

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

VOL. XLIX

OCTOBER, 1944

No. 10



“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## THE SERVICE OF GOD IN MEN

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

### I

I have been greatly pained to read of the pitiable plight of Bankura. —'s letter gives a heart-rending description of it. At the time when you should be blessed by serving the afflicted to the best of your abilities you have given evidence of a perverse attitude. It has astonished and greatly pained me to read of it. You have asked me to bless you so that you may be free from this work. But what other work are you going to do after being free from it? Service of God? Have you forgotten, 'He who loves man loves God'? Swamiji chalked out such an easy means for your liberation. Have you forgotten so quickly? 'Before thee are His various forms; forsaking these where thou seekest for God?' 'No man attains to actionlessness by refraining from work.' How will you be free from work without doing work? Don't let yourself succumb to *tamas* by taking up this perverse attitude by giving rein to laziness. On the contrary be blessed by doing work—why work—worship,

for service of man is not work but real worship of God. Know it for certain, such opportunities do not come always.

### II

The Lord's will alone is fulfilled. What more is there to be said about it? I am glad to know that you are keeping well and devoting your mind more to the service of God in man. 'There is no fear of turning out to be a Jada Bharata by looking upon man as God.' This was what the Master hinted to Swamiji when the latter rebuked him for entertaining so much affection for them by pointing out the example of Jada Bharata. So I find no reason of your being afraid of love and affection. You are worshipping the Lord. Academic jargon, etc., are mere outer vesture to you. For you very well know that it 'never, never saves'. 'The doer of good, my son, never comes to grief.' (Gita, VI. 40). These are the words of the Lord. So where is the likelihood of your developing a wrong attitude?

# IDOLS AND INSPIRATION

BY THE EDITOR

## I

Men, particularly modern men, want to be their own guides. They are loth to render allegiance to any person or institution, though they are peculiarly prone to cants, slogans, and shibboleths borrowed mostly at second hand and having no real touch with life. When they follow a leader they are loud in their protestation that they adhere not to him as a person but to the ideology he represents. This augurs well inasmuch as modern men seem to have transcended the physical and vital planes and reached a higher intellectual level: they are proportionately less concerned with food and shelter—the problems in the bodily plane having been solved more satisfactorily than before; they are not now mere creatures of impulses, but can guide themselves by the light of intellect and morality. This is indeed a rosy picture, flattering to man as he stands at this juncture.

But look at the other side of the shield. The tall talk of the fortunate few is made possible by relative poverty and degradation of the many. The spectre of poverty, ignorance, and moral depravity still stalks the world. Imperialism still thrives at the cost of the exploited, and democracy at home is rendered successful by exploitation in the colonies. When leading nations and leaders of society talk big, the poor people look askance or insulted. Furthermore, sooner or later, the leaders betray their own inner vulgarity and poverty of spirit when they fly at each other's throats to claim for themselves a greater share of the earth's good things.

The disease is easily diagnosed. The greatest progress achieved by humanity has not, at its best, transcended the

intellectual and moral planes. There is, as yet, no higher principle at work, no higher inspiration streaming down to the social level to make it more free, more equitable, more harmonious, more cohesive and more spontaneous. Intellect works from the bottom up unless it is vouchsafed an afflatus from above. Its usual course is to build systems with fragmentary things, to systematize and synthesize unrelated details and dogmas, to build robots and engines into which it cannot breathe life. Democracy, for instance, for which the present war is being fought, is one such ideology arrived at by the intellect through a process of synthesis and analysis. By experience and experiment some societies have hit upon it, and that has come to stay as a source of inspiration for that society. At first intellect developed it as a method of social welfare; but just as some poets are captivated by their own imageries, taking them for real things, so also the social intelligence now no longer takes democracy as a method of procedure but as an idol to swear by, irrespective of its real worth and capacity to inspire humanity as a whole. But can robots inspire or engines lead? Failures of the so-called democracy are, therefore, palpably clear to those who refuse to be swayed by shibboleths. In criticizing democracy René Guénon writes in his *Crisis of the Modern World* :

If the word democracy is defined as the government of the people by themselves, it expresses an absolute impossibility and cannot even have a *de facto* existence, in our time any more than in any other, . . . it is contradictory to say that the same persons can be at the same time rulers and ruled . . . the law is supposed to be made by the opinion of the majority, but what is overlooked is that this opinion is something that can very easily be guided and modified; it is always possible, by means of suitable suggestions, to arouse in it currents moving in this or that direction as



desired . . . . It is simply the law of matter and brute force, the same law by which a mass, carried down by its weight, crushes everything that lies in its track (pp. 109-10).

The less said about tyrannies, dictatorships, and other political institutions, the better.

The tyrants like to herd their subjects into those vast crowds, in which the individual is reduced to an intoxicated sub-humanity (Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 81).

Nor is the nation a very noble or elevating leader of life and thought;

The nation is a strange deity. It imposes difficult duties and demands the greatest sacrifice, and because it does this and because human beings have a hunger and thirst after righteousness, it is loved. But it is also loved because it panders to the lowest elements in human nature and because men and women like to have excuses to feel pride and hatred, because they long to taste even at second hand the joys of criminality (*ibid.*, p. 111). . . . The ethics of international politics are precisely those of the gangster, the pirate, the swindler, the bad bold baron (*ibid.*, p. 110).

## II

We have purposely dealt with politics first since it is considered to be the most powerful source of inspiration or, as some would prefer to say, intoxication, for social uplift. We dislike condemning it outright, for it has its rightful place and undeniable efficacy as a lever for social advancement. Our grievance is that these instruments for human welfare are mistaken as the sources of all good. Idols are mistaken for gods. That is putting the cart before the horse.

With this clear statement of our standpoint let us look at some of the other tinsel gods that are set up by different groups of people—at money, art, poetry, science, etc., for instance. One would think that the old adage, 'Man does not live by bread alone,' had demolished once for all the claim of money to be regarded as a prime consideration of life. But the modern socialistic theories have given it a false respectability which can hardly hide the boorishness under its thin veneer of sophistical paraphernalia. True, socialism has done yeoman's service in tearing asunder the rich garments that

hid the poor souls of the upper ten thousand and the cobwebs that hid the gems in the lower strata of society. But apart from this it cannot claim to be a perfect philosophy of life. Facts cry out too loudly against such a presumption. Money is at most a vehicle of ideas, and not the ideas themselves, much less is it the inspiration that informs those ideas. The same criticism can be levelled against aristocracy, oligarchy, and plutocracy, etc., that place earthly considerations above God.

We now turn to science. Science had the greatest awe and respect from humanity two generations ago. The first World War gave the first shock to that stupid allegiance, and the second World War has all but dethroned that impostor. Science, too, is found to be a useful instrument so long as it is kept under proper control and serves higher ends. The old dacoits used to worship Kâli for success in plundering. When the ends themselves are bad science cannot lead us higher: modern science fomented only world wars. As Aldous Huxley puts it:

We are living now, not in the delicious intoxication induced by the early successes of science, but in a rather grisly morning-after, when it has become apparent that what triumphant science has done hitherto is to improve the means of achieving unimproved or actually deteriorated ends (*Ends and Means*, p. 309).

Art and poetry fare no better from this critical point of view. At their worst they pander to the grosser instincts of men and at their best they make furtive attempts to clothe in colour and words ideas that baffle expression. In between these two extremes, the so-called poetic inspiration is nothing more than a glow of imagination that can hardly transcend the limitations of the senses. Poetry to be truly inspiring must have a Divine message and must speak to hearts that are eager for something more than a surfeit of breath-taking images. It is this transcendental element that makes Eastern art and literature



ennobling and immortal. In Eastern art the deep calls to the deep. It is mystic rather than realistic. As Lawrence Binyon says:

In this theory every work of art is thought of as an incarnation of the genius of rhythm manifesting the living spirit of things with a clearer beauty and intenser power than the gross impediments of complex matter allow to be transmitted to our senses in the visible world around us. . . . A picture is conceived as a sort of apparition from a more real world of essential life.

Even so, art is a vehicle and not the source of inspiration itself. And as already hinted, appreciation of divine values requires some preparation on the part of the connoisseurs. A thing of beauty is of course a joy for ever. But the joy has its degrees of temporary appeal and permanent transformation according to the mood we are in and the reality we are in touch with through art.

### III

On the whole, then, it would seem that we must aim at a more direct touch with the true source of inspiration whose partial manifestations are vouchsafed through the different mediums and instruments. Apart from this transcendental reference, slogans, vocations, and institutions are lifeless idols. Man cannot and should not remain for ever satisfied with such indirect contact with that source of life, light, beauty, and bliss. To make this direct inspiration possible the first step needed is to lift our thoughts upward. Our discursive intellect must now lay itself at the service of rhythm, harmony, dedication, and liberty. But weak humanity cannot achieve much merely through personal effort. Nor does a pooling of resources help much. For spirituality is an integral evolution from within and not a synthetic growth from without. When the real hankering comes, the covering of nescience gets eliminated layer by layer. Or as some would say, spiritual evolution begins with the descent of the Spirit in the heart of the aspirant. Congregational prayer may help; good wishes of

friends and the company of the good people may elevate; and self-effort may give the initial momentum. But at some stage or other one must surrender oneself to the higher will. Self-willed progress in spiritual life is a contradiction in terms. In their search for this higher will on the human plane the ancients came across the Gurus or spiritual leaders, selfless people absorbed in higher values.

The highest Guru is an *avatâra*, incarnation, through whom the light of spirituality shines the most brilliant. A mere look or touch of him can make a man whole. The scriptures of almost all religions bear testimony to the inspiration derived from such incarnations. It is to be noted, however, that an *avatâra* is just on the borderland of ends and means. In a sense he is a transmitter of spirituality; and yet he is spirituality itself, as, being identified with the Deity, he has no life apart from spirituality.

Nevertheless, one cannot get an *avatâra* for the mere asking. God in His mercy knows best when to manifest Himself. In the absence of incarnations, men have perforce to rely on Gurus, the illumined souls who after God-realization place themselves, through compassion, at the disposal of God for the service of humanity. Modern society is intolerant of any homage rendered to any human being, because it has no clear conception of what the institution of Guru means.

The Gurus are the spiritual media through whom this world is linked to a higher source of inspiration which imparts life, light, and meaning to all lower planes; for the higher cannot come out of the lower. A Guru symbolizes higher spiritual values which no democratic pooling of resources can replace.

. . . The higher cannot emanate from the lower, because the greater cannot come out of the less. . . . It is abundantly clear that the people cannot confer a power that they do not themselves possess; true power can only come from above, and it can be legitimized only by the sanction of some-



thing which stands above the social order, that is to say, by a spiritual authority (*The Crisis of the Modern World*).

A Guru stands for tradition, and recent developments have clearly demonstrated that a society can neither completely root out its traditions nor can it live well by suddenly breaking away from the past. A Guru personifies the ideal future, without a dream and vision of which society cannot prosper, for the present is quite meaningless when studied in isolation from the total life of the Spirit. Otherworldliness is not always an evil; but in a truer sense it is a blessing:

To be able to give oneself wholeheartedly to the present, one must be persistently aware that it is *not all*. One must rather be able to treat the present moment as if it were engaged in the business allotted to it by the total life which stretches indefinitely beyond (Hocking: *Thoughts on Death and Life*).

A Guru is a centre of love, faith, respect, and other qualities of the heart which bind together the different individuals and the successive generations and ensure the smooth working of the social machinery.

But Gurus and *avatâras*, too, may turn into idols unless the Ultimate Reality which they stand for is always kept in view. This presupposes an adequate preparation on the part of society. For unless the social level is high, men cannot get a real glimpse of Reality, or even if they get it now and then, they cannot hold to It for ever or give It free play in all their avocations of life.

#### IV

With the recognition of the *avatâras* and the Gurus as the true media of inspiration and spirituality as the basis of a good society, our next task is to look for some institutions and their essential characteristics that can encourage and perpetuate a Godward trend in all our dealings. The ancient scriptures are never tired of insisting on natural growth based on *svabhâva*, one's own nature, to which we may add one's natural environment. The Ultimate Reality is

caught in the social prism in different ways, and the colour that is most real to anyone is naturally also the most appealing and encouraging. Though one need not deny the possibility of other colours, one has to start with the one that is most truly real for the time being, for the denial of this latter means the denial of one's power of vision and comprehension. In the social and political fields, then, no group or race can progress by totally ignoring the culture that it possesses. A simple boy told us the other day, 'Truth to say, sir, I cannot understand why the communists should replace the national flag by the red flag. Can't communism, if it is a good thing, be taught under the national flag which is also a good thing and which we readily bow to? What do we, after all, know about Russia and its shibboleths: these have no real touch with life. And what's the fun there, sir, in canvassing for little school girls? Can't they convince older people or even college boys?' Could we give any adequate answer? We only thought, when idols get the better of life and light, you cannot expect better things.

But there was a deeper significance in the boy's complaint. India, following such distorted presentation of Western culture, is out to achieve national greatness at the expense of the younger generation. The older people are too afraid of facing facts and making adequate sacrifices. They want to enjoy life. So leadership has gone to impulsive youths. The older people now grumble and complain. But this is useless, since they cannot present their own ideals to the younger generation as anything more than mere idols. And when idols are at conflict, the younger people run after those of the successful West rather than those of the dead East. And yet, the ancient texts prescribed to their graduates: 'Consider your mothers as goddesses, your fathers as gods, and your Gurus as gods.' The fact is, when gods lack divinity how



can they divinize others? The family life, then, has to be put on a better footing, a footing of divine consecration through which the different units will get more closely knit together. It will not do, for instance, to run after bad Western pictures and expect the children to be moral. Unless divinity can become an all-absorbing interest in family life, it cannot replace the Western idols. Sincerity in life and action at home can alone counteract the insincerity in speech and propaganda in wider fields.

Besides, forms and institutions, logically evolved and intellectually adhered to do not touch the whole personality: the response to them, therefore, is only partial. In order that social forms may be truly inspiring, love must grease its wheels at every turn. And family is the best natural field for training in this self-sacrificing love which no ideology and institution can substitute. In order that a social unit may make intelligent, willing, and loving contribution to the whole, he must first grasp it as a whole and learn by stages to serve it with his whole being. And this can be most effectively developed through a devout family.

This resuscitation of family life presupposes a deeper acquaintance with our ancient culture embedded in the Vedas and Upanishads, the Purânas and Tantras. Sanskrit holds the key to our national revival and survival, for in it is held the life-giving elixir of the Hindu nation. People will be smiling at this suggestion, we fear. For in their estimation we are talking of a dead past which should be allowed to bury its dead. And yet, truth to say, renaissance in Europe was brought by the discovery of an old-world literature, for it gave a truer picture of the real Europe than it thought itself to be. In India, too, with the advent of *avatâras*, who represented the old Sanskrit culture, society grew into huge stature almost overnight. This happened with the coming of Râma, Krishna, Buddha, Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, and others.

For once a man can know his true stature, nothing can bind him down to his present degrading environment. Besides, Sanskrit is not as dead as it is thought to be. It records the achievements of a living society of which the present one is a mere distortion. The old should not be read solely in the light of the present. To place the present society on surer foundations we must get acquainted with the principles that it was designed to embody. Let us not think that the present form of our society is the best and has the blessings of our forbears, for that is another idolatry. Let us face facts with open minds, let us explore our old traditions out of which life has almost been stifled by seven hundred years of foreign rule leaving us only with the unrelated outlines.

To conclude: Indian society believed in integral development and not in lopsided growth. At every stage of life, therefore, the growing mind was placed amidst integral wholes like family, village, town, country, etc., through which it could get a rapidly developing view of the Cosmic Reality behind all, till in a life of renunciation or a complete identification with Wholeness Itself the individual found his life's mission fulfilled.

India at this juncture expects great things from her children; she expects them to repay their spiritual debts to their gods who have made their lives on earth possible, to the old seers who have given them an unparalleled culture, and to society which has provided them with protection and means of growth. Above all, Hinduism expects all Hindus to be true to their *svadharma* and not run after false idols. In order that Hinduism may come to its own, it requires to be reunited with its God through its natural spiritual leaders, and it has to be broad-based on a purer family and social life sustained by a hoary culture that has survived the stress and strain of ages and proved its intrinsic worth.



# PLANNING : FROM PAPER TO RESULTS\*

BY MAJOR ALBERT MAYER, C.E.

Before going into the subject of tonight's lecture, I would like to say something about lectures and audiences generally. I am not a professional lecturer, and I believe the only thing that justifies a lecture or a series of lectures, is if those listening to it are affected to the point of doing something about it. In the same way, no matter how good a poem may be, or a work of art, or a play in the theatre, if it is merely entertainment and if you merely enjoy it passively, if it does not impress you enough so that you are inspired to do something about it, then it has missed its mark. As to lectures, if no strong, permanent, effective impulse is generated, the lecturer and the audience have both wasted their time. I hope there will be people and groups who will do something about the subject of tonight's talk.

Another general point I want to make is this. In the relatively short time I have been here, especially short because in the Army we are naturally here to win a war, and not as observers of general conditions, I have not learnt as much about India as I would like. However, in spite of this handicap, I will take the liberty of making recommendations that I feel are essential anywhere, and of emphasizing those points in which I think American experience may be helpful to you. Certainly the principal or only value of what I have to say lies in my trying to show you where gaps exist in your situation and how they may be filled.

Planning is a very broad term. While it has been recognized and emphasized by name only in the last few years until now it may be called a slogan, we have always practised it to a greater or less extent. Everyone has some rough plan

for his own life, whether he can carry it out completely or not. Every business or industry plans its production as far ahead as it can see, and always has. Every party standing for election has its platform, which is nothing but a plan for what it hopes to be able to accomplish within the years that it holds power. Every railroad has a time-table which it lives up to as nearly as it can, and that time-table is nothing but a plan based on its rail capacity, the number of wagons and locomotives available and their speed, on the number of passengers, and on the amount and kind of goods that it expects. So planning is nothing new or fancy. It should not be theoretical only, but intensely practical.

As I see it, the only new elements in planning are two : first we should plan in terms of the people and their needs rather than in more restricted private terms ; and second that we believe planning should cover fields which up to now have been neglected. Another point about planning is that it must not be rigid or too restricting. It should be flexible and easy to change within the limits of its main purposes, so that it can meet new conditions and new demands. This applies to all planning, whether the broadest social and economic planning, or town and village and community planning. I may say here that all these levels of planning are most effective when they are inter-related as in The Tennessee Valley Authority in my country. This has been our most successful example of planning that has actually been executed. The Tennessee and Cumberland Rivers and a great area around them, which had been poor land for agriculture, subject to frequent floods, were placed under one planning authority to accomplish control of the floods,

\*Lecture delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture, Calcutta.



to improve navigation, generate electric power, and provide irrigation for the land. In order to do this much they had to do a good deal more. Not only did they build dams and power-houses, but they planted forests to hold the rain water, they planned and built new towns and villages at important points, they used the dammed-up lakes and the forests as the basis for a fine recreation area, they located new industries in planned relation to the other elements.

But while this larger planning cannot be carried out except as it is physically expressed in dams and farms and factories and communities and villages, individual communities *can* be planned and can be *built* even if the larger planning cannot be consummated. In the U.S.A. we have been able to accomplish only one such Tennessee Valley Authority so far. It is the intimate local planning and consummation by building that I want to discuss tonight. At this level, planning is not remote and intangible, but intimately concerns every man, woman, and child in ways that they recognize in their daily lives, in their homes, in their schools, in their villages. And though this planning takes great technical skill, it is planning in which every citizen can and should participate, because it is only in terms of the habits and desires of ordinary people that this work can be successful. The organization of this work must be guided by competent technical people, who also must have the courage of the future, and not be bound too much by habit and statistic, but he in turn **must** be **guided** in human values by the consumers of his plan, of his housing, of his buildings.

I have used the words community and planned community a good deal. What is a community—particularly a good, planned community? It may be a village, or it may be a section of a city. It should consist of homes with playgrounds and parks, with shops and school, and, if possible, a cultural

centre, all near enough at hand so that most of people's daily lives are passed and most of their interests are centred in the community. For safety, no important automobile traffic street should cut through it, but should pass on the outside of it—that is, there are local streets for pedestrian traffic and local traffic within it, which is slow-moving. Fast, dangerous traffic should pass outside. Thus if you built a new village on a busy highway such as the Grand Trunk Road or on a highway likely to become heavily travelled with through traffic, you would not have half the village on one side and half on the other as you do now, but the entire village would be a little off the highway, though convenient to it. In Calcutta if you were building a new community, or re-building an old one, you would observe the same principles by avoiding present main traffic arteries, and consult the Calcutta Improvement Trust's maps showing location of future arteries.

Within such a community you would avoid the present usual helter-skelter of shops and offices and homes, by placing your shops and offices in one or two concentrated locations instead of scattering them. In this way you can do your shopping more quickly and conveniently, and at the same time people in their homes are not bothered by the activities and noises of the shops, nor by the refuse and even smells that are part of the activities of shops such as eating places, fruit or butcher shops, blacksmith shops, etc.

In short, when you build a good community, you build to assure health, convenience, safety; you conserve energy and minimize the usual daily irritation and lost motion of ordinary living. Such communities or groups are not more costly than the same number of houses and shops and offices built separately and in haphazard fashion; in fact they generally cost less, because there are economies in large-scale design and construction as compared with piecemeal work.



The interest and opportunity in this kind of planning of homes, farms and meeting places of the people, lie in the fact that any community can start such a project, and in many cases build it in individual places, even if the great national plans take longer. While in many cases help may be required from beyond, such as the provincial Government, that help is in manageable terms and it may be available ; there will be other cases where local resources or local philanthropic wealth can be mobilized adequately without help from beyond. Calcutta could evolve and carry out a plan even if Bombay did not, or *vice versa*. In fact a large enough neighbourhood cell in Calcutta properly located could become a planned community which would be an example for Calcutta even if Calcutta had not made its own complete plan; and the proved advantages of such a planned community would have a profound effect in inducing the whole city to plan. Calcutta is a good illustration, because here you can see the results of some partial planning, but mainly no planning. You have a terrible mix-up of shops and industries and homes and narrow crooked streets, but you have the wonderful *maidan*, an early example of accidental planning; more recently the Calcutta Improvement Trust has created Dhakuria Lake and a number of neighbourhood parks and playgrounds. Within the framework of the Trust's announced plans for roads, etc., you can plan good new communities instead of just a lot of single unrelated houses and shops.

This is the main point I would stress, particularly in India. Here the tendency is to hold your breath, to postpone individual local performance until your great national issues are all settled. Granted that such national settlements must deeply affect the outlook of everyone, there are many reasons why work at the community level is immediately important. In the first place, it can go on at once, and it can be ready for

actual building as soon as War's end makes materials and men available. This is a tremendous and unique advantage. Like every other country, you will face some unemployment at the end of the War. If such projects are ready, they can quickly absorb large numbers of people, not only in actual construction but also in brickyards, in cement plants, in factories. Experience in my country is that, when people are out of work and there is a frantic effort to put them to work, it is first come, first done. The communities that have projects all ready to go forward are welcomed, and their work is pushed ahead.

In the second place, housing and planning are as vital and urgent as any problems that face you. They do not consist merely of monuments and broad boulevards and opera houses as the old planning did. Modern planning means better homes, safer streets; it means spending less time in travel to work; it means parks and playgrounds, which all adds up to better health. I had a talk recently with the Chairman of the Calcutta Improvement Trust, asked him how it happened to be established as far back as 1911. He said that the chief effective reason was the health of the city, to prevent plagues. Certainly their parks and playgrounds and green open spaces make a great difference to people's health and happiness. Of course many other elements enter into health, but these are among the most important. No doubt there should be more; possibly low-cost housing should be built by the Trust itself for *bustee* people, and the location of commerce and of industries should be controlled. But there is where public opinion comes in, to encourage and back up and extend the first-rate work the Trust has done, as far as it goes.

Again, the participation required of every element in the community to achieve good planning will be a splendid adventure in education and co-operation. You need the architect and engineer as chief planners. The busi-



ness men are important in connection with location and type of shopping places and office buildings. The economist has a role to play in studying the probable incomes of the people and relating them to rents they can afford, in determining the expenses of such communities and the taxes they can pay. The agriculturist in a particular locality can contribute by indicating how closely or remotely town and rural life can be integrated, and what the economies are of the close inter-relationship of the two, in the type of community we in the Western world call the Garden City, by the reduction of transportation costs, the saving in such items as refrigerated wagons, etc. The educator must be consulted as to types and location of schools, the possible use of the school at night for adult education and community and club activities, and by such double use of buildings make great cost economies. And the ordinary people can participate—for instance the housewife should make herself heard as to the details of the homes to be built, the kind of shopping facilities that are easiest and most convenient.

The fruitful contact at the intimate level of planning is also important because planning will become actuality only if public opinion grows along with it and demands it. Many beautiful plans have never been built because it was all a conception, not an expression of the people. Other beautiful plans have been built, but only for the benefit of a few because the public did not insist on being considered. The magnificent boulevards in Paris are only one or two blocks away from the slums.

And, finally, the benefit of such local single plans is that they develop the technicians and the technical skill, the actual experience which you now lack, and which you must have if good communities are eventually to become the rule rather than the exception. Your technicians must not only be skilful planners, they must be organizers, they must be able to plan not only in terms

of construction, but in terms of economics. They must be able to tell you whether it is just the middle and upper classes who can live in such communities, or whether they can provide for poorer people also, what for example the maximum interest rate is that can be paid for capital used, and still house people of modest income; or whether city or State aid is needed, and how much.

Believe me that such technicians are not developed over-night. I would not have you conclude from these descriptions that a breed of Supermen is required to carry out such work. On the contrary, it simply requires men who have training in this field, a good deal of common sense and determination, and above all experience and knowledge of how to get things done. You do not need magicians. You need people working in an atmosphere where action is not neglected in favour of talk.

I have said that such local individual plans could come to pass without waiting for complete national results, and in some cases even before provincial Governments went into action. I want to give you some actual instances of this. In the U.S.A. decent housing for the poor is still by no means the rule. In fact, the Government in Washington took its first action in 1934 to supply funds, the main purpose being less to create good housing than to create work for the unemployed during the depression. Later on, more funds were supplied by the national Government. Later still, due to political changes, the further money required for more housing was voted down. National public opinion in favour of housing was not strong enough. But in some localities it did have enough strength. New York State—a State with us corresponds to your provincial Government—did supply funds, and so did the city, which now has money for low-cost housing both from its own individual resources and from the State Government.

I have just said to you that the first



Government move in our country for housing the poor was in 1934. But private effort was much older than that. Private individuals, private groups of philanthropic men, and some labour unions, had been building individual examples of such communities for thirty years before. It took all that time of example, of propaganda, of agitation, before Government took hold. When Government did take hold, that handful of communities was of the greatest value in furnishing experience of what to do and what not to do, of where and why there had been success, where and why there had been failure.

So I would also stress the *positive* value of the individual example, the importance to any great planning of having carried out individual examples, experiments if you like, that can be seen, examined, studied to see whether they work and how they work. This is of especial value in a large country such as India where the solutions in each locality and province may be quite different from those in others. This variety in experience permits the later planners to compare the elements in each, and to use the best elements for the work that comes later.

If you agree that creating individual examples is valuable, and that it is vital to be ready to create them as soon as the War is over, then you have no time to lose. Even in countries where planning and design technique are more advanced, the adequate development of a community for some hundreds of families for example, takes not less than six to nine months. Here it will certainly take longer because there is so much information to be gathered in such matters as family incomes, places of work, sizes of families, types of construction, types of homes desired and types of homes that people can afford, desirable kinds and aggregations of shops of which I have not yet seen any good examples in India; what kind of street system will work out best and most safely in the motor-age—a pro-

blem possibly more serious in India than in Western countries because of your present very narrow crooked roads and absence of side-walks; whether city residents want to and can cultivate gardens; and other similar questions to be answered if you are to get the most liveable, most durable community. In your villages there are possibly even more uncharted problems to be solved, connected with land tenure, distance from home to farm or pasture, the possibility or necessity of warehouses for carrying over crops from full to lean years, how much in the way of social and community facilities can be provided, etc.

I believe that to plan good communities over here will, in the first instances, take over a year. Of course there will be exceptions to that, as for example an industrial enterprise that knows pretty closely what it wants for its employees; and many of your best communities here are connected with industries, as for example the Bata factory near Budge Budge, the homes for Tata employees at Jamshedpur. But generally speaking, it will take fully a year under the best conditions to do everything that is needed so as to be ready to build.

There are various things you can do or start to do right now—and as we are in Calcutta I will talk in terms of Calcutta. On a large scale, you can familiarize yourselves with the work of the Improvement Trust, and create an active public opinion behind it which should make it still more useful. One drawback is that all their work is restricted to Calcutta proper—they do not operate in Howrah and in surrounding areas which are all part of Calcutta's port and commercial activities though they are separate municipalities. I believe you should organize active understanding and interest in these matters. It would enormously interest those of you who have not seen it, to realize how much important work this Trust has already done—in the way of



street widenings, new streets, parks, sewer and water systems.

I want to tell you also that this Improvement Trust mechanism, which I have not seen anywhere except in the East, contains elements that we in the West have so far sought in vain to achieve. Its ample revenue is assured by definitely assigned tax allotments, as contrasted with the meagre funds our City Planning Commissions receive. And it is not in the position of having to plan and then merely hoping that City Departments will work along with these plans, but, because of its assured funds and its power of excess condemnation—which further increases its funds—it can itself execute the work it plans. You have here an extraordinarily flexible, powerful instrument, and I urge you to take an active interest in it both to broaden it territorially and in respect to its activities in such matters as *bustee* housing and in better permanent control of the kind of buildings erected on the land it acquires.

On the plane of the small community, a cell of the city, which I have talked most about, there are many ways to start work on projects. You have innumerable clubs—*samitis* and *sammilanis*, and *samâjas*, in which a group could associate itself with small committees or individuals of various professional societies such as engineers. You could undoubtedly find a large enough site of land, find out the owner. You would have to find a sympathetic owner, or convince him to be sympathetic, or you might find a site owned by the Corporation or the Improvement Trust. Then you would organize your planning work, make the various investigations I have briefly mentioned, come to conclusions as to the broad outlines of your scheme and later the details, in short—complete your plan. Of course the process of doing that is a subject in itself which cannot be covered at the tail-end of a single lecture. Study of that technique can be begun out of textbooks, and with the help of some

members of the visiting armies who have practised these professions.

If you are going to follow the idea of working up some of these projects, a number of people are going to have to put in a lot of free time. And if a serious number of projects are prepared, not all of them of course will be actually built. But this is all part of the game. Whether all are built or not, such co-operative effort is stimulating, is the best education in the world, and one of the best ways to arouse and educate public opinion to an effective interest and understanding of the importance of such developments in their daily lives and happiness. This is the kind of thing many of us did in the U.S.A., and which helped lead to the bigger results, though I assure you we have had our share of disappointments. So will you. But I am sure you will all finally have your share of success, as we did. And above all, I can assure you that if you organize such work and carry it out tenaciously to completion—you will not have wasted your time and effort.

There is one more point I want to meet. I have before this, strongly urged my Indian friends to lose no time in starting to explore the physical and the spiritual possibilities of such communities, and to get to work realistically to develop them now. Some of them retort that such work is on too small a scale, that there are hundreds of millions of people in India in need of betterment, that they require more food, better education, and a host of other things. To this I say that no matter what you do finally. But just because there may not be enough doctors in India or enough education, does the doctor refuse to treat his patients, or does the teacher refuse to teach? Of course not. The doctor has a mission, and feels it his sacred duty to relieve the ills of his patients and save their lives. The teacher knows that every pupil he can



awaken by education means a worthy future citizen. Every happy community you establish is an important step of progress in itself. Not only it is completely valid and worthwhile in itself, but by its example it will create public understanding and demand for others. If we cannot at once take care

of 300,000,000 people, neither has any other country been able to do so. Let us take care of as many thousands as we can, as soon as we can, not neglecting any other efforts in any other fields for the benefit of many millions. But in community building, you must now be in earnest.

## POST-WAR PLANNING IN STATES

By K. S. SRIKANTAN, M.A.

The atmosphere is charged with the talk of industrial planning. Hardly a day passes without the press or the platform giving us some idea of a new scheme of planning in some part of India. Suggestions ranging from thorough-going industrialization to unadulterated socialism have been made. As a matter of fact the suggestions made and the solutions offered for the present economic maladies are so numerous that one who tries to understand them is lost in a labyrinth of conflicting ideas.

There appears, however, to be a general agreement in regard to the question of industrialization. Industry, wisely initiated and controlled and kept far short of adventure and speculation—kept in reasonable relationship to the State's resources—will make and distribute wealth. Wise planning must regard the distribution of wealth as of equal importance with the making of it. Further, industry will enrich the State and increase its resources for every sort of welfare undertaking. For example, it can safely be said that without considerable industrial development there can never be universal education, nor such general prosperity as will make possible adequate leisure and the means for the best employment of this.

It is, however, strange that very few of the economists and industrialists have given in their plans a proper place to small and cottage industries, although emphasis on the importance of these industries has been again and

again laid by some of India's outstanding men. These industries have received so far only what I may call 'lip-sympathy' from these planners. They do not seem to realize that the whole fabric of Indian civilization is bound up with the survival and expansion of cottage industries. Whether one likes it or not, it is impossible to exterminate the potters, cobblers, tinkers, and others who form the warp and woof of Indian society.

To neglect them is to overlook India's real needs. The fear that they will be swamped and ultimately destroyed by modern industry is, perhaps, groundless. Eighty-five per cent of the million workers employed in industry in 1931 were engaged in small and cottage industries, and there is no reason to think that industrialization will seriously alter this proportion. Japanese experience shows that small industries can occupy an important place in modern industrial economy and can exist side by side with large-scale industries. The relation between the two is partly competitive and partly complementary. Where they are competitive, it may be necessary through a public organization, to demarcate the lines of division between the two and, in the case of the handloom for instance, to specify the varieties of cloth that should be reserved for it. Where they are complementary there is less difficulty, indeed some of the smaller industries would be auxiliary to large-scale industries.

Ideas like the above have shaped the policy of industrial planning in one of



the major States in Central India, the Holkar State, Indore. The opinion of the writer is that the Indian States should give a lead in a policy of proper industrial planning. People have a right to look to them for a lead in regard to the revival, improvement, and expansion of small and cottage industries.

Problems relating to industries and industrial planning in post-war years in States as in British India are mainly two.

- (1) The problem of adjustment arising out of the demobilization of technical and other labour from war industries.
- (2) The problem of planning the development of industries in the next few years.

These two problems, though apparently different, are inter-related and can be considered together. Every State is going to be faced with the problem of employment of demobilized soldiers. No one can deny that these deserve the best consideration at the hands of the State authorities. It is needless to add that unless steps are taken from now to provide them with suitable employment, it would be difficult to employ them in suitable services, and much less to help them to lead the standard of life that they might have been accustomed to lead during the period of their active service. It is, therefore, necessary that every State should take up immediately the question and prepare from now a list of such people who are now on active service and gather detailed information about each individual regarding his qualifications and any special training that he might have received during the period of his active service. On account of the extreme urgency of the matter every State should set up a 'Planning Committee' with officials and non-officials under the chairmanship of the Director of Industries to chalk out ways and means of absorbing them. This Committee should be charged with the duty

of making detailed recommendations concerning the exact nature of the help that the State might give to these persons so as to enable them to stand on their own legs.

When one thinks of the problem of the demobilized soldiers, one cannot refrain from suggesting the need for making a list of cottage industries that would be suitable to them, so that they could live in their own villages and at the same time earn enough to enable them to live a decent life. Steps should be taken from now to start a 'Central Institute of Cottage Industries' where some of these demobilized soldiers could be given a short training in some selected industries.

In fact, in view of the national and permanent importance of cottage industries, I may even suggest that the Government of India may consider the possibility of starting a 'Central Institute of Cottage Industries' for the whole of India where intensive training could be given in several cottage industries which are unfortunately becoming extinct. The ideal institute that the writer is visualizing would mean an investment of some crores of rupees, but in view of its importance, both cultural and economic, the expenditure is worth incurring. The machinery of the Government of India is so huge that it cannot be moved early. I, therefore, suggest that the major States in India do set up an institute like the one above so that they may give a lead in this to the Government of India.

Within a few years following the War, industries in the States may have to face a depression and a general downward movement of prices resulting in the growth of unemployment and under-employment. To face these difficulties, it is necessary to plan from now a policy of constructing public utility concerns, designed to distribute purchasing power and stimulate at once construction of roads, hydro-electricity schemes, irrigation works which would go a long way in helping the public



and the State at the same time. But the necessary plans and estimates should be prepared from now. In this connection the examples of Mysore and Jaipur deserve our notice. It is possible that before long Mysore may publish a comprehensive report on its plans. Even now, however, the information available shows that the target aimed at is a 100% increase in five years in the per-capita income of the people of the State. The plan proposes to achieve this by intensifying cultivation, improved irrigation, and better manure.

'Industrial development is to be pursued along two lines. Mysore must aim at producing all the consumers' goods, take up standardization of railways and replacement of rolling stocks. And the electrification of suburban railways have also been thought of. The State has already planned for great advance in the sphere of Hydro-electrical power. The present production of 70,000 k.w. is increased threefold. The plan envisages an expenditure of 400 crores.'

Certain States have taken advantage of the times and floated loans. No time is better suited for such a policy than the present one. It is hoped that the other States will soon follow suit and float similar loans and earmark them for productive purposes.

In a general way the State should be prepared to assist in a policy of industrialization; but it should not undertake functions which can efficiently be discharged by private enterprise. The State should regulate the conditions of labour and hours of work, and may provide information and supply power when available. Steps should from now be taken to make the power house a really central one giving power to all industries including the mills. In special cases, even a part of the investment may be taken up by the State. But risk-bearing in industry, is not, as a rule, a function which should be discharged by the State except in the case

of public utility undertakings such as water works, electrical concerns, telephones, etc., which should be operated with consideration of social advantage rather than of raising revenue. Nor does there seem to be any objection to the official operation of concerns of a semi-commercial character possessing public utility. The running of motor buses for local traffic by municipalities and the organization of a tourist industry by the State are examples under this category and may be taken up with advantage. A committee has already been set up to go into this question for the city of Indore.

Certain proposals for the establishment of large and medium scale industries have been outlined by the Director of Industries. These include industries as cement, mineral acids and alum, boots and shoes, tanning, oil mill, rectified spirit, paper (handmade and mill) hosiery, porcelain goods, starch, silk, rayon, soap, etc. In the development of these and other industries, it should be remembered that the industries selected should be such as promise continued prosperity in post-war years. The starting of every industry should be preceded by a detailed investigation into the technical and economic factors affecting the industry. Great vigilance is necessary not only in the selection of site and machinery but also in respect of experience and standing of business men and technicians who are to have directive positions in the concerns. To examine in detail new proposals for industry, it is desirable for the State to have a number of expert scientific and technical consultants and an economic advisory body of the kind that has already been set up in the Holkar State. The development of cottage industries as already remarked forms an important aspect of post-war reconstruction in the Holkar State. To assist the marketing of products, there should be a central emporium of handicrafts with a sales depart-



ment having as many sections as possible. It should distribute price lists and catalogues, establish agencies, get in touch with Trade Commissioners of the Government of India in other countries, and have stalls in exhibitions. It should be assisted by a staff of marketing officers to be posted in different provinces and States in India. Government might also consider the adoption of State marks guaranteeing to the purchaser the authenticity and genuineness of the products particularly in such trades as precious metal work, ivory carvings, textile fabrics, etc. It is also necessary to have a central polytechnic which should impart instruction to the artisans in improved methods of production and to study the way in which the talent available may be adopted to produce new things that can go on the market. As regards the larger field of private production it would be desirable to start multi-purpose co-operative societies. These will finance the artisans not in money but by supplying them with tools, raw materials and other reasonable needs, and the accounts will be kept in money. It should not be forgotten that several cottage industries can be made to thrive on a single large-scale industry. Decentralization has gone so far in Japan that even bicycles are made on a cottage industry basis. In any scheme of post-war planning, the State should not neglect to explore the possibilities of establishing a co-ordination between large and small-scale industries.

Besides large and small industries in cities, the development of rural industries subsidiary to agriculture necessary for improving the economic well-being of the rural population requires careful consideration. There seem to be excellent prospects for the development of woollen industry and sericulture in the State. The methods of marketing wool by grading will increase the agriculturist's revenue from this source. Demonstration in the methods of clip-

ping wool and arrangements for scientific sheep-breeding should be organized by the State.

It is to be noted that sericulture is possible only where labour is cheap, efficient, and abundant. It is because of this reason that Japan and China have acquired predominance in this industry, while in France and Italy it is already on the decline. Sericulture cannot profitably be conducted on hired labour, and it will pay only as a subsidiary occupation for families whose members can cultivate mulberry and rear silk-worms. In a village having the silk industry, a large number of families find such subsidiary occupations as plucking leaves, digging, weeding, pruning, not to speak of the several processes connected with rearing worms and reeling cocoons. Even the artisans find additional employment in the manufacture of appliances required for the industry. It is, thus, an admirable subsidiary occupation for an agriculturist. Mulberry can be grown on small plots of land ranging from a quarter of an acre to a couple of acres either as a dry or an irrigated crop; and it is the mulberry garden that is the principal investment in the industry. The other requirements and the equipments of the industry are very few. The ryot's house can serve as the place of manufacture and his wife and children can supply the necessary labour. Since the worms are reared inside the house and are fed only a few times daily at long intervals, there is not much exertion.

One need not have any hesitation about the demand for silk. All the silk in the Holkar State was being imported sometime back from China and Japan or some other provinces in India. Statistics tell us that out of a total annual consumption of about four million pounds of raw silk in India, the quantity produced in India itself amounts to one and a half million pounds. During 1937-38 the raw silk



produced in the several silk-producing centres in India was as follows :

Mysore State	...	800,000 lbs.
Bengal	...	400,000 „
Kashmir State	...	250,000 „
Madras	...	115,000 „
Assam	...	10,000 „
Punjab	...	5,000 „
Bihar	...	1,000 „

---

TOTAL ... 1,581,000 „

While the States may not be able to aid the hand-spinning industry, it

should assist the hand-loom industry by starting co-operative societies and by organizing production centres at important places. The starting of a textile branch in the proposed polytechnic may be a further aid to this industry. There is no easier solution to the problem of improving the handloom weavers than to take the aid of the huge mills which can easily purchase all that the weavers produce, finish them, and sell them to the public. If the mills care, they can do this in no time.

---

## OUR EDUCATION: A RETROSPECT

BY MRS. SWARNAPRABHA SEN

Education is very often supposed to be a mere item of luxury in the make-up of the civilization which we profess; an item which has already been relegated to tradition, so that the vitalizing sense—the only sense in which the word is to be understood—is lost to view in common talk. But the luxury idea, however wide-spread, is as far from the truth as possible, and this will bear repetition. Education is no make-believe; and its history guides us to the future of mankind. This is why after every disaster, men turn to the thought of a ‘new’ education which will escape the dangers and defects of the old.

We can best understand ourselves, or hope to be understood by our successors, only in the light of the past, by the study of the generation which has made the present and in that way endeavoured to mould the future. If we carefully review and analyse the changes that have occurred during the century or a period of hundred years just over—changes in the thought and actions of different groups of individuals in society, it may serve to point the way we should traverse in future and the pitfalls of which we should beware. To form an idea of our society would require an understanding of its interests, its morals,

its social ideals, its politics; and then is possible a reconstruction of it on the basis of the materials thus made available; educational plannings on other basis would be an absurdity. Virtually it means the history of the development of the minds of the people. Our mind is like a budding flower; the golden ray which kisses it into life is the light of education. Education draws forth man’s inherent capacity, nourishes and ennobles his mind and body, lends him vitality and sends him out into the world to get seasoned in the struggle that life entails, a struggle for which he has become fitted by the process of education itself. It is thus an essential part of human life and cannot be neglected in any scheme of progress, cultural, political, social, or economic.

Events and circumstances, differences of environment and inheritance have no doubt their influence upon the personal destinies of men and women and determine the life of an ordinary individual, but education is the chief factor that carves out our path in life. Education is the thing which can make man rise above circumstances and enables him, so far as possible, to struggle against what seems a perverse destiny.



The burning question of the day, the problem of all problems today, is concerned with education. We are living through one of the very great moments in the history of the world and the Indian horizon seems to be heavily clouded. But our leaders feel that out of this clouded horizon they will see the destiny of India unfold itself, and they visualize a greater India evolved out of this present chaos. Science and education are the two things that can help us to keep up with world movements and build us a greater India and make the Indians a nation. An analysis of the problem of education is, therefore, likely to help us clear the hurdles in our way to the realization and perfection of a new order of things for India. What is the fundamental aim of education, how does it affect the formation of society, how far does it help the growth of a nation, what is its relation to the State, who should be entrusted with the burden of carrying it to the members of society—these are questions that have set people thinking in the past, and are still a matter of deep concern in all countries. The achievements of Soviet Russia in recent times lend romance to the possibilities of education and contribute an optimistic outlook to the situation.

In India the problem of education like all other problems has its distinctiveness. Indian history of the last hundred years presents to us a series of changes—strange changes and remarkable developments—and a study of the same leads us automatically to an analysis, a survey of the educational activities of the period. And education is being more and more recognized as a major subject of study. The universities are going in for new courses in the principles and history of education and the Government department of education has recognized the importance of the subject; research studies are being undertaken and hundreds of young Indians are

qualifying every year for efficient teachership by attending special courses on the subject in the different centres of the world for the study of education. The last fifteen years have seen a marvellous development on this point. Dr. Maria Montessori's visit to India from this particular view-point has been very significant—and nursery schools and similar institutions enjoy a respectability rare to imagine twenty years ago. At Dacca, Patna, Calcutta, and elsewhere there has been provision for the training of teachers, and the educational policy of the Government of India is being rightly subjected to scrutiny from different points by an enlightened public. Planning is in the air, and education has come in for its share.

Though the subject of modern education has been ennobled in the imagination of an enlightened India, it is almost as old as the establishment of British rule in India. To form an idea of the existing system of education in Bengal and its influence on the Bengalees, it will be instructive to pause and look back in order to trace the result to its cause and the condition then existing, and to the factors that brought it about.

As we dwell over the past, we are inevitably reminded of Raja Ram-mohun Roy, a personality that rose far above his contemporaries. The development of an educational policy for the country was but one of Raja Ram-mohun's manifold activities. With rare insight, even in those days, he sensed that education was a necessity for its own sake, it was an essential item in the building up of life, it was in itself the building up of life, and it had to be spread far and wide and taken into the heart of the country. He was searching for the right lines on which it had to be done. The British had already consolidated their power in the country and brought along with them, behind the materialistic paraphernalia of the East India Company, an altoge-



ther different culture—a culture that was very much alive—and the Raja with his genius and foresight had envisaged a new outlook on life for the millions of his countrymen. But his educational policy was in conflict with those Britishers who thought that the best way of spreading education in India would be to make accessible the Oriental works which were as much a wonder and a revelation to them as Western culture, science, and history were to the Indians. Therefore it gave rise to a controversy and there were two parties. The Orientalists, who were for the old system, were for improving the method already in existence, the traditional ways of the *pāthshālā*. But the Raja and his party wanted that an altogether new system should be introduced. He was second to none in his love for the country and its culture; and in his day, he was one of the most learned men in the Oriental studies in their comprehensiveness as well as in their detail. But he realized the great need for a change. The gleam that had inspired him and caught his fancy was the golden light of Western education with its objective and experimental science. He foresaw for Indians the need of a scientific education, suitable for the practical requirements of life. If India had to march with the course of time, if it had not to lag behind, Indians, he felt, should be given a practical education comprising European science and culture, and that education should be given in English. This change in the system—introduction of a foreign language as the medium—did not meet with welcome with all the sections of leading public thought, and many were the difficulties in his way. Hot discussions followed; but he was always ready with arguments, and he succeeded in introducing a system of education which would ‘embrace Mathematics, Natural Philosophy, Chemistry, Astronomy, with other useful sciences’. His study of Western civilization led

him to appreciate a synthetic ideal of education in which there should be provision for science side by side with culture, the modern spirit of Western civilization synthesized with the ancient culture of the East. The best of the East and the best of the West—that was his ideal for the future India, and that was why he was opposed to mere Oriental studies divorced from Western scientific knowledge.

Such an ideal found support in those leaders of thought and moulders of public opinion whose control on the Bengali mind has contributed not a little towards the shaping of events in modern times. Bankimchandra, though dissatisfied with the system of grants-in-aid for popularizing education, appreciated the harmonious blend of diverse elements advocated by Auguste Comte, and in his *Ānandamath* advocated the acquirement of knowledge of the external world from Western masters, which was to be combined with the knowledge of the spirit to be learnt from Eastern masters. Rabindranath could never tolerate the idea of any exclusiveness in the matter of knowledge, and he was all along an advocate of a thorough catholicity in matters of education, not indeed to the extent of losing hold of India’s spiritual heritage, but strengthening it by acquisition from every source. Swami Vivekananda, who had captured the minds of Indian youth after his return from a successful tour in Europe and America, advised all to acquire mastery of the objective world through Western education and at the same time to retain the spiritual training of our ancestors.

In this way there has been a general agreement of successive masters of modern India about the lines of education that India should follow; there has been no advocacy of exclusiveness, and there has been continued activity for a hundred years to attain to that happy blend which has seemed so desirable.



A detailed survey, when undertaken, will show the many attempts to make the pattern a useful one—useful more to the State, however, than to the community itself, and that is where the defect of the system lay.

In the years to come, when the war will be no more and peace will again heal the wounds of humanity, education will be a major subject to tackle,

and the planning has already begun. But no planning worth the name can afford to ignore the vital needs of the community concerned, nor can it forget the past. If there has been of late years an increased investigation into the history of Indian education, that only serves to show the signs of the times which we are so often apt to miss.

## SHRI RAMAKRISHNA\*

BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL

We are here this evening to celebrate the birthday of the Paramahansa whose repeated experiences of God (God under all forms and God beyond all forms) are the fountain-source of this centre. The inspiration of his ecstasy he communicated to all peoples, of all classes, faiths, races, and nations. Our Centre, here in New York, is a far-flown spark from the fire of that ardent soul.

We are remote from Dakshineswar and the temple where the Master served the Creator-Preserver-and-Destroyer of the world in the form of Devi Bhavatârini, the Divine Mother, the Ferry across the Troubled Seas of Being. We are remote in space from Dakshineswar, and in time from the five decades of the life of Shri Ramakrishna: but space and time (this much we know) are no more than the veils of *mâyâ*; they do not touch that seed-moment which is of the essence of our existence, and wherein we are all one in Brahman, the One without a Second. Even as we sit here enjoying with our senses this beautiful chapel—made festive in honour of a birthday that took place over a century ago and half a world away—in the deepest core of our souls we are identical with the Brahman which then and there broke into the form of Shri

Ramakrishna. Calling that fact to mind, we taste something of the sweet Wonder of this moment. For in commemorating this birthday, we are looking, in imagination, through the mirror of space and time, only to contemplate an incarnation of that Self which is, here and now, our very selves.

A birthday festival is precisely a festival in honour of the entrance of Eternity into time; and a birthday celebrated one hundred and eight years after the original event, is a reminder of the dissolution of time in Eternity. We can simply wipe away the illusion of remoteness; we can know that now and here the Paramahansa sings to us: 'So'ham—I am that! I have no form or name; the all-pervading Self am I.'

But if the annihilation of the mirage of space and time seems an extreme measure, and not quite appropriate when the space has been decorated with flowers for the festival, and the time enriched with discourses and music, then we may regard the moment in another way, and sing with the Gopis of Vrindavana:

Tell me, friend, how far is the grove  
Where Krishna, my Beloved, dwells?  
His fragrance reaches me even here;  
But I am tired and can walk no further.

We are in New York. There is a war on. These are terrible days for our civilization. Everyone is behaving in the craziest possible way: it is duty,

\* An address delivered at the meeting of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre of New York to celebrate the birthday of Shri Ramakrishna.



now, to be mad. This is the wildest moment in the dance of the terrible Goddess: the moment when everything splits into fire. We require an eye such as that of Shri Ramakrishna to know that even in Her frenzy She is our sweet ferry through the storm. Dancing in an ecstatic mood the Master himself could sing:

Mother, Thou canst not trick me any more,  
For I have seen Thy crimson lotus feet.

On this birthday, then, of the Paramahansa, we may try to fill ourselves with

the courage that it takes to love Kâli, the All-terrible, and to see that in the sweetness of these flowers, and in the foulness of the things we are all now doing to each other, the one World Presence reveals Herself, for the delectation of her devotee, who, now and here, as well as eight decades ago in Dakshineswar, sings and dances, joyfully repeating:

Durgâ! Durgâ!

Thy two feet are my boat to cross this world's dark sea.

---

## EPISTLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA\*

### I

Da Forest P.O.  
Santa Clara Co.  
6 Place des Etats Unis  
Paris, France  
1st Sept. (1900)

My dear Hari,

I learnt everything from your letter. Earlier I had an inkling of some trouble between the full-fledged Vedantist and the Home of Truth—some one wrote that. Such things do occur; wisdom consists in carrying on the work by cleverly keeping all in good humour.

For some time now I have been living *incognito*. I shall stay with the French to pick up their language. I am somewhat freed from worries, that is to say, I have signed the Trust Deed, etc., and sent them to Calcutta. I have not reserved any right or ownership for myself. You now possess everything, and will manage all work by the Master's grace.

I have no longer any desire to kill myself by touring. For the present I feel like settling down somewhere and spending my time among books, etc. I have somewhat mastered the French language; but if I stay among them for a month or two, I shall have proficiency in carrying on conversations well. If one can master this language and German sufficiently, one can virtually become well acquainted with European learning. The people of this France are mere intellectualists, run after worldly things, and firmly believe God and souls to be superstitions; they are extremely loath to talk on such subjects. This is a truly materialistic country! Let me see what the Lord does. But this country is at the head of Western culture, and Paris is the capital of that culture.

Brother, free me from all work connected with preaching. I am now aloof from all that, you manage it yourselves. It is my firm conviction that Mother will get works done through you a hundredfold more than through me.

\* Translated from original Bengali.



Many days ago I received a letter from Kali. He must have reached New York by now. Miss Waldo sends news now and then.

I keep sometimes well and sometimes bad. Of late I am again having that massage treatment by Mrs. Waldon, who says, 'You have already recovered!' This much I see—whatever the flatulence, I feel no difficulty in moving, walking, or even climbing. In the morning I take vigorous exercise, and then have a dip in cold water.

Yesterday I went to see the house of the gentleman with whom I shall stay. He is a poor scholar, has his room filled with books, and lives in a flat on the fifth floor. And as there are no lifts in this country like America, one has to climb up and down. But it is no longer trying to me.

There is a beautiful public park round the house. The gentleman cannot speak English; that is a further reason for my going. I shall have to speak French perforce. It is all Mother's will. She knows best what she wants to have done. She never speaks out, 'only keeps mum'. But this much I notice that for a month or so I have been having intense meditation and repetition of the Lord's name.

Please convey my love to Miss Boocke, Miss Bell, Mrs. Aspinel, Miss Beckham, Mr. George, Dr. Logan, and other friends and accept it yourself. My love to all in Los Angeles also.

Yours,  
VIVEKANANDA

## II

6 Place des Etats Unis  
Paris

Dear brother Hari,

Now I am staying on the coastal region of France. The Congress of History of Religions is over. It was not a big affair, some twenty scholars gathered to debate such subjects as the origin of the Shâlagrâma,<sup>1</sup> and the origin of Jehovah, etc. I, too, joined in the discussion.

I am broken down in health and mind. Rest is absolutely needed. To add to this, not only have I none to depend on, but so long as I live, all will depend on me and become very selfish.

. . . Dealings with people are a source of constant worry. So I have freed myself by formally transferring everything to . . . I am now putting it down that no one shall rule singly. All work shall be carried on according to the decisions of the majority . . . I shall feel relieved if a Trust Deed is drawn up on those lines. . . . To let well alone, 'Murâri turned to wood by constantly thinking of his domestic affairs';<sup>2</sup> I slip off for fear of turning to wood—what of that!

Thus far about this topic. Now do as you all think proper. I have finished my part, and there it ends. I was indebted to the Master, and I have repaid the debt with my life.<sup>3</sup> How shall I describe it to you! . . .

<sup>1</sup> A stone emblem of Vishnu.

<sup>2</sup> On being asked why Jagannâtha of Puri was wooden, somebody replied humorously, 'One of His wives is sharp-tongued (meaning Satyabhâmâ) and the other is fickle (meaning Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth), one of His sons Manmatha (Cupid) is uncontrollable and conquers the world, He lives in ocean, His bed is on (the coils of the snake) Shesha, and He has Garuda as His carrier—constantly thinking of (these) domestic worries Murâri turned to wood.'

<sup>3</sup> Vide letter of 26 May 1890 to Pramadas Mitra.

They have sent me a draft deed granting me absolute authority. I have signed everything except the authority clause. . . . Brushing aside G., yourself, K., S., and the new boys, I have conferred authority on R. and B. The Master estimated them highly. This is his work. . . . I have put my signature. All that I may do hereafter will be my work. . . .

I now proceed to do my work. I have repaid the Master's debt with my life. He has no further claim. . . .

What you all are doing is the Master's work. Carry it on. I have done what I had to do, there it ends. Please do not write or tell me about those things any more—I have absolutely no opinion to express on them. . . .

A new chapter begins from now. . . .

NARENDRA

P.S. My love to all.

### III

6 Place des Etats Unis

My dear Turiyananda,

Just now received your letter.

Through Mother's will all work will go on; don't be afraid. I shall soon leave for some other place. Perhaps I shall be on a tour of Constantinople and other places for some time. Mother knows what will come next. I have received a letter from Mrs. Wilmot. From this, too, it appears that she is very enthusiastic. Sit firm and free from worries. Everything will be all right. If hearing of the *nâda*, etc. does any one harm he can get rid of it if he gives up meditation for a time and takes to fish and meat. If the body does not become progressively weak, there is no cause for alarm. Practice should be slow.

I shall leave this place before your reply comes. So do not send the reply to this letter here. I have received all the papers of Sarada, and wrote to him lots a few weeks ago. I have a mind to send more later on.

There is no knowing where my next stop will be. This much I can say that I am trying to be free from care.

I received a letter from Kali, too, today. I shall send him a reply tomorrow. The body is somehow rolling on. Work makes it ill, and rest keeps it well—that is all. Mother knows. Nivedita has gone to England. She and Mrs. Bull are collecting funds. She has a mind to run a school at Kishengarh with the girls she got there. Let her do what she can. I do not intervene any more in any matter—that is all.

My love to you. But I have nothing more to advise as regards work.

Yours in service,  
VIVEKANANDA



## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

Planning is in the air; and we do not see why our readers, too, should not have their plans ready for reconstructing their own post-war Utopias. When we write this, we can very well visualize the anger in many faces at this uncalled for cheap raillery. So we sit thinking and produce *Our Idols and Inspiration*, which gives indication of the spirit that should inform all attempts for betterment . . . . But lest this should be condemned as too airy, we hasten to publish two solid contributions from two men of position—Major Albert Mayer, Architect and Town Planner of New York, U.S.A., and Mr. Srikantan, Director of Commerce and Industries, Holkar State. . . . Mrs. Swarnaprabha Sen, who is already known to our readers, gives a short *résumé* of her previous articles.

### LITERACY AND CULTURE

Once some persons were crossing a river in a boat. One of them, a pundit, was making a great display of his erudition, saying that he had studied various books—the Vedas and the six systems of philosophy. He asked a fellow-passenger who appeared to be illiterate, 'Do you know the Vedanta or the Sankhya?' 'No, sir,' replied the fellow-passenger. 'Have you not read any philosophy or literature whatsoever?' asked the pundit sardonically. 'No, revered sir,' returned the other meekly, rather bewildered. As the pundit went on expatiating in a vain way on the advantages of book-learning, a storm arose and the boat began to toss heavily. The passengers looked concerned, fearing the boat might sink, and, more than all, the pundit felt utterly despondent in face of danger. Then the other fellow-passenger calmly said to the pundit, 'Sir, can you swim?'

'No,' said the pundit, excited. The passenger laughed and said, 'I don't know any system of philosophy, nor have I read any literature; but I can swim.' To the pundit learning and scholarship constituted the essence of man, and anyone devoid of these was to be given up as lost. There are many who think that there can be no culture without literacy, and who consider unlettered peoples backward, uncivilized, and unfit for self-government. Writing in the *Asia and the Americas* for February 1944, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy discusses the merits and demerits of literacy as it is in evidence today and to what extent it is indispensable to the growth of culture. Western intellectualists often subscribe to the glib assumption that literacy is an unqualified good and an indispensable condition of culture. But as against this, the learned writer points out that there is no necessary connection between literacy and culture. Viewing the problem from the standpoint of an American citizen, he observes that

to impose our literacy (and our contemporary 'literature') upon a cultural but illiterate people is to destroy their culture in the name of our own.

When we set out to 'educate' the South Sea Islanders, it is generally in order to make them more useful to ourselves (this was admittedly the beginning of 'English education' in India), or to 'convert' them to our way of thinking: . . . . The purpose of our educational activities abroad is to assimilate our pupils to our ways of thinking and living.

He pleads for the cultivation of oral literature which has greater advantages and is more permanent than the written one. In ancient India knowledge was imparted to boys and girls, even from a very early age, through the medium of the ear and with the help of the pupil's trained memory. And yet most of these pupils hardly knew how to read or write. The Census reveals that



the number of 'literate' in India is quite small. But this has not stood in the way of her cultural progress. On the other hand she has maintained the tradition of her rich cultural heritage not because of but in spite of the gift of 'literacy' conferred upon her by those who were 'bent by the weight of the white man's burden'. The writer strikes a note of caution in his concluding words:

Our real concern is with the fallacy involved in the attachment of an absolute value to literacy, and the very dangerous consequences that are involved in the setting up of 'literacy' as a standard by which to measure the cultures of unlettered peoples. Our blind faith in literacy not only obscures for us the significance of other skills, so that we care not under what sub-human conditions a man may have to earn his living, if only he can read, no matter what, in his hours of leisure; it is also one of the fundamental grounds of inter-racial prejudice and becomes a prime factor in the spiritual impoverishment of all the 'backward' people whom we propose to 'civilize'.

Education is a very necessary and important factor in the intellectual and moral growth of man. Acquaintance with letters stimulates thoughts and ideas, and helps cultural contact between the different peoples of the world. But a mere inability to read or write should not be taken as a sign of absence of culture. True culture is an expression of spirituality, and some highly spiritual men have not been 'literate' in the modern sense.

#### PRESENT-DAY WORLD IS LIKE A PILOTLESS PLANE

That the unhappy and shrivelled condition of the world today indicated that the great qualities of head and heart possessed by man were being employed for wrong ends was the theme of an illuminating address by Sir S. Radhakrishnan to the alumni of the Benares Hindu University. He said:

The world is like a pilotless plane; it has lost its sense of direction. We have knowledge that is power; we require wisdom that is enlightenment.

To the moderner, possession of material wealth and intellectual power is of great importance in solving the problems of this world. But he forgets that these, though necessary, are not enough, and refuses to be guided by the lesson of history. The horrors of the present armageddon leave no doubt that the world has not become any better to live in notwithstanding the fact that man has undisputed command over Nature to a great extent. What is wanted is the proper regulation and direction of the mainsprings of human action through the cultivation of spirituality and faith in God. Calling upon the students to show reverence towards the great ideas which have kept the hoary civilization of India alive, Sir Radhakrishnan laid stress on the imperative need for initiation into a higher life of spirit. The purpose of such a life is to eradicate greed and passion, and ennoble man's motives which will give him the right sort of stimulus for thought and action. The inspiration for such a life can come only from religion.

Speaking to his students on another occasion he said:

If, in spite of all our progress in science, technique, and wealth, we find ourselves in this condition of sorrow, it is because we have taken a wrong road. We have a philosophy of life, but it is based on an imperfect conception of man's nature and destiny.

Recognition and realization of the indwelling Divinity in man, irrespective of race, class, or nation, is the goal of human endeavour. It is not what or how much resources we possess that matters, but how very rightly we make use of those resources.



## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

RIGVEDIC CULTURE OF THE PRE-HISTORIC INDUS, VOL. II. BY SWAMI SANKARANANDA. FOREWORD BY SWAMI PRATYAGATMANANDA. *Published by the Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Raja Rajkissen Street, Calcutta. Pp. Lii+140. Price Rs. 10.*

In the first volume the author sought to establish through a comparative study of the Vedic and Indus-valley civilizations that the two are identical. The task before the present volume is mainly to evolve a method which may prove successful in 'attacking the main citadel of "ancient mysteries" through the difficult but negotiable moraine of "unseemly" scripts and the dubious but not impassable morass of "uncouth" sounds'. The *tantric* dictionaries have yielded him the key for unlocking the door of 'the dark cave of the science of scripts' and he demonstrates by charts and figures how the Egyptian hieroglyphs as well as the Mohenjo-Daro pictographs, the Sanskrit letters as well as the Chinese scripts, and in fact all the ancient writings can be made to yield their meanings through the guidance of the *tantric* dictionaries.

It is altogether a new and very bold venture undertaken with the zeal of a monk whom no extraneous consideration can draw away from his settled conviction. The conclusions are supported by a plethora of

textual evidence and logical insight and there is the stamp of sincerity imprinted on every page. Scholars may not see eye to eye with the author in all his conclusions, but that is no discredit; for complete accord often raises suspicion as to the real worth of a book of research of this type. It is the method of approach, the thought-challenging conclusions, the range of information brought under scrutiny that should be the real test of a book of this kind. We have every hope that the book will draw the attention of all interested in the study of the Mohenjo-Daro culture and the mystery of ancient scripts.

### SANSKRIT-BENGALI

BRIHADĀRANYAKA UPANISHAD. EDITED BY SWAMI GAMBHIRANANDA. *Published by the Udbodhan Office, 1, Udbodhan Lane, Calcutta. Pp. 480. Price Rs. 5.*

This is the third part of the *Upanishad Granthāvali*, published by the Udbodhan Office. Like its fore-runners it contains the Sanskrit texts with word-for-word paraphrase in Bengali, running translation and notes in Bengali. There is a short introduction dealing with the subject matter of the book, and at the end there are two indexes giving the most important words and sentences.

---

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

#### REPORT FOR 1943

The Hospital forms one of the activities of the Advaita Ashrama, Mayavati. From a very humble beginning it has now grown into a full-fledged and well-equipped hospital with 13 beds. It serves a very wide area: patients come even from a distance of 50 or 60 miles, taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

The total number of patients treated in the year under review in the Indoor Department was 255, of which 202 were cured and discharged, 24 were relieved, 26 were discharged otherwise or left, and 3 died. In the Outdoor Department the total

number of patients treated was 11,554, of which 9,427 were new and 2,127 were repeated cases. The cases of surgical operations numbered 101.

We cordially thank all our donors and subscribers who by their continued support have made it possible for us to carry on this humanitarian work in such an out-of-way place.

All contributions, however small, will be thankfully received and acknowledged by the undersigned.

SWAMI PAVITRANANDA,  
President, Advaita Ashrama,  
P.O. Mayavati, Dt. Almora, U.P.

---