles contain the basic steps to be 'followed to change and improve their mode of living to follow the Divine Discipline advocated not only by Theosophy but by all the great master Teachers who have appeared on the world scene and to walk the way that leads' to the supreme Goal. 'The remaining articles relate to the high discipline, re-education and transformation that should take place within the individual. These articles also impress on the reader the warmth and kindness and compassion that characterized the personality of Sri Wadia throughout his life.

I strongly recommend the book to students who wish to follow an ideal for a happy and prosperous living.

PROF. K. S. RAMAKRISHNA RAO

BHAGAVAN SRI RAMANA—A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY: Compiled and designed by JEAN GREENBLATT AND MATTHEW GREENBLATT. Published by Sri Ramanasramam, Tiruvannamalai-606 603 (Tamil Nadu). 1981. Pp. xiv + 108. Price not mentioned.

Ordinary people can never get a direct access to the true inner life of an illumined sage. Only the outer events of his life are within the range of their understanding. But since the life of an illumined sage is a totally integral one, his outer life always reflects something of the glory of his inner life. Thus everything he does and says assumes a deep spiritual significance. Even the places, objects and persons connected with his life acquire a new sanctity and importance as having borne witness to the triumphal march of the Spirit. This is what distinguishes the biography of an illumined sage from that of other great men. And when that biography takes a pictorial form, it becomes a permanent re-enactment of the whole drama of spiritual unfoldment and the eternal *līlā* of the Lord in the heart of the devotee. This is what the book under review has achieved.

Here we find how a simple village lad felt the call of the Divine in the depths of his heart, how in obedience to that call he set out in search of his eternal Father, how he found his final earthly abode and attained the highest spiritual realization, how his benign presence changed a barren hillside into a world renowned centre of spiritual teaching, how his spiritual power transformed the lives of countless people who came into direct or indirect contact with him, and how his silent power still flows as a living tradition at Tiruvannamalai.

The events of Bhagavan Ramana Maharshi's life were not many. For he never left the environs of the Arunachala hill, and his spiritual realization was attained in such a short span of time that it was devoid of the trials, struggles and 'dark nights' which mark the lives of other saints and sages. Nevertheless, all the apparently commonplace incidents in his life have something fascinating about them. There are, however, two points in his life which no one can fail to notice. One is the utter simplicity

of his life, and the other is his pure and selfless love for all those who sought his blessing. Both these aspects have been captured with remarkable fidelity in the pictures of this album. Both the human and divine aspects of the sage of Arunachala intermingle like light and shade throughout the book.

All the pictures have been carefully chosen to give pictorial continuity to the biographical narrative. The overall lay-out, design and printing of this book are of a very high order. All spiritual aspirants will love to possess this beautiful book as a source of perpetual inspiration, spiritual solace and divine promise. An ideal gift book.

S. B.

HINDU GODS AND GODDESSES: By SWAMI HARSHANANDA. Published by the President, Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama, Mysore 570 002. 1981. Pp. 203+viii. Rs. 7.50.

This is a handy volume containing brief descriptions of 49 Hindu gods and goddesses. A widely read scholar, the author has sought to present the subject before the layman who is unaware of the Agamas and iconography by giving a lucid interpretation of the meaning of symbols, rites, emblems connected with these divinities.

In the brief historical introduction outlining the concept of Godhead Hinduism, Harshanandaji has given an important clarification of the problem of polytheism in Hinduism on the basis of the Vedic mantra *ekam sadviprā bahudhū vadanti* 'Truth is one, but sages call It by various names'. God is one but he is worshipped by many in different ways. Hindus have the freedom to worship God in His different aspects or forms depending upon their inclinations or the traditions they are heir to. It is also true that persons at different levels of spiritual evolution view the Ultimate Principle in different ways. But this does not mean that the different gods and

goddesses are the imaginations of people. God has infinite aspects. He can be contemplated upon through any one of his infinite aspects such as Viṣṇu, Rāma, Kṛṣṇa, Devī, Śakti, Śiva, Kālī and others who are all real emanations of the one Supreme Self. Each Hindu chooses a particular deity for his meditation and worship called his *iṣṭadevatā*, but through these different *iṣṭadevatās* everyone is worshipping the same one God. Thus though considered individually Hinduism appears to be polytheistic, the Hindu religion as a whole is monotheistic.

The author makes it clear in a simple language that all forms of gods and goddesses of Hinduism have an esoteric meaning. All gods and goddesses are manifestations of one Pure Consciousness or Para Brahman. Every divine form has its effect on the mind and heart of man. If the devotee is imbued with bhakti his contemplation on the icon will lead him on to a spiritual experience, which will eventually free him from the need for such objects. This is the principle underlying the concept of Dhyāna Devatā. A devotee sees his own *iṣṭadevatā* (deity) in all the iconographic manifestations of God and this implies absolute unity of God, a philosophically significant concept in the worship of icons.

The description of gods and goddesses of Hinduism is scholarly, yet concise and easily comprehensible by the layman. The last chapter, 'From Gods to Godhead', brings out the metaphysical basis of the relationship between man and God.

Swami Harshanandaji's tireless and meticulous study of the Vedas, Upaniṣads, Purāṇas, Itihāsas has enriched this work and made it possible for him to write so fluently and clearly. The book is a welcome contribution on the subject and deserves a place in every home and library. The illustrations are well executed and the printer has done a commendable job.

DR. L. V. RAJAGOPAL
Retired Professor of Philosophy
Mysore

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION GOVERNING BODY'S REPORT FOR 1981-82

Issued by the General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

Under the Chairmanship of Swami Vireswarananda, the President of the Ramakrishna Mission, the 73rd Annual General Meeting of the Ramakrishna Mission was held at the Belur Math premises at 3.30 p.m. on Sunday, the 9th January 1983. The Governing Body's Report for 1981-82, placed before the meeting, is given below.

Notwithstanding several difficulties and problems cropping up in some of the Mission's Institutions, the dedicated workers remained loyal to their ideals and steadfastly carried on the selfless service activities of the Mission including strenuous relief and rehabilitation programmes in places devastated by the flood, cyclone, drought, and such other calamities.

In the period under report a sum of Rs. 48, 71,720/- was spent by the Mission towards (a) Flood Relief in Rajasthan; (b) Cyclone Relief in West Bengal; (c) Distress Relief in West Bengal; (d) Fire Relief in Arunachal Pradesh; (e) Tornado Relief in Orissa; (f) Winter Relief in Rajasthan; (g) Drought Relief in Tamil Nadu; (h) Riot Relief in Bihar; (i) Ardha Kumbha Mela Relief in Allahabad; (j) Medical Relief at Ganga Sagar Mela in West Bengal; (k) also Rehabilitation Work in Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Rajkot, and West Bengal. Besides, different gifts valued at Rs. 94,952/-.

During this year Math and Mission did considerable Pallimangal (Integrated Rural Development) Work for the economic self-reliance of villagers through Agro-Economic Service, Cottage Industry, Pisciculture, Dairy, Poultry, Goat Rearing, Schools, Small Business and several Mobile Dispensaries. On the whole the project Pallimagal spent Rs. 4,26,383/-.

During the said period the following new

developments took place. A Physiotherapy Department in the hospital at Bombay, an Allopathic Section in the dispensary at Kishanpur, a new building for Blind Boys' Academy at Narendrapur, A Doctors' Quarters at Varanasi, 30 Non-formal Schools at Kamarpukur and a Primary School at Cherrapunji were inaugurated. And also two statues of Sri Ramakrishna were installed—one at Purulia and another at Mauritius.

A mobile medical van of Madras Math (as Mobile Dispensary) based at Nattarampalli started functioning. A statue of Sri Ramakrishna was installed at Kankhal. A large Mansion was acquired by the Vedanta Society of Western Washington, Seattle, and used as its monastery.

In addition to the above, the Mission continued to conduct 9 Indoor Hospitals which served 37,781 indoor patients, 62 Outdoor Dispensaries which treated 38,68,161 cases and 12 Mobile Dispensaries which treated 3,62,436 cases; and also 644 Educational Institutions which had 92,900 students.

The Mission's sister institution, the Ramakrishna Math, had 7,520 students in its 28 Educational Institutions and served 8,34,329 patients through its 24 Hospitals and Dispensaries.

206 Educational Institutions and 49 Hospitals and Dispensaries including Mobile Units, and a large number of Libraries were conducted and various Economic Programmes were implemented in Rural and Tribal areas.

As a follow-up measure of the Second Convention of 1980 and under the direction of 'Sri Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Bhava Prachar Committee' a number of Youth Conventions (Yuva Sammelan) were held in different States.

The Math and the Mission Foreign Centres are engaged in conducting Educational, Medical, Cultural and Spiritual Works including worship, seminars, etc.

Excluding the Headquarters at Belur, the Mission and the Math had respectively 74 and 66 Branch Centres spread throughout the world.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

National Imperatives

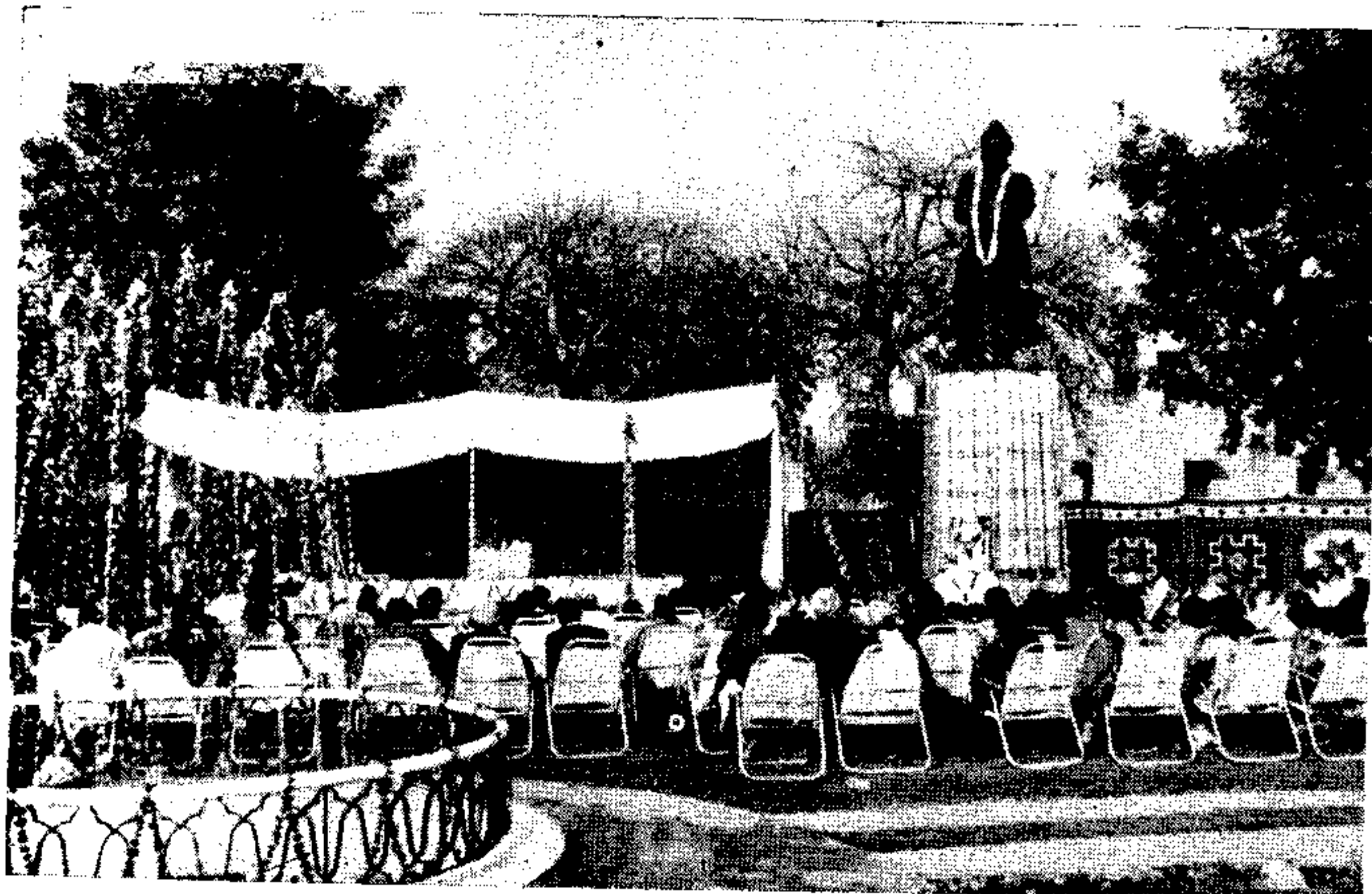
It doesn't need a prophet to predict what the future of India will be at the turn of the coming century. The profile of the nation's immediate future is prefigured in its present socio-economic conditions and political movements. It is already silhouetted in the present national scene.

It is of course quite obvious that India is bound to achieve impressive superiority in at least three fields : technology and industry, agriculture and higher education. In another two decades industry will be wholly built on indigenous foundation and the country will become a major exporter of industrial goods. The present self-sufficiency in food production is likely to be maintained, and the nation may be able to feed double the present population. There will be an overall increase in modern knowledge through higher education, research and mass media.

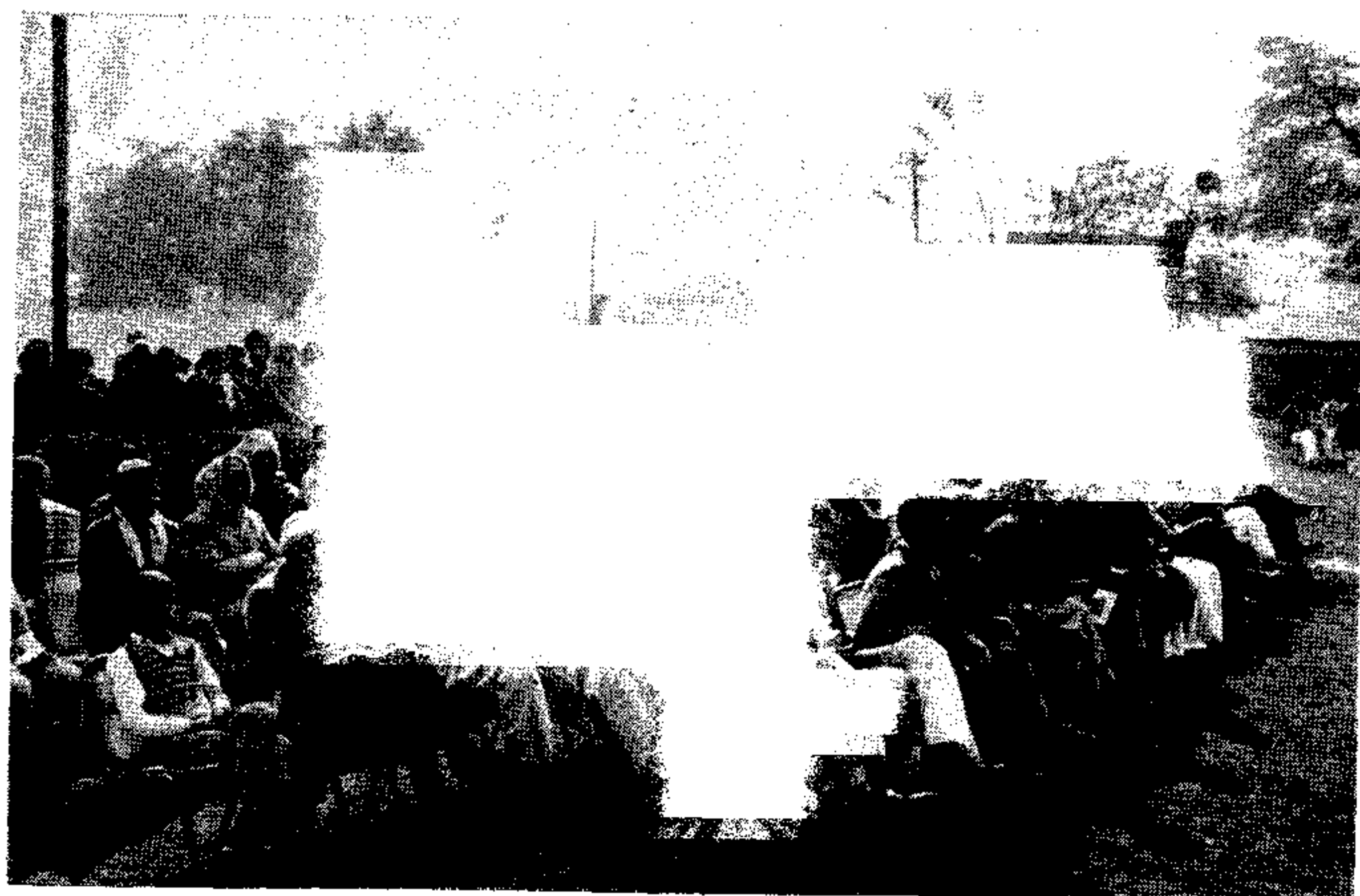
But the indications are that the nation will have to grapple with serious problems. Some of these problems will be a carry-over of the defects of the past, while some others will be the creations of the present. The history of developing countries shows that economic prosperity and spread of education themselves create discontent and divisive tendencies in society. The major problems India will have to face at the beginning of the twenty-first century will be regarding the following. (1) National integrity. (2) Political instability and the survival of the present pattern of parliamentary democracy. (3) Communal strife. (4) Widening gap between the rich and the poor. (5) Social injustice and exploitation of weaker sections. (6) Increase of violence and crime (7) Social unrest and communism. (8) Materialism and religious fanaticism. (9) Break-down of familial and social cohesion. (10) Depletion of forest and natural resources, pollution and other ecological problems.

In order to cope with these future problems, which are already present in the present society, the nation must prepare itself for the task right now. Fortunately, there is a growing awareness of the danger. The main difficulty, however, is the lack of understanding about the way of dealing with it. There are many people, including industrialists, economists and administrators, who believe that the root cause of all present-day problems is economic and that the attainment of material prosperity through industrialization and higher education is the best solution. There are others, mostly intellectuals, who believe that nothing short of a violent revolution can save the nation. Both these assumptions are naive.

Stupendous historical forces are acting upon the nation, and the handling of these mighty forces calls for deep thinking and concerted action. For more than two thousand years the common people of India looked to the kings—Hindu, Muslim and British—for the solution of their problems. Now they have to evolve it themselves. Given the following moral imperatives, they are capable of achieving it : (1) Truth—in personal conduct, business and administration ; (2) non-violence ; (3) self-reliance ; (4) simplicity ; (5) equality of religious faith and social status ; and (6) cooperation. These are the minimum national imperatives for all Indians.



Swami Vivekananda Birth
Anniversary by the
Municipal Corporation of
Delhi on 12 January, 1983



The audience sitting near
the cross section of the
three roads



The Secretary, Ramakrishna
Mission, New Delhi
addressing the audience

Senior Monks of the
Ramakrishna Order
among the audience



Vedanta Ramakrishna-
Vivekananda Literature
being sold near the site
of the celebration

The statue of Gandhiji's dandi
march near the Wellington
Crescent in New Delhi

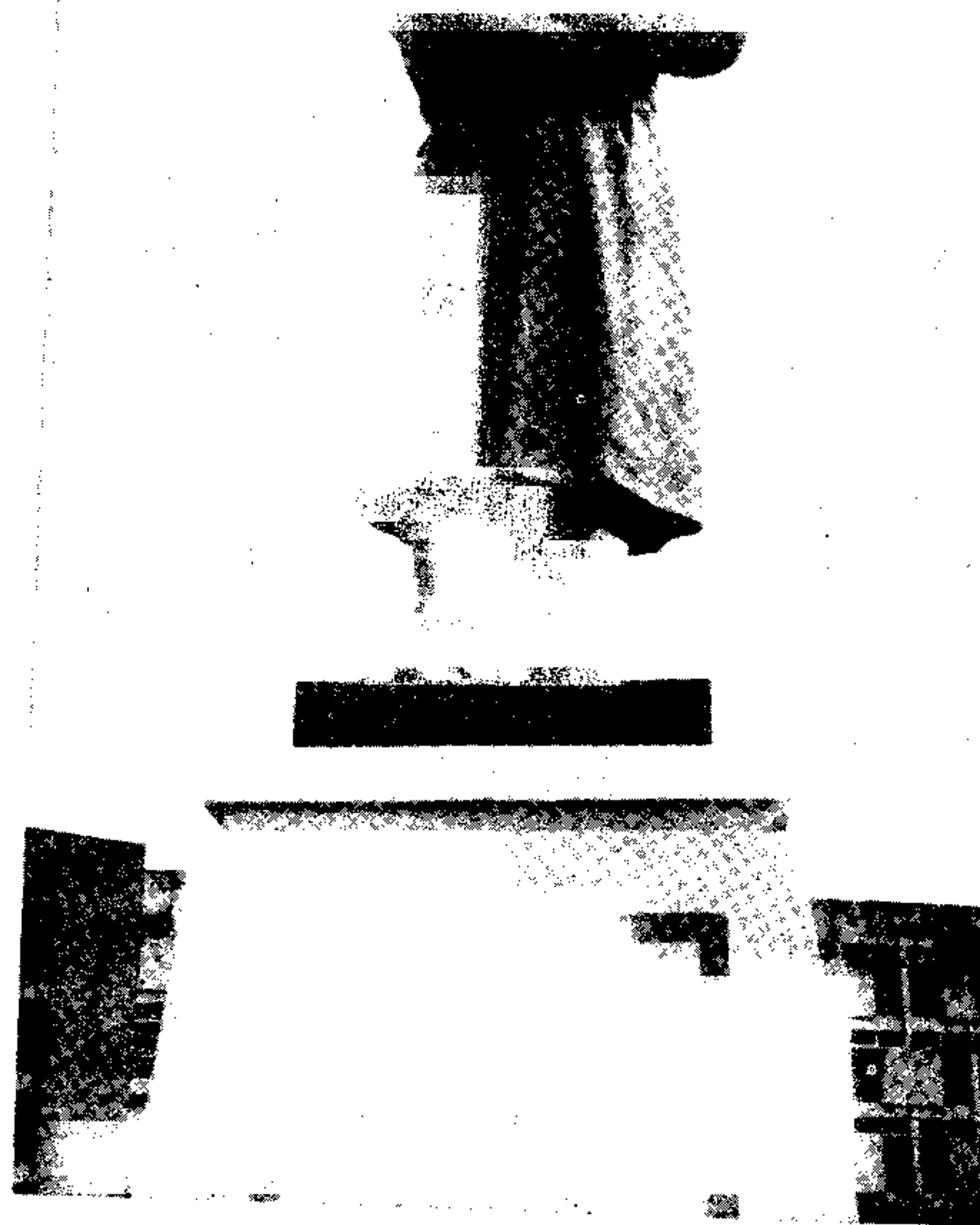




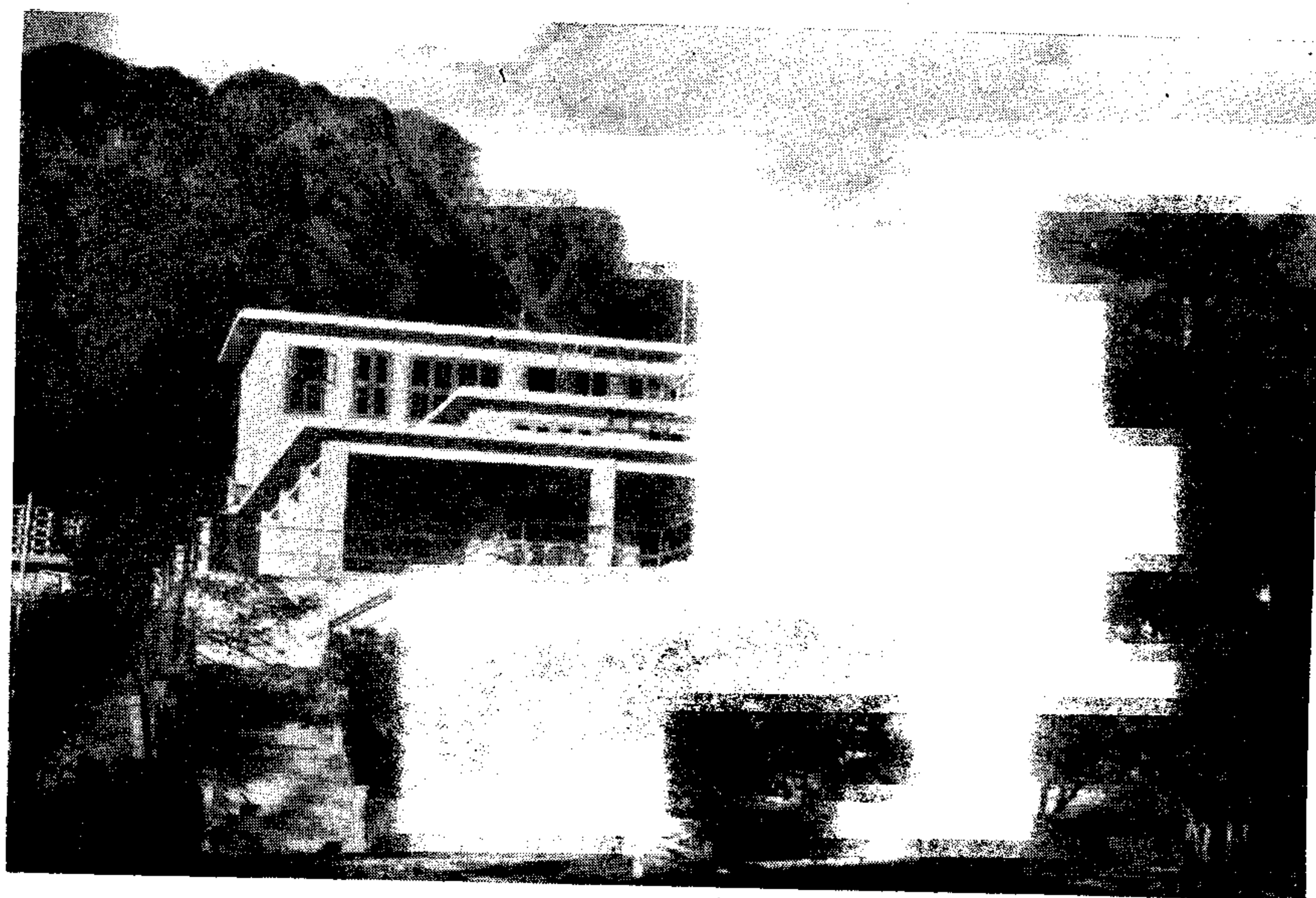
The vacant pedestal on which installation of Parivrajaka Vivekananda is suggested near the India Gate, New Delhi



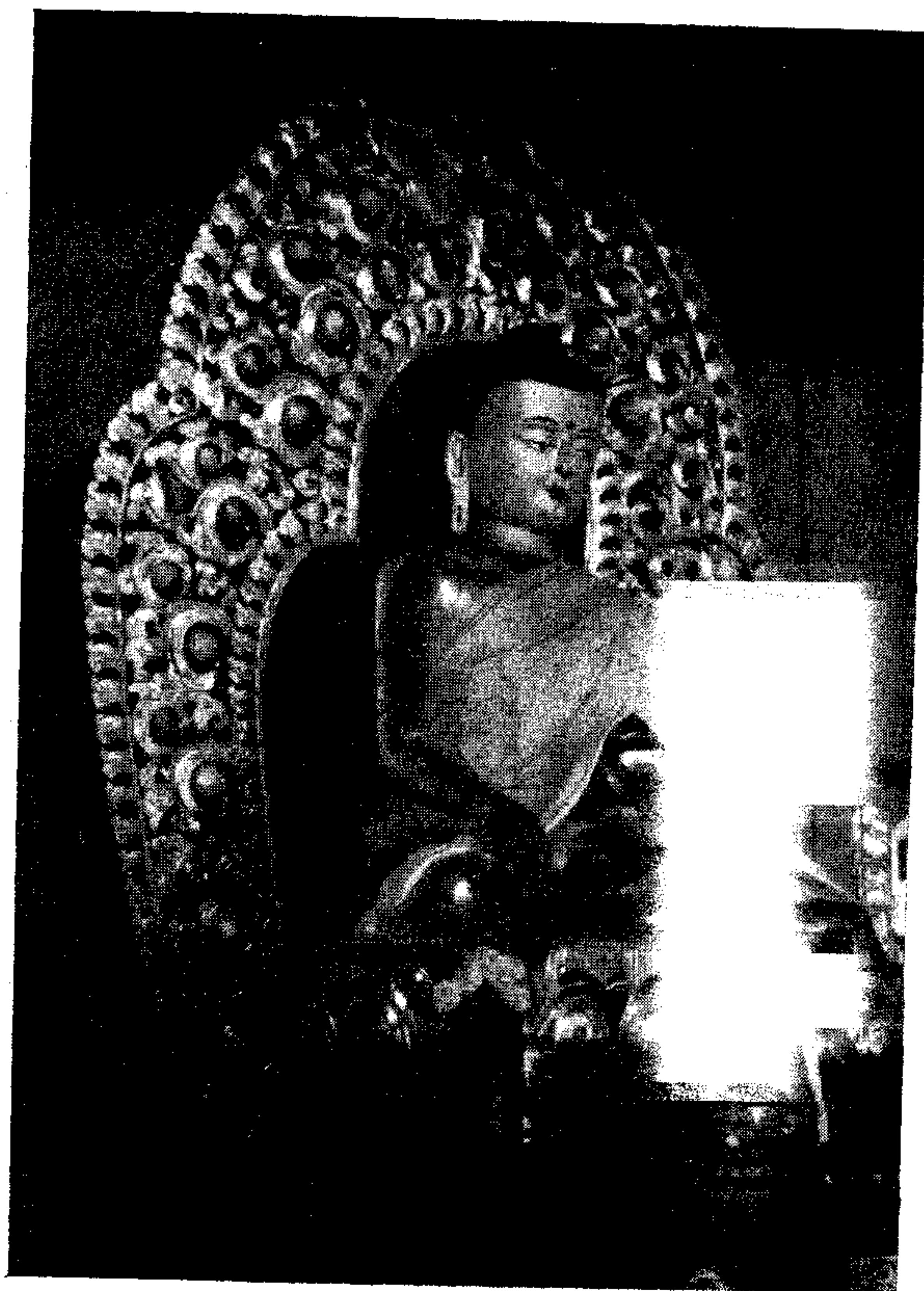
The statue of Swami Vivekananda
Bombay, near the Gateway of India



The statue of Swami Vivekananda
Calcutta, behind the Victoria Memorial



‘Beyond the monastery was the Dalai Lama’s temple.’



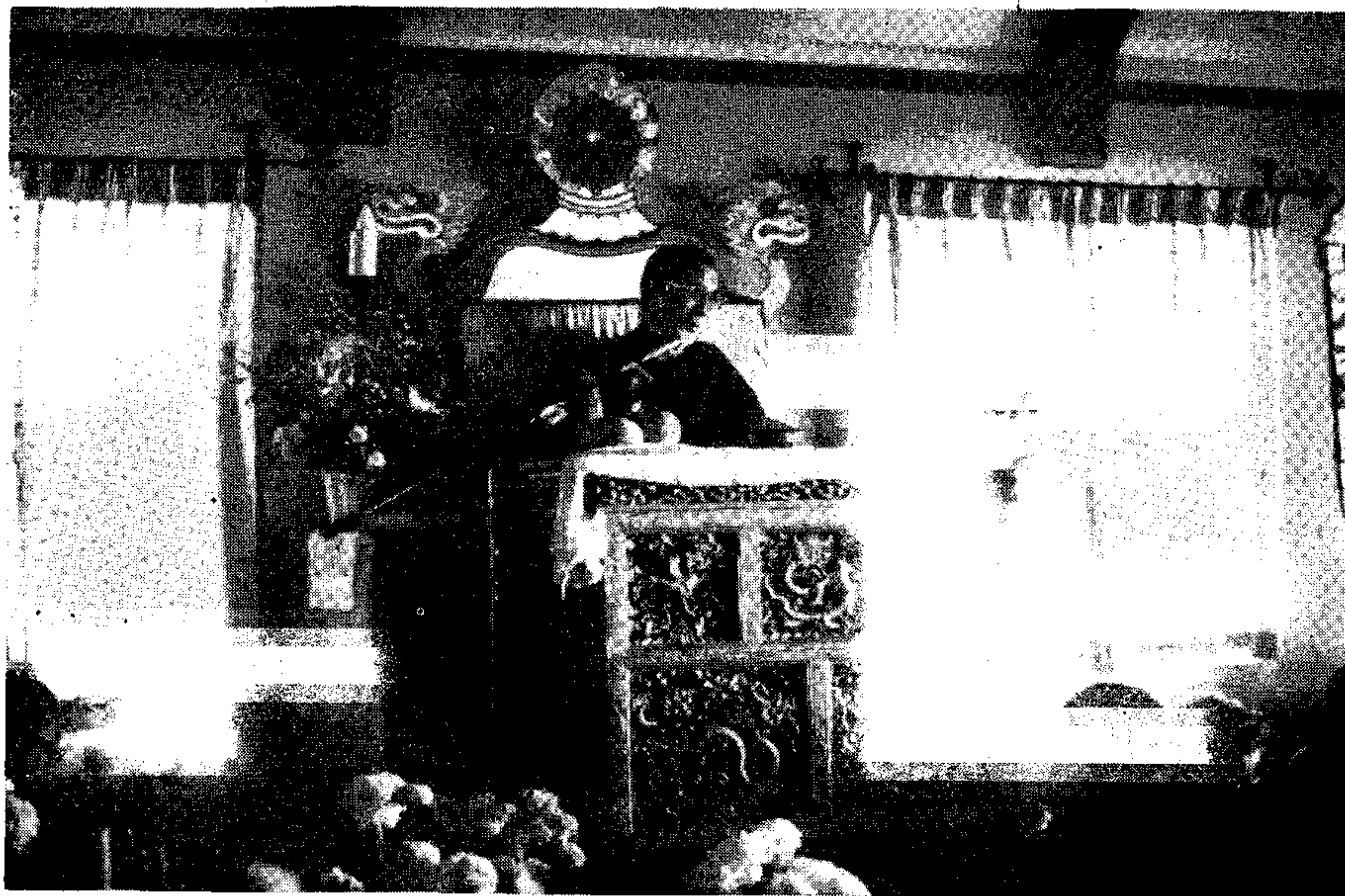
‘Inside, the main deity was Amitābha Buddha.’



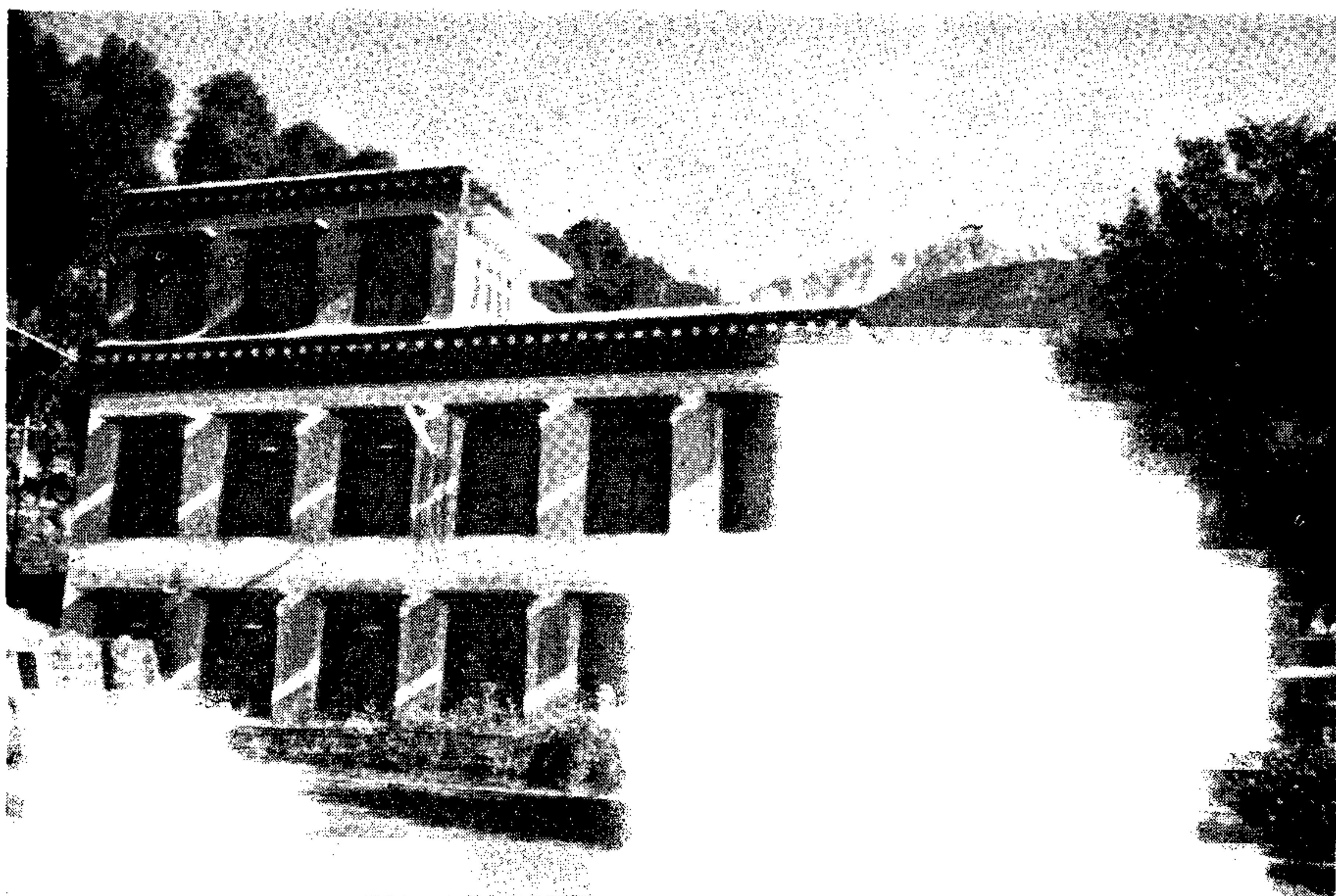
‘Macleodganj never ceased to fascinate...



...it was so full of colour and life.’



H. H. the Dalai Lama at Ewam Choding Tibetan Buddhist Center,
Kensington, California (October 1979)



Library of Tibetan Works and Archives near Macleodganj



Tibetan Children's Village, near Macleodganj



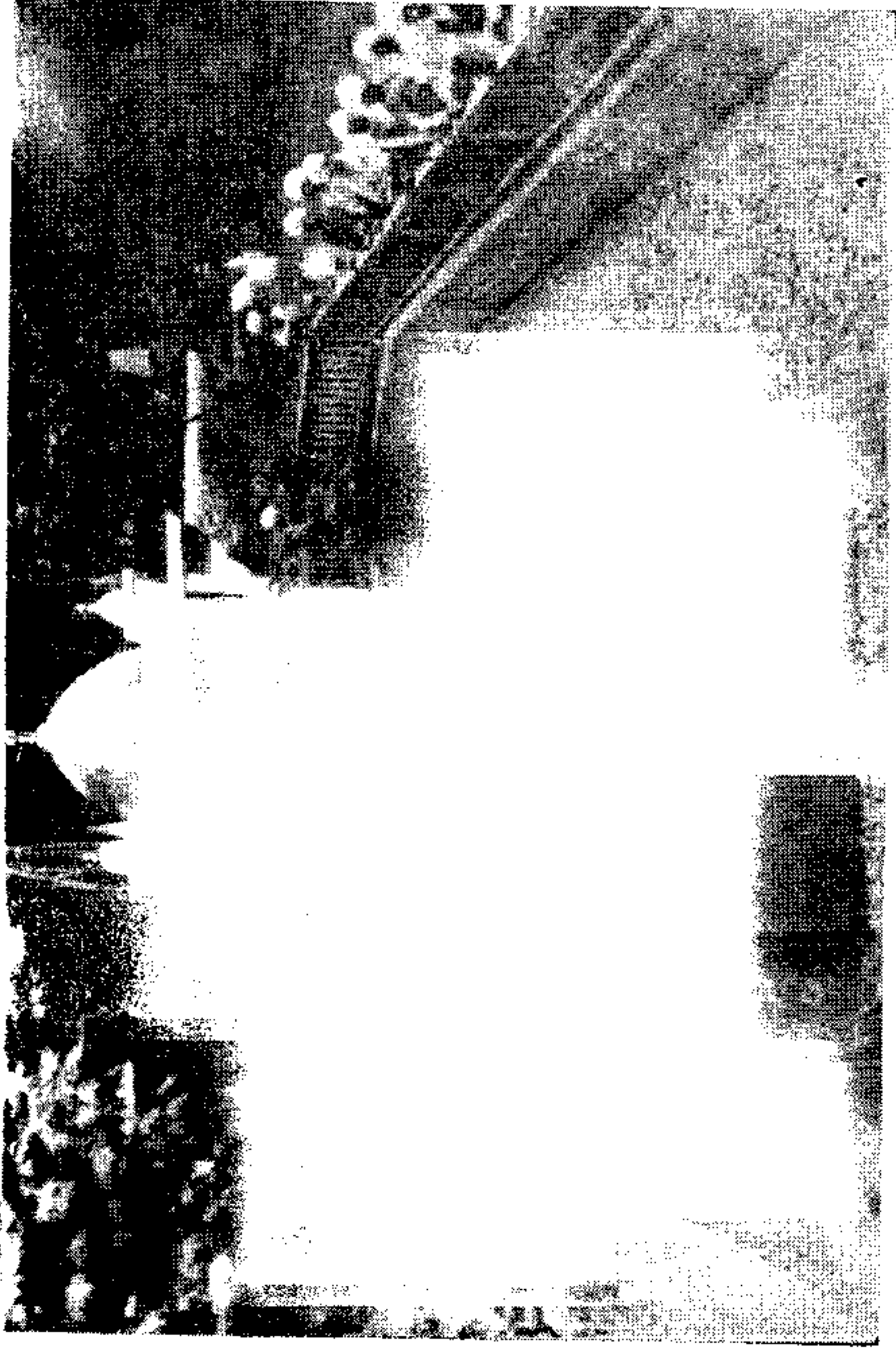
'Tibetan children are especially beautiful.' Tibetan Children's Village



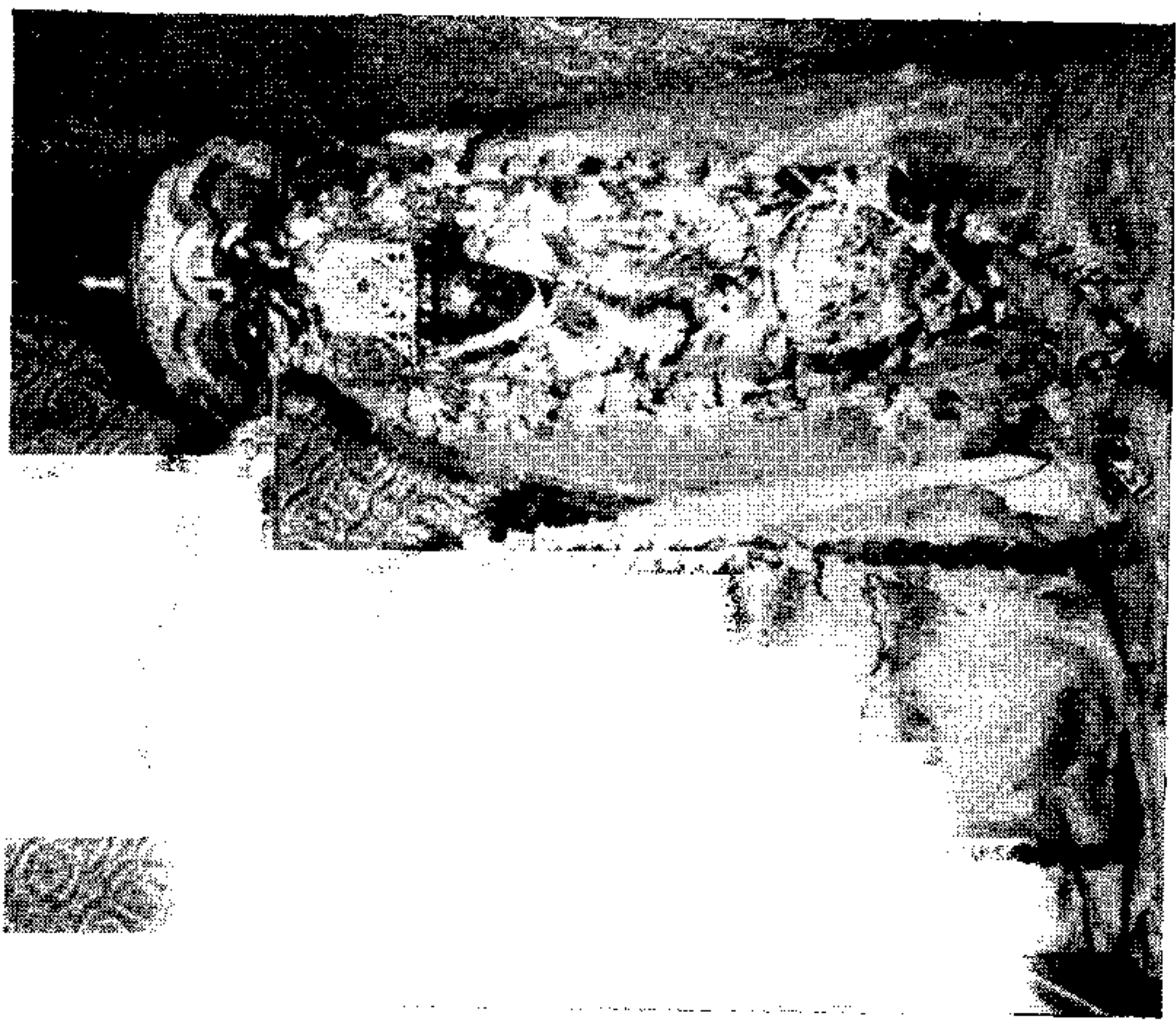
The cave of Amarnath with the ice lingam in the centre



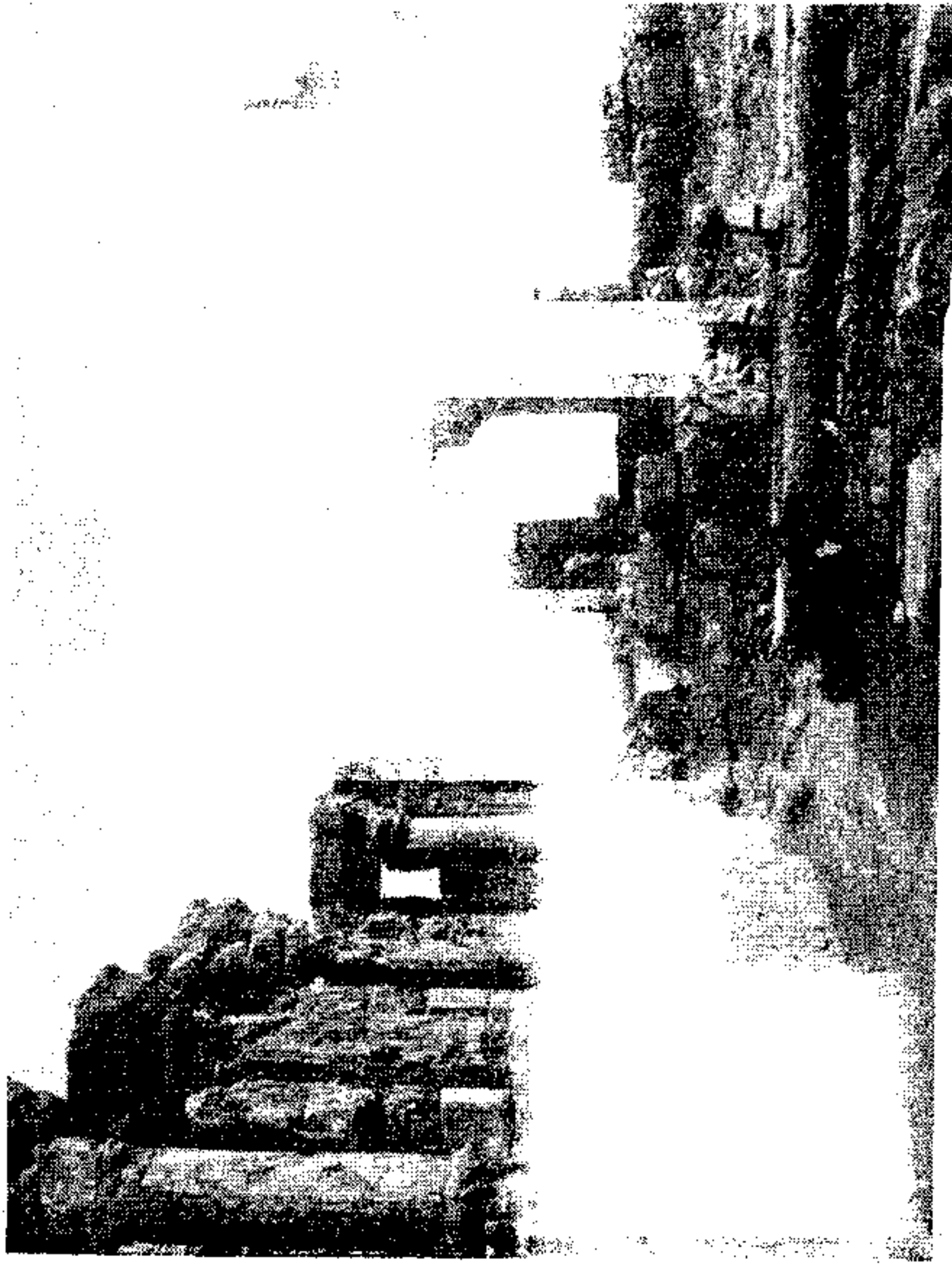
Siva temple on Shankaracharya Hill



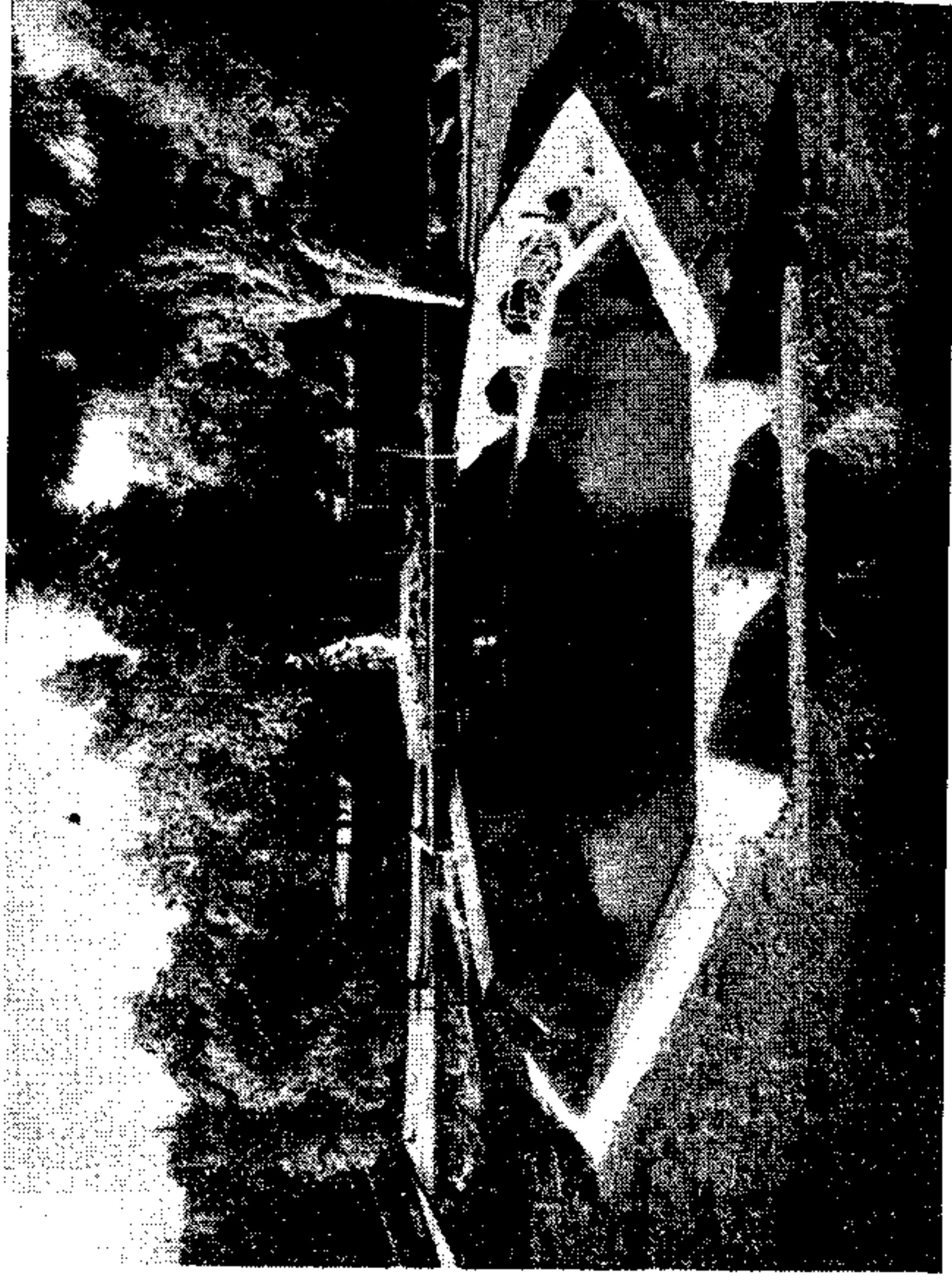
Ksheer-Bhawani : shrine and *kund*



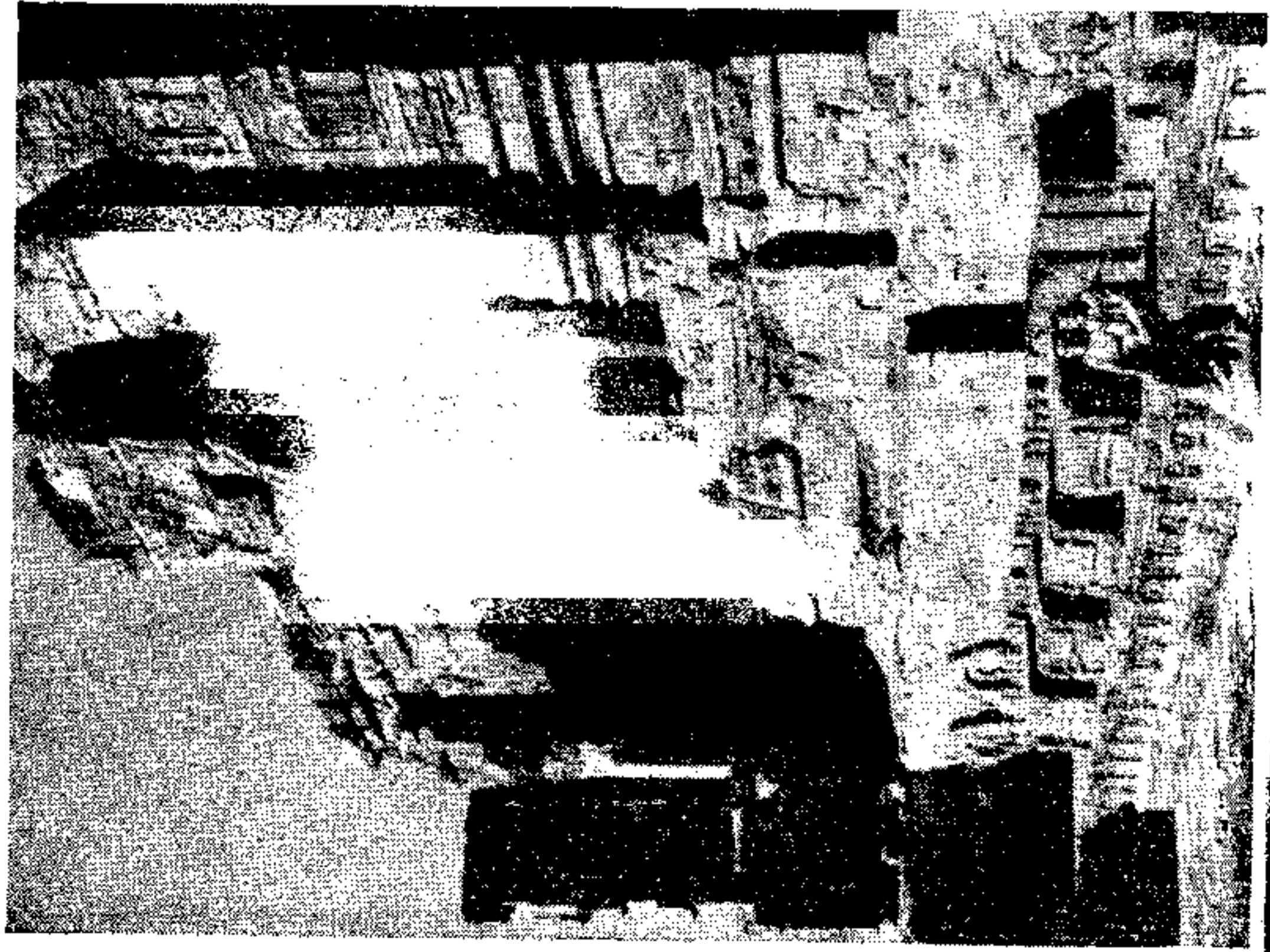
Ksheer-Bhawani :
images of Mother
Rajani and
Bhūtesvar Śiva in
the shrine



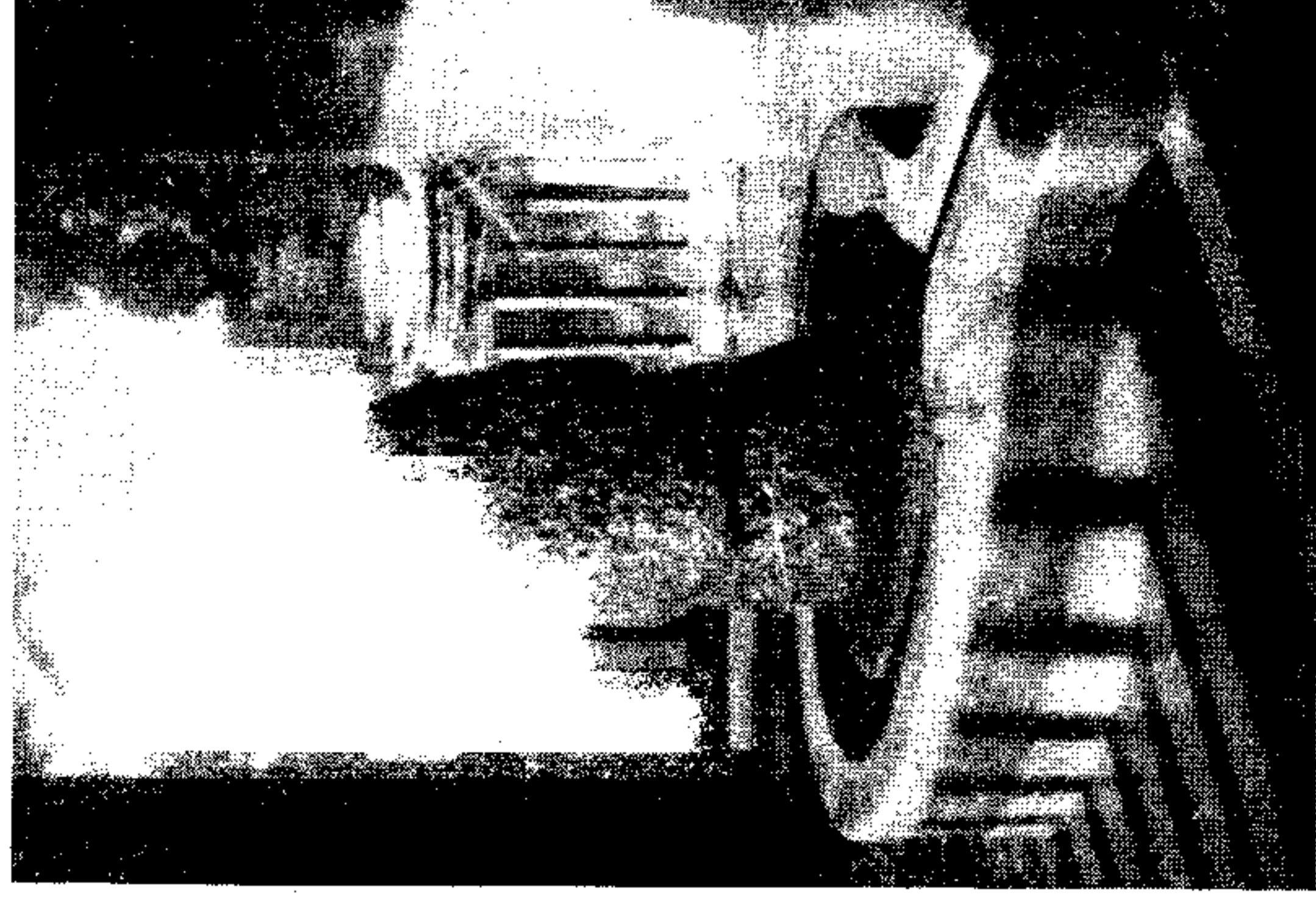
Martand : ruins of Natmandir



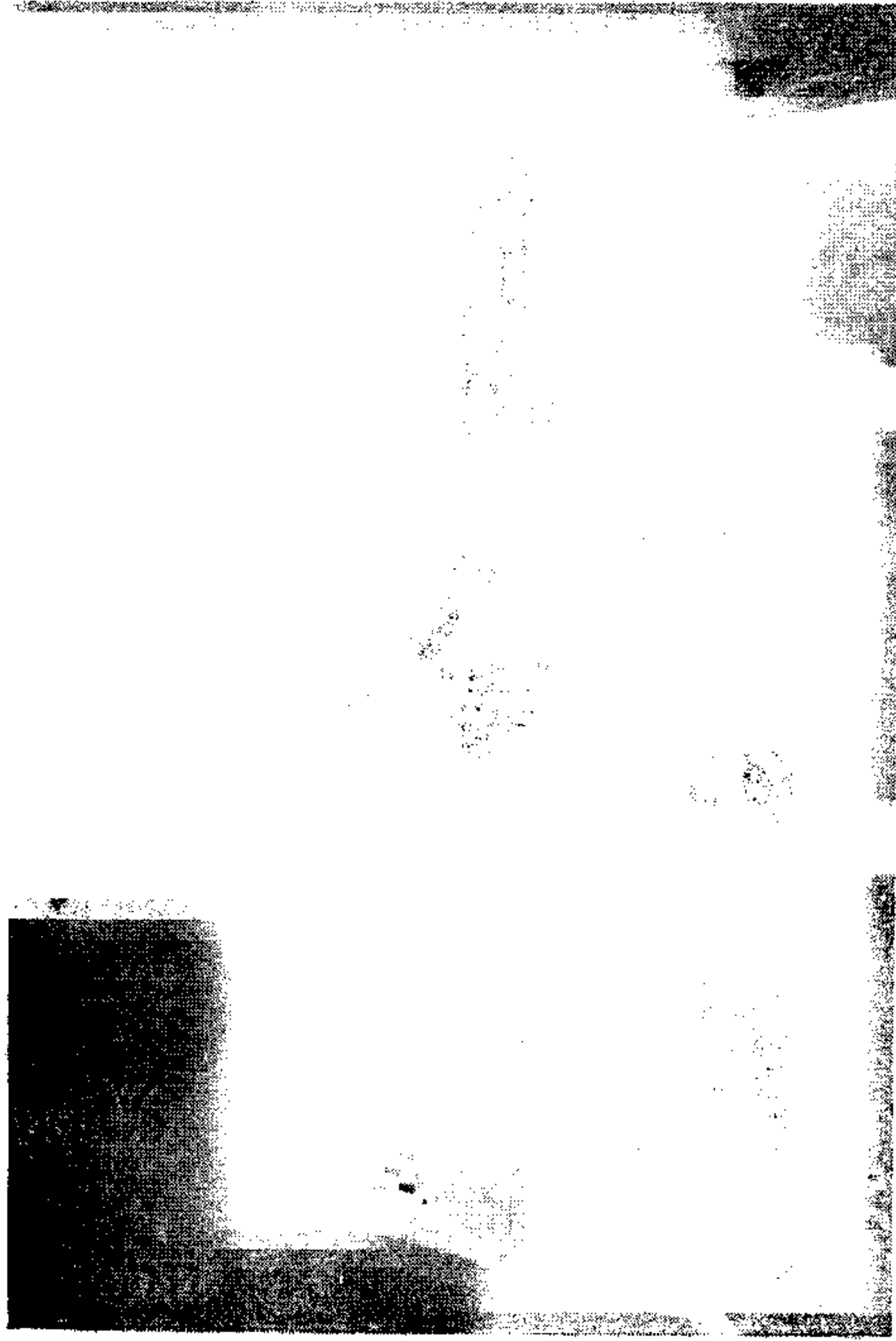
Vetha-Vatur : source of the river Vitasta (Jhelum)



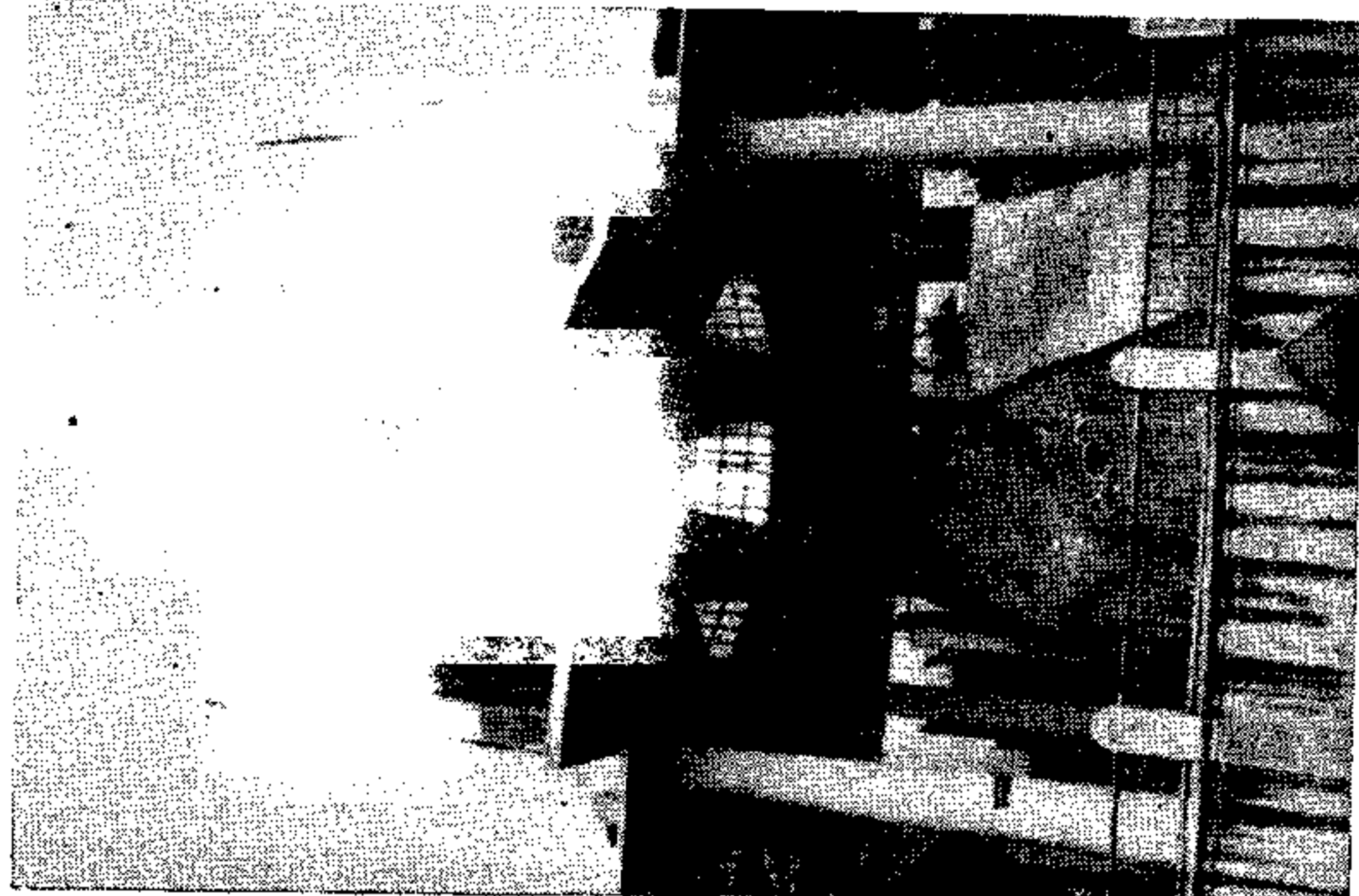
Martand : front
view of the main
temple (dedicated
to the Sun)



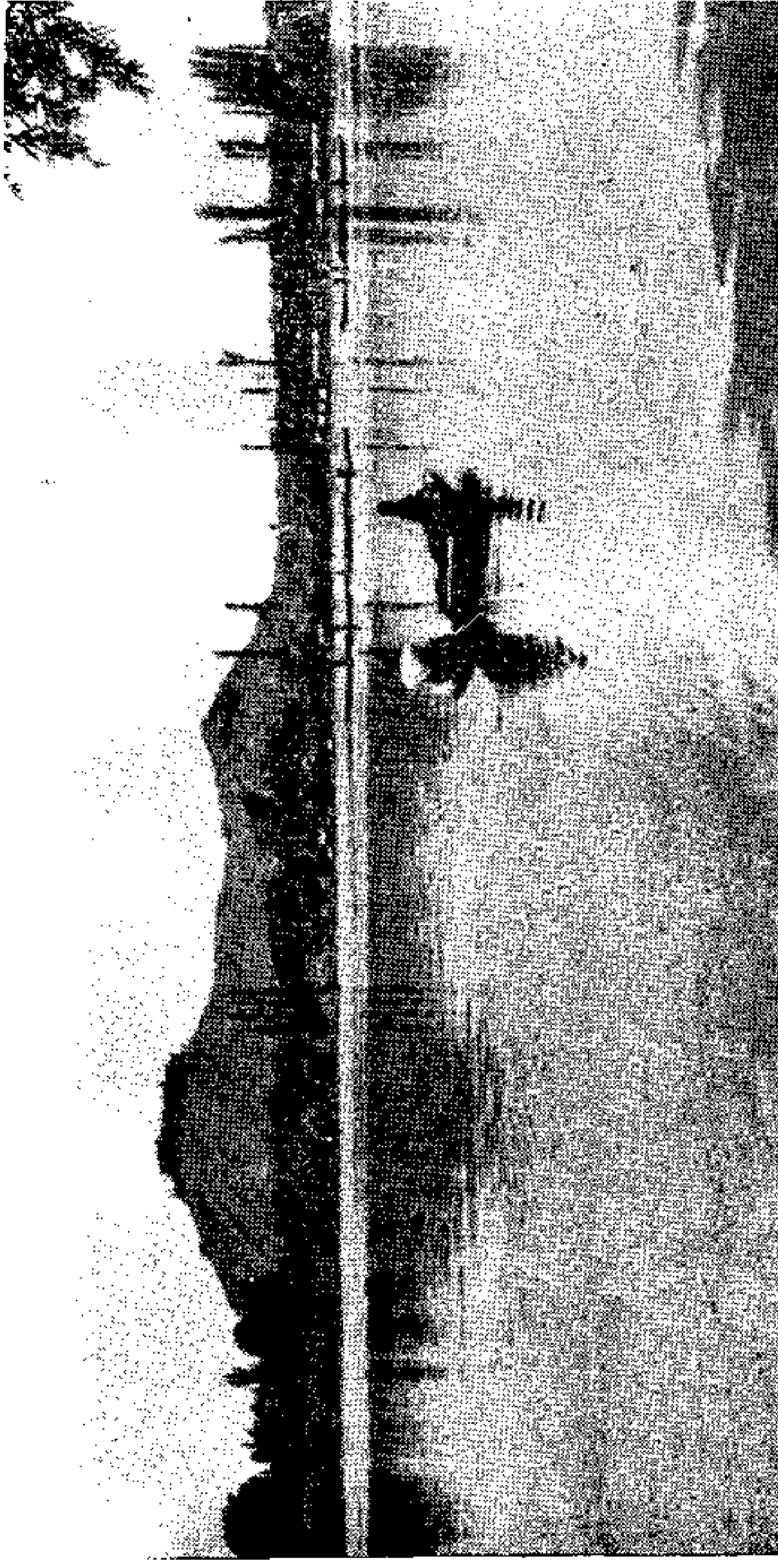
Kapal Mochan:
'open air' Śiva-
linga at Shopian



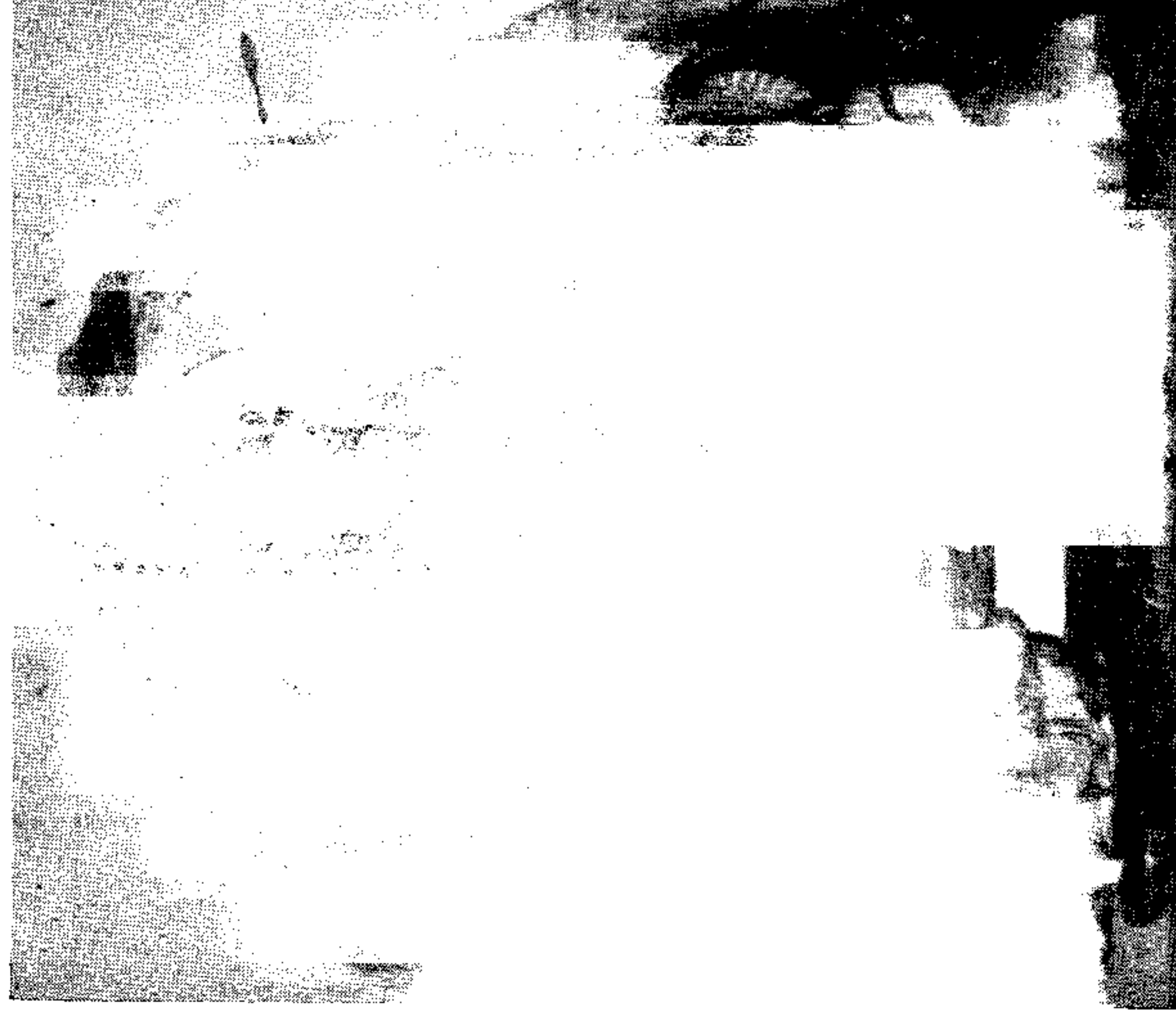
Jwala Mukhi temple at Khrew



Sharika (Chakre-
swari) temple on
Hari Parbat



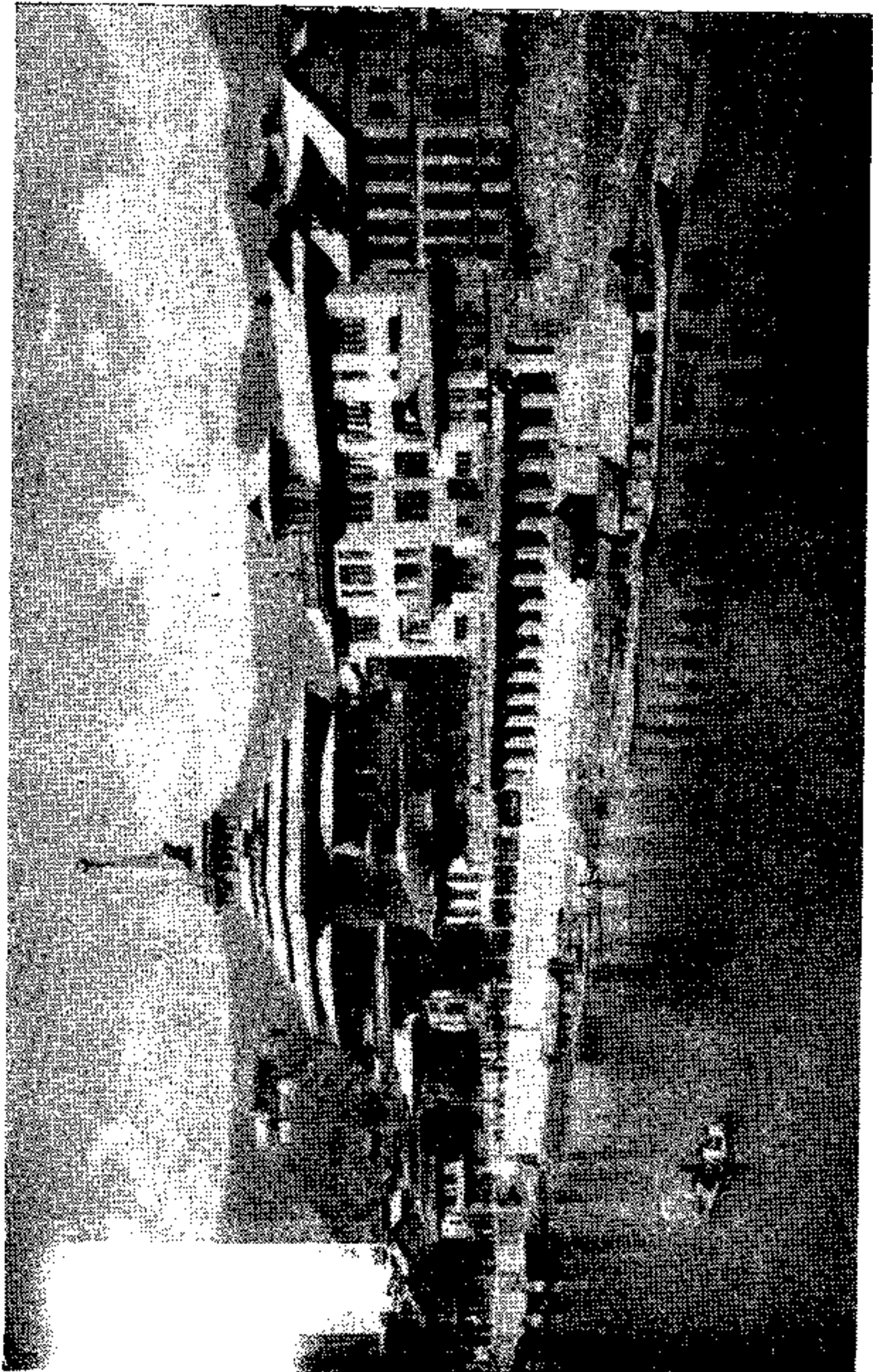
Hari Parbat: seen from Dal Lake



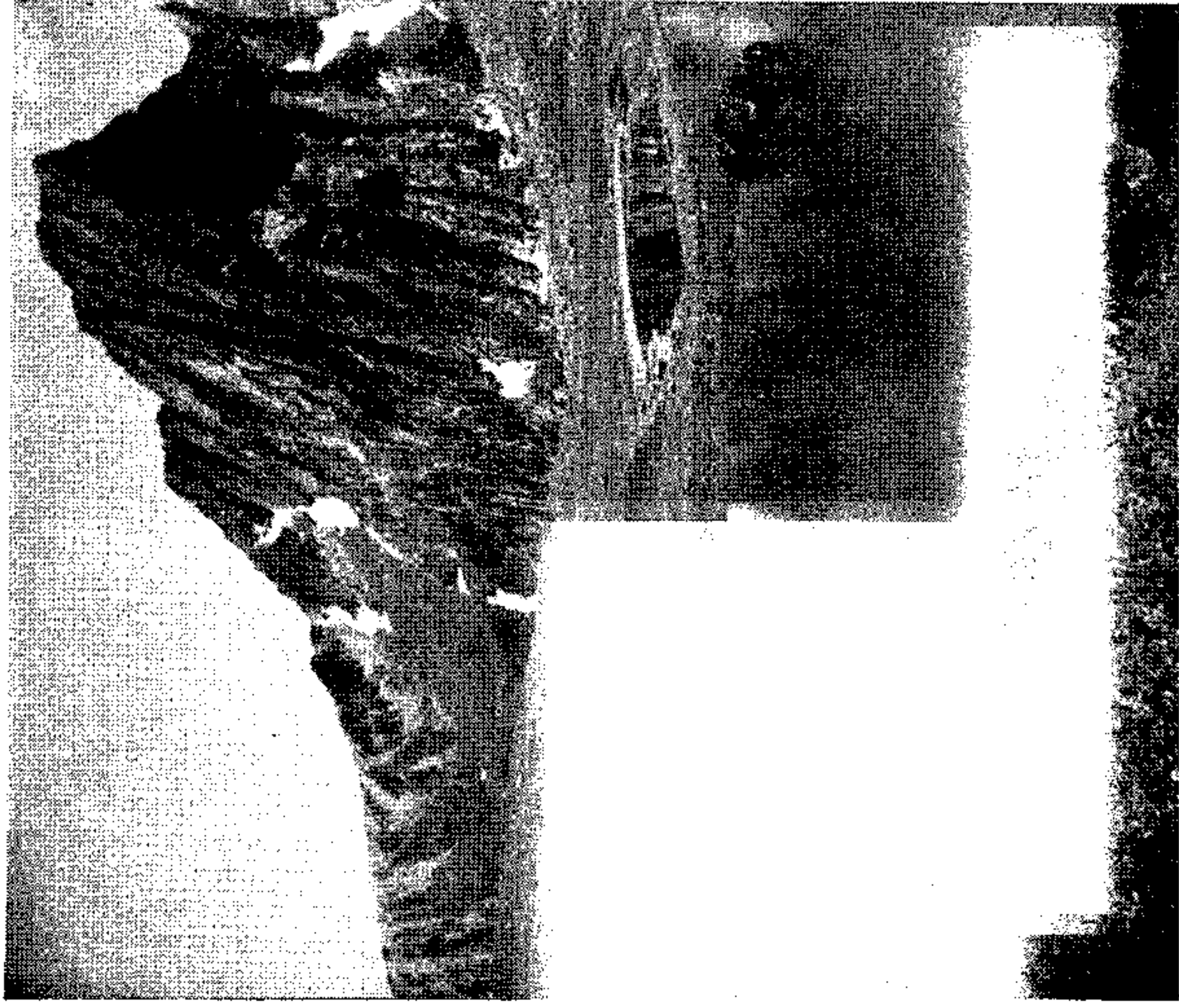
Mother Sarada of
the famous Sārādā
Pīṭha of (Pakistan-
occupied) Kashmir;
now invoked and
worshipped at
Takar in Kupvara
near the border



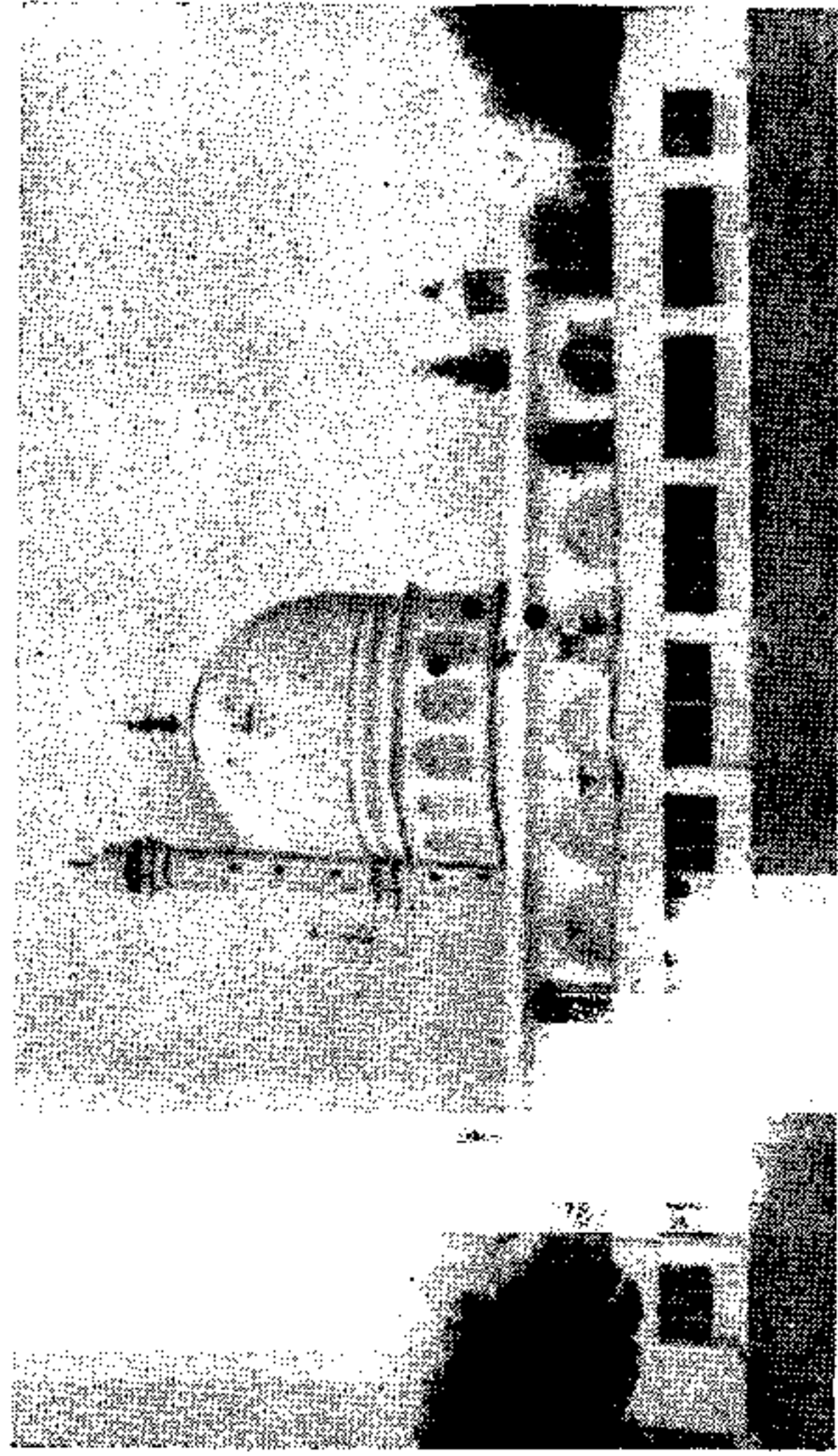
Gangabal lake



Mahakali Asthapan (right) with the mosque of Shah Hamdan and Hari Parbat to the left



Krishen Sar lake



Hazratbal mosque where a holy relic of Prophet Mohamed is preserved