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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## BE BRAVE

BY SWAMI TURIYANANDA

My own will is of little consequence, ‘the Divine will takes effect’. I am grateful for your wishing my health. My heartfelt thanks to you for this. Your desire for realizing God is very right.

For one who has realized It here on earth there is true life. For one who has not, great is the destruction. (*Kena Up.*, II. 5).

It is fortunate if He can be realized in this body, otherwise there is no doubt that great harm lies in store. Whoever seeks Him finds Him. ‘By him It is attained whom It chooses.’ (*Katha Up.*, I. ii. 23). ‘Vain is my search; whoever finds Him to him He belongs.’ The Lord can be realized very easily. He is very merciful. He promises to appear in a trice if He is sought for earnestly. But who seeks for Him? Such is the great *mâyâ*. He has made us so busy about other things that we do not feel inclined to seek for Him. Recall the words of the Master about the bags of rice in the rice godowns:

‘Outside a quantity of popped rice is left on a winnowing fan; drawn by its smell rats come and eat their fill of it and do not come to know of the big bags of rice—though they are just there.’ Similarly persons are intoxicated with the happiness derived from wife and children. There is no seeking for the Divine bliss, though He is within. Such is the great *mâyâ*.

Such is the mysterious spell spread by the magic of Mahâmâyâ that Brahmâ and Vishnu are under its power. What can a person know of it?

They dig a tank and place bamboo fish-traps into which fish enter. The way for ingress and egress is open, yet the fish cannot escape.

The silk-worm weaves the cocoon, it lies in its power to tear it open. But thanks to Mahâmâyâ the cocoon is closed; the silk-worm meets its doom from its own secretions.

Such is the enchantment of Mahâmâyâ. However, there are these words of assurance:

Those who come to me, cross this *mâyâ*. . . . Take refuge in Him with all thy heart,

O, Bhârata ; by His grace shalt thou attain supreme peace (and) the eternal abode. (Gita, XVIII. 62).

Faith is necessary. There is no more fear if faith emerges by His grace.

The man with *shraddhâ*, the devoted, the master of one's senses, attains (this) knowledge. Having attained knowledge one goes at once to the Supreme Peace. (Gita, IV. 39).

What does it matter what others say, for this is realized by oneself. It is felt within. It is known by one's own self—do the words of others make any difference? There is perfect bliss within. 'He does not repent nor desires.' It is not at all surprising to realize this by the grace of the Master. A room which lay dark for a thousand years is filled with light in a trice by the light of a match stick. The Master used to say, 'All jackals howl alike.' That is to say, all have the same experience on the dawning of knowledge. Their utterances do not conflict. They are all Mother's children. Many are the dogmas and various the paths, but all reach the same place. The goal is one.

As all waters run into the ocean, so Thou art the one goal of men whatever be the various paths, straight or crooked, along which they may travel due to variety of tastes. (*Shivamahimnah stotram*).

'The uncle moon is the common uncle of all (children).' Is there any doubt in this? Why should you be of weak heart? You are Mother's child— infinite power is within you. 'O listen,

of whom is he afraid whose Mother is the Divine Brahman?' Ramprasad sang:

I stand with the charm of the name of Kâli all around me.

You will be punished, O Death, should you say bitter things ;

I will tell it to Mother.

Shyâmâ, the trampler of Death, is indeed a very crazy girl.

Listen me, O Death, I am no (feeble) child untimely born that I shall put up with thy words.

This is no sweet in a child's hand that you will wheedle it out and eat.

What! Mother's child wanting in strength! By Her grace infinite power lies in your grasp. The Master used to say, 'She is no "godmother" but one's own true mother.'

The Divine Mother is everywhere; at Her feet lie 'Gaya, Ganges and Benares'.

Thou art the Divine Shakti of infinite prowess, the seed of the cosmos, and the supreme *mâyâ*. O Goddess, Thou hast cast everything under Thy spell, and pleased Thou art, Thou dispenser of freedom in this world.

This Divine Energy is our Mother. What fear can there be for us? Why should we be weak? One who thinks himself to be weak becomes weak. You are Mother's child—why should you be feeble? You hold great strength within you. What can be beyond your power by Mother's grace? How long does it take for your notion of 'me and mine' to disappear? The Mother, by Her grace, can enlighten you in a moment. And it is a fact that She does.

## OLD INDIA AND FUTURE EUROPE

BY THE EDITOR

### I

In the early days of 'delicious intoxication' induced by the success of science, Hume wrote :

If we take in our hand any volume, of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance, let us ask, Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning quantity or number? No. Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact or evidence? No. Commit it, then, to the flames ;

for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion.

And thus the West prepared for scientific progress. The rise of the West synchronized with the decline of the East. Or to put the matter more realistically, the loss of emphasis on spiritual values in the West was counterbalanced by an unprecedented material advancement, whereas the loss of moral and

spiritual vigour in the East was all the more luridly underlined by an arrested economic progress. There was, however, one relieving feature in the East. When the West, or at least the progressive part of it, in its self-confident vigour, openly decried old-world values, the East in its dotage did not dare go so far, so that those values continued here in a moribund state, making themselves cognizable to discriminating eyes alone. But now things are taking a new turn. The West is becoming increasingly conscious of some defect in its modern system, whereas the East apes the ways that prevailed in the West a generation ago. The Eastern youths still glibly swear by those shibboleths whose emptiness has been proved to the hilt, theoretically in the past and practically during the present world crisis.

The first World War followed by the present armageddon, has despoiled the West of its easy-going optimism. It has now discovered that science supplies improved instruments to unimproved moral babies, so that instead of progress we have holocausts. Western intelligence, though outwardly chuckling at the stern warning of Oswald Spengler about the decline of the West, has all along been feeling ill at ease. There was a premonition of a coming cataclysm, which the West wanted to avert by all means. As a result, a huge literature, dealing with the future of the Euro-American world, has grown. The writers generally fall into two main groups—those who find the remedy in more efficient organization and extension of the material instruments of progress and human relationships accruing from them, and those others who stand for a thorough overhauling of the moral and spiritual outlook.

## II

As a representative of the first school we may select Mr. H. G. Wells. Speaking about himself he writes :

My instincts about foreigners are as insular as my principles are cosmopolitan. (*The Shape of Things to Come*, p. 16).

The reader wonders how these two attitudes can be reconciled. But a solution is found when he realizes that Wells's universalism aims only at a wider application of those values in English life, or at most in European life, which according to him, are the best suited for his 'Modern State'. He has little need for a moral or spiritual re-orientation. Nor need he look beyond the European frontiers for better things. According to him there should be a clear plan for the future 'World-State', and then it should be materialized through controls, dictatorships, etc., by 'the rather unimaginative forcible type' which is 'the necessary executive of a revolution'.

First came the intellectuals, men living aloof from responsibility, men often devoid of the qualities of leadership and practical organization. . . . Such men are primarily necessary in the human adventure, because they build up a sound diagnosis of events ; they reveal more and more clearly and imperatively the course that lies before the race, and in that task their lives are spent and justified. Then it is that the intelligent executive type, capable of concentration upon a complex idea once it is grasped, and resisting discursiveness as a drag on efficiency, comes into action. Their imaginative limitation is a necessary virtue for the task they have to do. (*Ibid.*, p. 267).

The relationship between the prophet and the leader of a revolution can be well understood by what existed between Karl Marx and Lenin. Karl Marx's chief merit lay in his 'clear recognition of the ultimate dependence of social and political forms and re-actions upon physical necessity ("the Materialist Conception of History")'. (*Ibid.*, p. 50). It was the genius of Lenin who organized the Communist party and modernized the Marxian ideas that made Marx's name a cardinal one in history.

A sound theory borrowed from someone by an executive genius is the desideratum for a world reconstruction, which will come through revolutions. The executive leader need not bother about the moral content of the theory he accepts, or his own spiritual nature. The world suffers not so much because of lack of morality or religion as because

of a lack of a world outlook and proper education and organization for it. It is customary to ascribe the failure of modern civilization to the inability of spirituality to keep pace with material advance. But the real disease is diagnosed thus :

The biological and especially social inventions were lagging far behind the practical advances of the exacter, simpler sciences. . . . The over-running of the biologically old by the mechanically new, due to these differences in timing, was inevitable, and it reached its maximum in the twentieth century. . . . Under the stimulus of mechanical invention and experimental physics it (human society) achieved . . . a hypertrophy of bone, muscle, and stomach, without any corresponding enlargement of its nervous controls. (*Ibid.*, p. 47). . . . It arose naturally and necessarily from the irregular and disproportionate growth of human appliances as compared with the extension of political and social intelligence. . . . (p. 65).

Controls are absolutely necessary. Soviet Russia has shown the way for reconstruction of society. Its five-year plan may not be ideal as a plan, but as an idea it shows the way to a higher social achievement. The present-day world, following the 'pseudo-philosopher Hegel' thinks that the 'World-State' will 'come about automatically by the inherent forces in things' (p. 45). But the 'World-State' can come only through a control of human destiny (p. 42).

We may remember in this connection that, true to the Eastern ideals, Mahatma Gandhi's economic ideas differ widely from those of the West. Faithful to the Indian standpoint, he thinks that human society cannot progress by multiplication of wants. But Wells, a protagonist of the modern European outlook, writes :

Human Society, so long as productive efficiency increases, is *obliged* to raise its standards of consumption and extend its activities year by year, or collapse. And if its advance does not go on, it will drop into routine, boredom, viciousness and decay. Steadfastly the quantity and variety of things must increase. (P. 54).

Before the 'World-State' comes into being, and before continued progress can be ensured, there must be 'a huge development of and application of the sciences of social psychology', a

'monetary reconstruction', 'a thorough-going socialism throughout the world', and 'a complete revolution in education' (p. 107).

The world is now passing through 'a phase of throwing out bright but disconnected ideas'. Our future lies in how rapidly we can consolidate the 'social and educational science into an applicable form' (p. 257).

What is the basic theory of the new education? Up till now we are habituated to think that 'moral values, bias and prejudices, hatred and so forth come by nature'. But we have to remember that

Men are born, but citizens are made. A child takes to itself what is brought to it. It accepts examples, usage, tradition, and general ideas. All the forms of its social reactions and most of its emotional interpretations are provided by its education. (Pp. 258-9).

Democratic liberty of choice of goal is not the best foundation for the 'World-State' :

It is no good asking people what they want. . . . That is the error of democracy. You have first to think out what they ought to want if society is to be saved. Then you have to tell them what they want and see that they get it. (P. 262).

And yet it will be wrong to infer that a few intelligent leaders at the head is all that we need. Fascism, Nazism, and Communism fail exactly because of this wrong supposition. There must be scope for free criticism, though there must be no opposition. If a directive organization is bad, it may be broken or thrown away, but one must rid one's mind altogether of a conception of see-saw and give and take as a proper method in human affairs (p. 264).

### III

This rather lengthy analysis of Wells's views is necessary to prepare the reader for what follows. Wells, in fact, does not present anything new. He only cuts the t's and dots the i's of modern European thought, and at times he italicizes or deletes a few sentences. Mr. Aldous Huxley's *The Brave New World* may be regarded as a *reductio ad*

*absurdum* of *The Shape of Things to Come*. Huxley openly declares in his *Ends and Means* that Europe cannot be saved merely by organizational efficiency. This can ensure material prosperity for a time, but it cannot uplift humanity morally and spiritually.

Now, economic and political reform is a branch of what may be called preventive ethics. The aim of preventive ethics is to create social circumstances of such a nature that individuals will not be given opportunity for behaving in an undesirable, that is to say an excessively 'attached', way. . . . So far so good. But we must not forget that reforms may deliver man from one set of evils, only to lead them into evils of another kind. . . . The wickedness is not abolished; it is only provided with a different set of opportunities for self-expression. (Pp. 17-20).

The fundamental problem, therefore, is how to enrich man's ethical nature. We cannot afford to enter into details. We can only refer to two fundamental facts. The aim of reform should be the production of non-attached men. But as ethics without a metaphysical background is a neutral thing—liable equally to be used for material prosperity, national aggrandizement, or international slaughter—the ideal man must have the best possible metaphysical outlook. A 'Mechanomorphie cosmology', which regards the universe as a great machine pointlessly grinding its way towards ultimate stagnation and death—a universe in which men are tiny offshoots of the universal machine, running down to their own private deaths—leaves purpose entirely out of human life. But man naturally seeks for purposes in things. And when the prevailing scientific outlook fails to supply this felt want,

Any doctrine that offers to restore point and purpose to life is eagerly welcomed. Hence the enormous success of the nationalistic and communistic idolatries which deny any meaning to the universe as a whole, but insist on the importance and significance of certain arbitrarily selected parts of the whole—the deified nation, the divine class. (*Ibid.*, p. 141).

Separate existences, however, are illusions of common sense. Scientific investigation reveals that concrete reality

is closely knit together. Competition among individuals or groups cannot lead to progress. Progress must be based on a more substantial metaphysical view. Progress is dependent on the preponderance of intra-specific co-operation over intra-specific competition. There can be no progress apart from progress in charity. But

charity cannot progress towards universality unless the prevailing cosmology is either monotheistic or pantheistic—unless there is a general belief that all men are the 'sons of God' or, in Indian phrase, that 'thou art that—tat tvam asi.' (P. 9).

So much about individuals in groups and the metaphysical beliefs that should lead them. Let us now turn to the individuals themselves. For in the last analysis, it is the individuals who are the raw materials for a lasting society. We know to our cost that the treatment of individuals *en masse* with political goals in view, leads to no lasting result. All that organizational effort should, therefore, aim at, is to produce the proper type of individuals, i.e., non-attached persons.

The ideal man is the non-attached man. Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possessions. Non-attached to the objectives of these desires. (P. 4).

Multiplication of want is not the best method of progress; for addiction cannot be destroyed by satiation, but tends, if indulged, to become a demonic passion. Planning for national prosperity is not always desirable; for national planning leads to international chaos. Dictatorship cannot lead us to our goal.

Marxism as an idea may be excellent. But in practice it is difficult to have all its implications fully realized.

Dictatorship by a small privileged minority does not lead to liberty, justice, peace, and co-operation of non-attached, but active and responsible individuals. It leads either to more dictatorship, or to war, or to revolution, or (more probably) to all three in fairly rapid succession. (P. 70).

Capitalism is a bad thing, as it produces a multiplicity of petty dictators. But state socialism tends to lead to a

centralized totalitarian dictatorship (p. 96). Equality of income for all is 'probably impossible, and perhaps even undesirable' (p. 185).

Equality in action—in other words, reciprocal good behaviour—is the only kind of equality that possesses a real existence. (P. 194).

Education in the modern world fails in its mission in so far as it supplies no principle in terms of which knowledge and experience can be integrated. Wells puts forth his universalism as this integrating principle. But Huxley would give his alumni a more spiritual frame of reference.

Thus, almost at every turn Huxley is opposed to Wells. No wonder that Huxley '(1894-2004)' is characterized in *The Shape of Things to Come* as 'one of the most brilliant of reactionary writers' (p. 364). None the less, this 'reactionary writer' appeals to us, since he does not confine his vision to the Euro-American field. He clearly recognizes that a mere expansion of the present-day European technique or a mere heightening of its tempo will not solve the problem. Europe is out to play *Hamlet* without the Prince of Denmark. If she is serious about her future, she must turn her attention to the inner world, to the things of the spirit, to the man 'non-attached to self and to what are called "things of this world" '.

#### IV

René Guénon is another writer with broad catholicity and wide vision. He fully realizes that

So long as Western people imagine that there is only one 'civilization' at different stages of development, no mutual understanding will be possible. (*East and West*, p. 10).

There are different civilizations growing along different lines and there should be no question of superiority or inferiority without making it quite clear from what point of view the things to be compared are being considered. Till recently 'civilization was Europe itself,

it was a patent which the European world granted itself' (p. 28).

And with this was allied the idea of indefinite progress which convinced the European world that it had entered upon a new era of absolute civilization, from which there could be no sliding back. But when an intellectual diagnosis is made, it is found that Europe has come under a 'gigantic collective hallucination' by which the 'vainest fantasies are taken as incontestable realities' (p. 31). But, truth to say,

The belief in indefinite progress is, all told, nothing more than the most ingenuous and grossest of all kinds of optimism; whatever form this belief may take, it is always sentimental in essence, even when it is concerned with material progress. (P. 41).

The contrast between the East and the West is very pronounced. Western science means analysis and dispersion; Eastern knowledge means synthesis and concentration (p. 43). The West has not been able to prove its absolute superiority over the East. When, therefore, it tries to impose its civilization on the East it adopts many subterfuges; there is an atmosphere of insincerity all around.

In them the spirit of conquest goes under the disguise of moralist pretexts, and in the name of liberty they would force the world to imitate them. (P. 44).

Modern Europe is weltering in the mire of intellectual degradation, because of an absence of metaphysical knowledge, a negation of all knowledge that is not scientific, and arbitrary, limitation of scientific knowledge to certain particular domains (p. 57). Its education is defective inasmuch as it results in 'replacing intelligence almost entirely by memory' (p. 69). Europeans are so impermeable to higher metaphysical ideas and so self-complacent that a scholar like Deussen thinks of explaining Shankaracharya to the Hindus through the ideas of Schopenhauer (p. 78)! The Westerners have adopted speed and change as the only ideals of life. The part played by 'vital dash' in their lives is well known. And

instinct and sentiment are identified with a being's very depth.

Evolution is, all told, nothing but change, backed up by an illusion with regard to the direction and quality of this change; evolution and progress are one and the same thing, to all intents and purposes, . . . (P. 91).

It will not do to base future society on morality, for 'morality in itself is something essentially sentimental'. A moral code 'cannot be anything more than a rule of action'. Modern Europe, interested in action more than in anything else, will naturally put stores by morality. But humanity wants a greater value than mere morality. Even intellect, as it is commonly understood, is no sure basis of future reconstruction, for intellect in the modern world is a shallow thing.

Where is the remedy then? The remedy lies in studying the Eastern ideals from the Eastern point of view:

The West, through understanding the Eastern civilizations, would come nearer to being brought back into the traditional paths which it so rashly and foolishly broke away from. . . . (P. 128). What we call traditional civilization is one that is based on principles in the true sense of the word, that is, where the intellectual realm dominates all the others, and where all things, science and social institutions alike, proceed from it directly or indirectly, being no more than contingent, secondary, and subordinate applications of purely intellectual truths. (P. 166). When we speak of purely intellectual truths, it is always the universal order, and no other, which is in question; here lies the domain of metaphysical knowledge, that is super-individual and super-rational knowledge itself, knowledge that is intuitive, beyond all analysis, and independent of what is relative. (P. 168).

Not being based on such intuitive realization, modern European civilization has set up anarchy and individualism in place of intellectual hierarchy, family, and community, which are the real foundations of an equitable social life. To get at these foundations and to re-adopt the traditional view, we have to look to India, and to Hinduism in particular (n. 233). Hindu traditionalism need not be identified with inelasticity. Tradition admits all the aspects of truth, 'it does not set itself against any legitimate adaptation' (p. 241).

## V

We have so far presented before the readers the conclusions of three representative minds of the West. Wells believes that his island will some day expand into the universe and thus end his insularity. Huxley enters into the region of morals and metaphysics and thinks that the salvation of modern civilization lies in making men better: it is better men that can bring in a better society. For this, and for throwing more light on the discarded values, he turns often to the East. But he seems to believe with Romain Rolland that the West can dig up its old foundations and build a new society on them independently of the East. Guénon is all admiration for the East. The West has lost its 'tradition' irretrievably and unless it takes its lessons from the East, there can be no revival. With Wells's views we need not deal any longer, for Huxley and Guénon have given the quietus to them. The difference between the two latter is not vital; for so far as India is concerned, she has gone so long whoring after the West, and through continued thralldom has lost so much of mental balance, that she, too, is practically unaware of her own treasures. So whether Huxley takes the Indian ideals as models for comparison, or Guénon takes them as living realities to be inspired and instructed by, to us in India they are nothing but ideals to be conscious of and striven after. It is from this point of view that we shall now make a hurried survey of some of the ideals not dealt with in the earlier sections.

We have noted that society needs a solid basis of spiritual realization, the world cannot keep spirituality any longer in cold storage. Spirituality alone can supply the principles which can determine all lasting social relationships. In order that this spirituality may be kept ever in view and in order that it may be a living force there must be constant contact of men with it.

The mystics of the East sink into their contemplation, the more directly to commune with the will of humanity. Escaping the brawling noise of every day, they can through the silence hear the murmuring of truth, and in silence release it to pass into the turbulence of men and women to sweeten it and to keep them from perishing. (Gilbert Cannan's *Anatomy of Society*, p. 179).

The modern world needs a mystic connection with Ultimate Reality. The Hindu Yogic systems are eminently fitted for the purpose of leading the modern world of bustle and becoming, of the purposelessness of intellectual life and self-centred megalomania to the silence of intuition and being. Yoga can open for it that flood-gate of inspiration that can make of life an ever widening field of lasting achievements and not a mere running down to nothingness.

The beauty of the Hindu system is that through it each can have his private as well as public satisfaction. While the other systems offer only one way of salvation for all, the Hindu system offers a plethora of alternatives suitable for various mental stages; and the relative fulfilment of the individual's wants clears the way for social understanding and integration. The Hindus ensure social peace through individual spiritual uplift, whereas the West aims at general uplift through a regimentation of the individuals. Personality does receive the highest recognition in Hindu spiritual thought, though that personality must have ultimate unity as its goal. Once this attitude is accepted and its implications are worked out on the social and political fields, imperialism, trusteeship, mandates, colonization, and ideological wars are bound to come to an end.

The antidote to the modern disease of personal acquisitiveness is *vairāgya* or non-attachment. But this non-attachment is not a negative virtue, nor is it simply a personal affair.

To abandon this struggle for private happiness, to expel all eagerness of temporary desire, to burn with a passion for eternal things—this is Emancipation, and this the Free Man's Worship. (Bertrand Russell).

Western thought is as yet slow to realize the truth and importance of another Hindu idea—we mean *karma* and the consequent transmigration. A petty short life here and an eternal damnation or everlasting bliss hereafter, give poor consolation to ordinary mortals. Reason, too, becomes sceptical before such an unintelligible hypothesis. It opens too wide the gates of pre-destination and fatalism. Besides, on this supposition the problem of evil and God's justice become inexplicable. But *karma* challenges our manhood to take full responsibility for what we are and what we ought to be and it shows the way to infinite possibilities.

But if Hindu spiritual thought is individualistic, it does not lead to anarchy; because it teaches us to respect men as nothing but potential divinities. Each man has a right to his private belief; and it is because of that linking up of individuality with unity—because of that divinity in the process of unfoldment—that man deserves all help, sympathy, and toleration. The ancients declared: 'Truth though one is called variously by various sages.' That sets the norm for all social behaviour. India cannot tolerate regimentation and dictatorship with all their horrid consequences—dullness of spiritual life, loss of initiative, proneness to propaganda, worship of nationality, international friction, and war, under the pressure of which the weary spirit cries out:

Europe no longer makes me react. This world is too familiar to me to give new shapes to my being: it is too limited. The whole of Europe nowadays is one mind only. I wish to escape to spaces where my life needs be transformed if it is to survive. (Keyserling).

The fault of the European mind is that it relies too much on outside suggestion, on what the public want it to be. It has now to look inside for ordering life afresh, for drawing fresh inspiration for newer achievements, so that personality may be fully developed and individuality may not feel itself lost in conformity. Instead of relying on others individuals must now become architects of their

own inner life. God must now take the place of nation and society.

Then there is our faith in the pristine purity of the soul. No sin can touch it. A man weighed down with sin is a potential tyrant. A school-boy who comes into contact with the birch rod too often, is bound to be a social autocrat or a nincompoop with all his personality rounded off. Purity scintillates purity all around, and a firm belief in one's innate purity is bound to keep all sin at arm's length. A belief that one is a sinner is a standing invitation to one to sin off and on. Excessive pre-occupation with sin generally generates an excessive pre-occupation with the selfish separate self.

Hinduism is criticized for its emphasis on supermundane things. But one fails to understand how a mere acceptance of the matter-of-fact world as it appears to each individual soul, can give the impetus for a higher life: there must needs be transcendence of some sort somewhere. Society cannot progress unless individuals transcend their private worlds. Nor can humanism replace God-intoxication, for humanism represents only very limited values while the march to Divinity means infinite progress. Universalism is also a poor substitute for absolute spiritual fulfilment. Besides, Vedantism, rightly understood, does not negate the world; it teaches its votaries to realize Brahman everywhere. Hinduism thus presents a higher and fuller world view.

Hinduism feels no need for conversion. It may state its case, and others may accept its views intellectually and spiritually: there the matter ends. But other religions embark on a career of saving people's souls, though they often end by killing them physically, culturally, morally, and spiritually.

The Absolute monism of India has vast potentialities for social welfare. As Huxley has shown, belief in a personal moral God often leads to fanaticism, persecution, and sectarian war. The antidote is a belief in an all-pervasive spiritual reality. Vedanta believes in the equality of men and truth of all faiths, and practical Vedanta insists on selfless service. Vedanta stands by reason and realization. To take one's stand merely on revelation is antithetical to communal understanding. Hinduism adopts a rationalistic attitude in the matter of religion on the plane of usage (*vyavahâra*). Revealed things, so far as they relate to the matter-of-fact world must be rationally comprehensible. And transcendental truths, so far as they are matters of realizations, are not to be exchanged for theological discussions.

In these and many other ways, then, Hinduism has an important positive part to play in all future plans for peace. And it lies with us Hindus to explore this possibility fully by building our lives according to the true Hindu tradition.

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## ARE WE CIVILIZED ?

BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA

We moderners boast of our civilization. The modern era, no doubt, has to its credit epoch-making achievements of science. The inscrutable atom has disclosed its secrets. Physical Nature is almost within our grasp. Her immutable laws bend before the inventions of

science. Man moves like a master through land, air, and sea at an amazing speed. News and views go round the world in the twinkling of an eye. The rigours of climate, weather, disease, and all that, vanish before the magic wand of science. Surely, we can

boast of all these and thousand other trophies of science. Yet, are we in a position to assert that we are civilized?

Civilization means a lot. The core of it, however, is refinement. Refinement of our sentiments, thoughts, and conduct is really what it stands for. Anything less is said to be vulgar, boorish, savage. Refinement being a process, it must have stages and grades. When our refinement goes ahead of a certain stage, our civilization may be said to have advanced.

Let us see how far our civilization has advanced from the earliest stage, that of the cave-man, the very starting point of human history.

The cave-man was self-centred. He was swayed by instinctive impulses as much as the other denizens of the forest. He was as ferocious as the beasts of prey. His life was a non-stop fight for existence not only with elemental fury but also with brutes and brute-men. He had, perforce, to dominate others if he was to live. If he had any brain-storm, it would usually be over the invention of weapons that could kill his foes or animals for his food. To him Nature was a mystery, an object of awe and terror. His life was simple, his needs were few, in fact, no more than those of other animals. His joys and sorrows centred round the essential biological demands. His budding mind was no more than a handmaid of life.

In many respects we are far ahead of this crude, primitive stage. The starting point of civilization is beyond our ken. We have secured our life against the furies of Nature. The beasts of prey are at a safe distance from our abodes. Our skill as well as weapons have improved so far as to make the hunting of wild animals a sport. The discovery of the technique of raising food from the soil and from domesticated animals has, by a single stroke, lifted us above the prowling dangers surrounding the cave-man's search for food. We have practically banished fear from all these spheres of primitive existence.

From its earliest stage on the human plane our mind has developed beyond recognition. Our mind is no longer a mere vassal of life. Besides meeting the biological demands in a much more thorough and extensive manner, our mind has created a distinct field of its own with an entirely novel set of appetites and values. We hunger for knowledge, we crave for beauty, we seek ethical values. They give us intellectual delight, emotional ecstasy, and moral satisfaction unknown to our primitive forbears. Indeed, when we look at this phase of our life, the cave-man appears to be no more than a mere brute in human form.

Let us now probe our mind a bit beneath its surface. Is it not a fact that all the instinctive cravings of the brute-man are still lurking there in all their rapacity? Are we not shamelessly selfish in our thoughts and desires?

Of course, we may very well be proud of our sky-scraping intellect and its amazing exploits on various fronts. Yet, we have to own that we are no more than bondslaves of crude passions. Greed, lust, malice, ferocity, and all the ugly brood of crass selfishness are at the steering wheel of our conduct. Our reason is helplessly set aside when it goes against the urge of the baser instincts. Quite frequently we do things that are decried by our own sober judgement. Very often we find that we are on the wrong track; yet we cannot simply help it. We suffer, we repent. And this, perhaps, is the greatest tragedy of our life—we cannot act up to our reason. We are not trained to develop our will, that alone can put a brake on the unworthy impulses and steer through the path of reason. A dynamic and well-directed will is the very basis of character. But character-building, that is, proper training of the will is none of the business of the educational systems of this day. This is why mostly we are intellectual giants but spiritual pigmies.

And this is not all. Failing to use reason for shaping our conduct we

mobilize its strength for justifying our vile deeds. Our intellect is kept busy in rationalizing all that we are forced to do under the whip-hand of our baser instincts. With perverted reason we proceed to whitewash our motives. Indeed, we have mastered the trick of hiding the hideous contents of our mind beneath a polished and charming exterior. And this passes as the acme of our refinement. We have guillotined truth and honesty and placed tact and diplomacy on the pedestal. We are civilized in the sense that we can successfully keep the brute in us concealed behind a smoke-screen of sweet words and noble ideology. Looked at from this angle we are no more than camouflaged cave-men. The cave-men might have been beastly, we appear to be flendish.

No doubt, we have built up societies and States and framed laws for regulating our lives and securing public peace. Anti-social activities are dubbed as crimes and put down ruthlessly by the State. Slips from the ethical standard are penalized no less by social taboo. But these only drive our mischievous propensities underground and do not cure them. And this is why we seek cover whenever we are led by a base impulse to do a dirty job. We are up to anything only if we can evade laws and hoodwink society. Crimes, therefore, multiply and become more nefarious. Societies and States fail to secure the peace they seek. So long as the will of the individual will not be trained to control the baser instincts, this state of things will continue in spite of law-courts and social opprobrium.

So much about the life of the individual. Collective life appears to be more shocking. Ambition and jealousy, unseemly scramble for power, exploitation and discrimination, fratricidal fights in the name of classes and nations present a ghastly picture of jungle-life all over the world. In every State or society a microscopic minority, perched on political, economic, or social vantage grounds, ceaselessly dominate and

exploit the teeming millions. Safely entrenched in power, the privileged custodians of vested interests of various types and shades drain the resources of their fellow-men and reduce them almost to beasts of burden. They do this without any scruple, without any compunction. And while doing all these, they never cease declaring from house-tops that they are inspired by the best of motives. Do they not really look like organized gangs of camouflaged cave-men?

And all the while, how do the masses fare? In almost every country, however civilized it may claim to be, a vast majority reel under oppression. Everywhere suffering is the badge of the masses. Of course, it varies in intensity from country to country. Yet it is there all the same. Colour, birth, wealth, or some other accident determines the pressure to be put upon a section of humanity. These go to brand a human individual as a social pariah, political underdog, or an economic slave, or even a combination of all these. In any case his life is miserable.

Day in and day out, the masses have to toil for eking out a miserable existence. Leisure they have none. Cultural refinement does not seem to be meant for them. Luxury, of course, is a forbidden fruit. They live simply to drudge so that the privileged few may get milk and honey. On the top of this there is the fear of unemployment. This fear crushes their spirit and makes them kowtow to the bosses. They are forced to remain subhuman.

The capitalists are having their day. The thousand and one amenities of life brought in by science appear to be their close preserve. They are a clever lot. Even under a democratic Government they know how to grip the State machine and then get a stranglehold on the people. With the Government in its thumb, capital grinds labour and the backward peoples on earth. They have the knack of seizing power and wielding it for bringing untold profits to their pockets. Through the clever ruse

of nationalism they can mobilize the masses in an instant and make them dance to their tune. It is not unlikely that ammunition magnates may manoeuvre nations into a war!

Thus even in democratic States, where the people enjoy a good deal of freedom of speech and personal liberty, they are made victims of appalling wants and outrageous iniquities. Indeed, corruption as well as false and inadequate representation have made democracy an eye-wash. No serious effort has yet been made for a just and equitable distribution of privilege. Organized labour has been making insistent demand but advancing at a snail's pace. War conditions bring them very near their coveted goal of equality. They pay the price with their life's blood. But as soon as peace comes they are thrust back into the old grooves. They become disillusioned. In spite of big promises, the capitalists have been playing this game so long, and this even in the democratic States.

In the modern totalitarian States, run mostly on socialistic lines, the grievances of labour are claimed to have been substantially reduced. In one of these States class discrimination appears to be at its minimum; and food, education as well as other amenities of life are within everybody's reach, so long, of course, as he or she does not choose to remain idle. Yet the condition of these people is not covetable. They have to barter their personal liberty for economic equality. Dictatorship sits heavily on individual freedom. Their thought and speech are regimented by the State as much as their food and clothes. This is a horrible condition for human beings to live in. Without freedom of thought and speech individuals are apt to be mechanized and converted into mere parts of the State machine. A free thinker is a misfit; and, therefore, he is either crushed or brushed aside. However precious service one may have rendered towards the growth of the State, one can oppose or even criticise the State policy only

at the peril of one's life. Under dictatorship of any brand nobody's life is safe, nobody's property is secure, unless one stamps out one's own manhood and reduces oneself into a mere puppet.

The bulk of the people, therefore, in any State, democratic or totalitarian, groan under tyranny and sink to sub-human depths. Add to this the condition of the masses in the empires, colonial possessions, and the so-called mandated States strewn over Asia and Africa and ruled by big powers. Preyed upon by perpetual want and fear, they have become 'next door neighbours to brutes'. And the tyrants, representing the vested interests and the privileged classes all over the world, present, more than anything else, the depth of human degradation. They are greedy, unscrupulous, and heartless in their dealings and diabolical in their profession. This sums up our inner life at the moment.

Beneath the pomp and grandeur, flourish and glitter, intellectual feats and triumphs of science of the present day, humanity appears to be sliding back to the brute level. It is under a spell of atavism. Our civilization is a misnomer when we are losing our foothold on the human plane.

Yet man can become divine. He can rise above selfishness and carnality and sacrifice his all for the well-being of his fellows. It is his prerogative to stand for unrestricted equality, fraternity, and liberty. Universal and selfless love is the essence of his soul. The kingdom of heaven is really within him. Only if man would care to unlock its gates he would step on to the divine plane. He would become a superman of the divine order. And this is the goal towards which humanity has to be led. The path has been chalked out from time to time by its man-gods, Râma, Krishna, Buddha, Jesus, Mahomet, Shankara, Ramanuja, Chaitanya, Nanak, and a host of saints and seers. Whenever there has been a confusion about the goal, the potential divinity of man has been made manifest through

the luminous life of a man-god. There is no mistake about it. Man has to evolve into superman of the divine type. The craze for becoming superman of the monstrous type is just an aberration. Some openly avow it, others are unconsciously under its grip. But this craze is suicidal. If not checked in time it may work the extinction of the human race. One world war coming at

the heel of another is a pointer. We should become wiser and start treading the right path. Then alone our civilization will be saved from its present crisis. And this is, perhaps, why the mist of doubts and misunderstandings, that almost obscured the right path, has been removed in our days by the spiritual flood-light of Shri Ramakrishna's life.

## SOME ASPECTS OF THE ANCIENT INDIAN SOCIAL ORGANIZATION\*

BY PROF. HEM CHANDRA RAY CHAUDHURI, M.A., PH.D.

Every civilized nation of the world has its own distinct type of polity. The factors determining the social and sociopolitical organization are, however, not the same in all lands. We find one set of principles behind the division of the Babylonians into the *Awilum* (noble), the *Mushkenum* (humbler folk), and the slave; another accounts for the classification of Iranians into *Athravas* (priests), *Rathaesthas* (warriors), etc. A third set of ideas is at the bottom of the distinction in Athens between Eupatrids (nobles), the Geomori (husbandmen), and the Demiurgi (artisans). We may also refer to the division of the early Romans into Patricians and Plebs.

The classification of Indians who follow the Hindu discipline is said to rest on *varna* and *jāti*, colour and birth. *Varna* or colour, in the sense of a pigment of the skin or ethnic origin, was undoubtedly a factor of primary importance in the early Vedic polity. Mention may be made in this connection of the distinction between the fair complexioned (*Shvitrnya*)<sup>1</sup> Aryans and the dark-skinned aboriginals called *Dāsa* or *Dasyu*. The high-blown Aryan of the *Rigveda*, probably the earliest literary monument

of the Indo-Aryans, never forgets that his own colour is distinct from that of the *Dāsa*.<sup>2</sup> Other distinctions are also alluded to. The *Dāsa-Dasyus* are 'noseless' (*anāsa*) and of 'hostile speech'. They have little faith in Aryan gods and sacrifices, and were probably worshippers of the phallus.<sup>3</sup> Divergences of mythology and mode of worship are frequently adverted to.<sup>4</sup>

It is clear that we have here a division of the people into two broad groups on the basis of ethnic and, at the same time, of cultural differences. As a result, however, of assimilation through inter-marriage with peoples outside the Vedic pale, and other processes, a number of blue-blooded Aryans must have in course of time lost their original complexion, and thus the old distinction of the people into the *Ārya-varna* and the *Dāsa-varna* gradually lost its primary significance. Moreover, the word *varna* soon came to be applied to four, instead of two, social groups. This was the direction towards which ancient Indian society was moving in the period represented by the later Vedic texts. Treatises like the *Shatapatha Brāhmaṇa*<sup>5</sup> distinctly refer to

<sup>2</sup> I. 104. 2 ; III. 34. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. VII. 21. 5 ; X. 99. 3.

<sup>4</sup> I. 33. 4-5 ; IV. 16. 9 ; V. 7. 10 ; 42. 9 ; VIII. 70. 10 ; X. 22. 7-8 ; etc.

<sup>5</sup> V. 5. 4. 9 ; VI. 4. 4. 13 ; cf. *Ved. Ind.*, II, p. 247.

\* Based on a lecture delivered at the Ramakrishna Mission Institute of Culture on 21 August 1943.

<sup>1</sup> *Ved. Ind.*, I. 356.

*chatvâro varnâh* or the four 'colours', i.e., social classes or grades. These *varnas* are usually mentioned as (a) *Brahman*, *Brâhmana*, or *Deva*; (b) *Râjan*, *Râjanya*, or *Kshatriya*; (c) *Vaishya* or *Arya*; and (d) *Shudra*, roughly answering, perhaps, to the *Chandâla* of the *Chhândogya Upanishad*<sup>6</sup> and the *Dâsa-Dasyu* of earlier texts. But the relative precedence of the four grades was rather indeterminate in the early period. The *Atharva Veda*<sup>7</sup> and the *Vâjasaneyi Samhitâ*<sup>8</sup> of the *Yajurveda*, while speaking of the four classes, gives the *Shudra* the third place in the order of enumeration, and the *Arya* or *Vaishya* the fourth. The *Maitrâyani Samhitâ*<sup>9</sup> places the *Vaishya* before the *Râjanya*. The *Shatapatha Brâhmana*<sup>10</sup> distinctly speaks of the superiority of the *Kshatriya* over all other classes, *tasmât kshatrât param nâsti*. That the *chaturvarna* system, as distinguished from the older two-fold division into *Âryas* and *Dâsa-Dasyus*, did not entirely rest on *birth* seems to be proved by such Vedic stories as that of the sage *Kavasha* who apparently ranked as a *Brâhmana*, but was alleged to have been born of a *Dâsi* or *Dâsa* woman.<sup>11</sup> A famous *Rigvedic*<sup>12</sup> poet-sage (*Kâru*) had for his parents, or, according to another interpretation, children, a physician (*bhishak*) and a grinder of corn (*upala-prakshini*). The lady mentioned last appears at any rate to have pursued an occupation fit for plebeians. According to the *Shatapatha Brâhmana*<sup>13</sup> King *Janaka* who belonged to the *Râjanya-Kshatra* class became a *Brâhmana* by virtue of his superior knowledge. The same *Brâhmana*<sup>14</sup> adds that

some of the king's ministers were *Shudras*.

The case of *Kavasha Ailusha* clearly suggests that admixture of Aryan and non-Aryan elements was not unknown in later Vedic society. It is, therefore, clear that social divisions (*chaturvarna*) at this period cannot be explained simply in terms of pure ethnic extraction. Some Vedic texts attempt a distinction between the white (*shukla*) *Brâhmana* and *Vaishya*, and the swarthy (*dhumra*) and dark *Râjanya* and *Shudra*.<sup>15</sup> The point of difference is emphasized by reference to the contrast presented by day and night. The authors in question must have noticed men and women lacking the Aryan 'colour' not only in the *Shudras* but even in the aristocratic *Râjanya* class. One is reminded of the complexion of epic heroes and heroines, *Râma*, *Krishna-Vâsudeva*, *Arjuna*, and *Draupadi-Krishnâ*.

Diversity of 'colour' did not moreover blind the eyes of the Vedic sages to a proper appreciation of the underlying unity of the social organism, nay of the whole Universe. In the domain of religion and philosophy, the many gods were being synthesized into one supreme reality (cf. 'To what is One, the poets give many a name,' 'That One alone breathed,' 'Brahman is all,' *sarvam khalvidam Brahma*).<sup>16</sup> In a similar way the conception of an ultimate unity that absorbed the manifoldness of the social structure, makes its appearance as early as the tenth *mandala* of the *Rigveda*. In the *Purushasukta*, all the four social classes are represented as having their origin and being in the same *Purusha*. 'The *Brâhmana* was his mouth; the *Râjanya* was made his arms; the *Vaishya* constituted his thighs; the *Shûdra* sprang from his feet.' The account, as already pointed out by several scholars, bears on its face the stamp of allegory.

<sup>6</sup> V. 10. 7.

<sup>7</sup> XIX. 32. 8.

<sup>8</sup> XXVI. 2; cf. *Ved. Ind.*, II. 252 for other references.

<sup>9</sup> IV. 4. 9; cf. *Ved. Ind.*, II. 252.

<sup>10</sup> XIV. 4. 2. 23.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the case of the dark-complexioned sage (*Krishna*) *Dvaipâyana Vyâsa* born of a fishermaid according to the *Mahâbhârata*.

<sup>12</sup> IX. 112. 3.

<sup>13</sup> XI. 6. 2. 10; cf. *Ved. Ind.*, II. 262.

<sup>14</sup> V. 3. 2. 2; *Ved. Ind.*, II. 390.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Ved. Ind.*, II. 247.

<sup>16</sup> *Rig.* I. 164. 46; X. 129; *Chhândogya Upanishad*, III. 14. 1.

The Brâhmana exercised his vocal organ in chanting hymns, the *Râjanya*, employed his strong arms in defending his country and people; the tillers and traders, Vaishyas, were the mainstay of society as the thighs are of the human body; the Shudras had to make large use of their feet for a due performance of their plebeian duties. The connection of the Shudra with the feet of the Supreme One need not by itself imply any social inferiority. The medieval Shudra kings of the Andhra country point out that the sanctifying stream of the Ganges springs, like people of their own caste, from the lotus-feet of Shauri, i.e., Vishnu the Supreme Being.<sup>17</sup> The most significant fact in the *Purushasukta* is the absence of any reference to tegumental or ethnic difference as the basis of the classification of society. Members of the four social grades are represented as integral parts of the same organism, albeit with different functions. Thus we have in the famous hymn, which is the Magna Charta of the Hindu social polity, recognition of the organic unity of society with implied functional differences. It has been rightly pointed out by scholars in connection with a few other hymns that the word Brâhmana at times suggests something peculiar to the *individual* and denotes a person *distinguished for genius or virtue*<sup>18</sup> or *elevated by special characteristics to receive the gift of inspiration*.<sup>19</sup>

As centuries rolled by, a large number of occupational or professional groups formed within the bosom of society. From ages past people in this country have shown a marked tendency to follow the traditional calling of their forbears. Many members of the occupational groups preferred the ancestral avocation. This tendency, together

with other factors such as the admission into the Brahminical polity of new tribes and clans, sometimes from well-defined geographical areas, with their own ideas about *mana* ('a power and influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural'), and rules regarding connubium and commensality, may have been responsible for the wide vogue, side by side with *varna*, of the important word *jâti* which primarily meant 'birth', but later, by an extension of the sense, also a social group the membership of which was supposed to be based on *birth*. With the gradual crystallization of such groups into exclusive and inelastic units to which the designation *caste* properly applies, the importance of *birth* as the main determining factor in social classification was recognized by a notable fraternity of law givers and publicists. The institution styled *varna* at times comprised several such *jâtis* or castes.<sup>20</sup> It was not unnatural for jurists of the type mentioned above, to attribute to the bigger social unit (viz, the *varna*) characteristics of the *jâtis* of which it was believed to be an agglomeration. Soon the two concepts of *varna* and *jâti* got confused, and the terms came sometimes to be used synonymously.

There were, however, leaders of thought who viewed matters from a different angle. They pointed to a special import of the fourfold social division (*chaturvarna*), as distinguished, on the one hand, from the dualism of the early Vedic period and, on the other, from the new organization of infinitesimal birth-groups or *jâtis*. According to them, the *chaturvarna* system had absolutely nothing to do with *jâti* or birth, but was broad-based on character and conduct.

In post-Vedic literature, especially in the epics, two currents of thought—one basing social distinction on birth, the other on *vritta* (conduct)—are found running in parallel streams. The theory of the first group of writers which holds

<sup>17</sup>Cf. तत्र चतुर्थो वर्णः शौरेः पादपद्मसंभवो जयति ।

यस्य सहजा स्रवन्ती त्रिभिः प्रवाहैः पुनाति

भुवनानि ॥ (Ep. Ind. III. 64).

<sup>18</sup> X. 107. 6.

<sup>19</sup> X. 125. 5.

<sup>20</sup> *Manu*, X, 43.

the field in large measure even in our own times, and is represented in such epic passages as *yena jâtaḥ sa eva saḥ*<sup>21</sup>, is too well known to need any elaboration. But even to this school, birth implied by the expressions *jâti* and *janman* does not in all cases refer only to a physical fact, but has sometimes a cultural and spiritual significance, as is clearly suggested by the use of the word *dvija*, which points to a second (non-material) birth, and the term *santati*, spiritual offspring. It may further be noted that social status claimed on the basis of birth alone was not held in any great esteem as the disparaging expressions *Brahma-bandhu*, *Râjanya-bandhu* and *Kshatra-bandhu*<sup>22</sup> very clearly suggest.

The exponents of a higher thought never forgot the essential evenness and unity of society. They based social status not on the accident of birth but on the spiritual quality and activities of man and boldly proclaimed the truth that 'there is nothing nobler than man' (*guhyaṁ Brahma tadidam vo bravimi na mânushâchchhreshthhataram hi kinchit*).<sup>23</sup>

The sense in which the epics understood the term *varna*, presents interesting features. The colours of the Brâhmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra is said to have been white, red, yellow, and black respectively. But it is emphasized that there is no essential difference (*visheshā*) amongst the *varnas*, as originally all men were Brâhmanas or emanations from Brahman. They were, however, grouped into grades according to complexion based on character and conduct. The idea is said to be that the physical complexion of a man is conditioned by his spiritual nature and deeds.

ब्राह्मणानां सितो वर्णः क्षत्रियाणां तु लोहितः ।

वैश्यानां पीतको वर्णः शूद्राणामसितस्तथा ॥

न विशेषोऽस्ति वर्णानां सर्वं ब्राह्ममिदं जगत् ।

ब्रह्मणा पूर्वसृष्टं हि कर्मभिवर्णतां गतम् ॥

कामभोगप्रियास्तीक्ष्णाः क्रोधनाः प्रियसाहसाः ।

त्यक्तस्वधर्मा रक्तांगास्ते द्विजाः क्षत्रतां गताः ॥

गोभ्यो वृत्तिं समास्थाय पीताः कृष्युपजीविनः ।

स्वधर्मान्नानुतिष्ठन्ति ते द्विजा वैश्यतां गताः ॥

हिंसानृतप्रिया लुब्धाः सर्वकर्मोपजीविनः ।

कृष्णाः शौचपरिभ्रष्टास्ते द्विजाः शूद्रतां गताः ॥

इत्येतैः कर्मभिव्यस्ता द्विजा वर्णान्तरं गताः ॥ etc.<sup>24</sup>

Nilakantha says,

सितः स्वच्छः सत्त्वगुणः प्रकाशात्मा शमद-  
मादिस्वभावः । लोहितो रजोगुणः प्रवृत्त्यात्मा  
शौर्यतेजश्चादिस्वभावः । पीतको रजस्तमोव्या-  
मिश्रः कृष्यादिहीनकर्मप्रवर्तकः । असितः  
कृष्ण आवरणात्मा तमोगुणः स्वतः प्रकाश-  
प्रवृत्तिहीनः शकटवत् परप्रेयः ॥

It is to be noted that the above theory not only discards the question of birth as the basis of the division into *varnas*, but actually points to the identity of origin of all the four *varnas*.

In the *Shrimadbhagavadgitâ-parvâ-dhyâya*<sup>25</sup> of the *Mahâbhârata*, Vâsudeva-Krishna says in very clear terms that the classification of the people into four *varnas* is based on *guna-karma*, i.e., spiritual quality and conduct. In another context<sup>26</sup> the god Shiva is represented as quoting a saying of Lord Brahman which declares:

एभिस्तु कर्मभिर्देवि शुभैराचरितैस्तथा ।

शूद्रो ब्राह्मणतां याति वैश्यः क्षत्रियतां व्रजेत् ॥

\* \* \*  
कर्मभिः शुविभिर्देवि शुद्धात्मा विजितेन्द्रियः ।

शूद्रोऽपि द्विजवत् सेव्य इति ब्रह्माब्रवीत् स्वयम् ॥

\* \* \*  
न योनिर्नापि संस्कारो न श्रुतं न च संततिः ।

कारणानि द्विजत्वस्य वृत्तमेव तु कारणम् ॥

सर्वोऽयं ब्राह्मणो लोके वृत्तेन तु विधीयते ।

वृत्ते स्थितस्तु शूद्रोऽपि ब्राह्मणत्वं नियच्छति ॥

\* \* \*

<sup>21</sup> *Mbh.*, XII. 296. 3.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Ved. Ind.*, II. 116 ; *Chhâ. Up.*, V. 35 ; Pargiter, *D. K. Age*, p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> *Mbh.*, XII. 299. 20 ; cf. *Homo sum ; humani nil a me alienum puto* (Terence).

<sup>24</sup> *Mbh.*, XII. 188. 5, 10-14 (with Nilakantha's commentary).

<sup>25</sup> *Ch.* III. 18.

<sup>26</sup> *Mbh.*, XIII. 143, 26, 48, 50-51, 59.

एतत्ते गुह्यमाख्यातं यथा शूद्रो भवेद्द्विजः ।

ब्राह्मणो वा च्युतो धर्माद्यथा शूद्रत्वमाप्नुते ॥<sup>27</sup>

The verses quoted above go definitely to prove that, according to a very important school of thought, the *chatur-varna* system was not based on birth, performance of rites and ceremonies, sacred knowledge or spiritual succession<sup>28</sup>, but exclusively on *vritta* or conduct. A Brâhmana might be degraded to the status of a Shudra and a Shudra might be elevated to that of a Brâhmana by following particular modes of social behaviour. The words attributed to Vâsudeva (Vishnu), Shiva, and Brahman, the three manifestations of the Supreme Spirit according to Hindu belief, cannot be regarded as less binding than the opinion and *obiter dicta* of law givers and jurists of less exalted rank. Similar passages regarding conduct as the basis of the *varna* division are found in different parts of the *Mahâbhârata*.<sup>29</sup>

Cf. सत्यं दानं क्षमा शीलमानृशंस्यं तपोऽवृणा ।

दृश्यते यत्र नागेन्द्र स ब्राह्मण इति स्मृतः ॥

\* \* \*

शूद्रे तु यद्भवेत्तल्लक्ष्म द्विजे तच्च न विद्यते ।

न वै शूद्रो भवेच्छूद्रो ब्राह्मणो न च ब्राह्मणः ॥

यत्रैतल्लक्ष्यते सर्पं वृत्तं स ब्राह्मणः स्मृतः ।

यत्रैतन्न भवेत् सर्पं तं शूद्रमिति निर्दिशेत् ॥

\* \* \*

कृतकृत्याः पुनर्वर्णा यदि वृत्तं न विद्यते ।

Nilakantha rightly points out:

शूद्रोऽपि शमाद्युपेतो ब्राह्मण एव ब्राह्मणोऽपि

कामाद्युपेतः शूद्र एवेत्यर्थः ।

But the learned commentator's interpretation of the word *vritta* as *vaidika-samskâra* is rendered implausible by the

<sup>27</sup> Cf. *Manu*, IV. 245 : ब्राह्मणः श्रेष्ठतामेति

प्रत्यथायेन शूद्रताम् ।

and IX. 335. शुचिरुत्कृष्टशुश्रूषुर्मुदुवागनहंकृतः ।

ब्राह्मणाद्याश्रयो नित्यमुत्कृष्टं जातिमश्नुते ॥

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Ep. Ind.*, V. 230.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. III. 180. 21, 25-26, 36.

great epic itself<sup>30</sup> where *vritta* is clearly distinguished from *samskâra*, which includes *vaidika-samskâra*. The reference to *vritta* in connection with Shudras who were precluded from the performance of Vedic rites, excludes the possibility of its meaning Vedic *samskâra*. While commenting on *Mbh.*, XII. 189. 8., Nilakantha further says:

धर्म एव वर्णविभागे कारणं न जातिरित्यर्थः—

‘righteousness and not birth is at the root of the *varna* division.’ The views attributed to the Trinity in the Gita and the *Shântiparvan* receive a striking confirmation from the *Vanaparvan*. According to this Book,<sup>31</sup> the gods accept as Brâhmanas only those persons who possess the requisite spiritual quality. (Cf. यः क्रोधमोहौ त्यजति तं देवा ब्राह्मणं विदुः, etc.). The *Mahâbhârata*<sup>32</sup> actually refers to a number of personages such as Ârshtishena, Sindhudvipa, Devâpi, and Vishvâmitra who were originally not Brâhmanas, but were elevated to Brâhmanahood on account of their spiritual worth.

Cf. यत्रार्ष्टिषेणः कोरव्य ब्राह्मण्यं संशितव्रतः ।

तपसा महता राजन् प्राप्तवान् ऋषिसत्तमः ॥

सिन्धुद्वीपश्च राजर्षिर्देवापिश्च महातपाः ।

ब्राह्मण्यं लब्धवान् यत्र विश्वामित्रस्तथा मुनिः ॥

The possibility of a change of *varna* is also recognized by the supplement to the *Mahâbhârata* known as the *Hari-vamsha*:

नाभगरिष्टपुत्रौ द्वौ वैश्यौ ब्राह्मणतां गतौ ।<sup>33</sup>

Even the *Manusamhitâ* which, in several passages, prescribes a more or less rigid system of caste based on birth, cannot altogether ignore the importance of *vritta* or *guna-karma*. It is clearly stated in this work<sup>34</sup> that a Brâhmana becomes a Shudra by following a particular course of action. It is added that

<sup>30</sup> XIII. 143. 50-51.

<sup>31</sup> Ch. 205. 33-38.

<sup>32</sup> IX. 39. 34-35.

<sup>33</sup> Verse 658 ; var. lect.

<sup>34</sup> *Manu*, Ch. IV, 245. (Bangavâsi edition,

X. 30). नाभगरिष्टपुत्राश्च क्षत्रिया वैश्यतां गताः

the son of a Brâhmana is not a Brâhmana simply by virtue of his birth. If he is negligent of his duties, he is no more than a *vrâtya*, one fallen in social status.

The following verses, also, deserve notice :

शूद्रायां ब्राह्मणाजातः श्रेयसा चेत् प्रजायते ।  
अश्रेयान् श्रेयसीं जातिं गच्छत्यासप्तमाद्युगात् ॥  
शूद्रो ब्राह्मणतामेति ब्राह्मणश्चेति शूद्रताम् ।  
क्षत्रियाजातमेवन्तु विद्याद्वैश्यात्तथैव च ॥<sup>35</sup>

The *Manusamhitâ*<sup>36</sup> further describes how various tribes and clans (*jâtayah*) belonging to the Kshatriya *varna* were gradually degraded to the status of *Vrishalas*, deviators from approved social conduct, as a result of their neglect of prescribed duties. It is to be noted that we have in this context reference to a plurality of *jâtis* included within the same *varna*, thus pointing to the difference between the two concepts, *jâti* and *varna*. The social status conferred by *varna* might be changed, even according to this prince of law givers, through neglect of duties of a particular character.

It may be added that certain authorities regarded devotion to God as the principal factor that counted in determining the social position of man. According to this view, even barbarians and outcasts were worthy of honour if only they were devoted to the Lord. The *Svargakhanda*<sup>37</sup> of the *Padmapurâna* has the following verses :

वैष्णवो वर्णबाह्योऽपि पुनाति भुवनत्रयम् ॥

\* \* \*

पुङ्गवः श्वपचो वाऽपि ये चान्ये म्लेच्छजातयः ।

तेऽपि वन्द्या महाभागा हरिपादैकसेवकाः ॥

The liberal thought of the *Mahâbhârata* finds support in certain passages of the sister epic. There was no bar to the attainment of the status of a *maharshi* for a man even of mixed Vaishya-Shudra extraction. To this

category belonged the son of the blind sage who figures in one of the most tragic episodes of the *Râmâyana*. He is represented as versed in the *shâstras* though born of a Shudra mother and Vaishya father: शूद्रायामस्मि वश्येन जातो नरवराधिप ।<sup>38</sup> Guha who was a Nishâda is described as a *Râjan* and is treated as a *confrere* by prince Râma sprung from one of the proudest of the Kshatriya lines.<sup>39</sup> Shabari, doubtless belonging to a tribe branded as *Dasyu* in the *Aitareya Brâhmana*, is not only called *siddhâ*, *tapodhanâ*, and *tâpasi*, but is allowed to touch the feet of Râma and offer him *âchamaniya* and food.<sup>40</sup> The above sections of the *Râmâyana* breathe an atmosphere that offers a striking contrast to that of the story of Shambuka as given in the supplementary book, doubtless of a later age, styled the *uttarakânda*. Here we find a Shudra forfeiting his life for the offence of performing penances. It is further stated that in the *Tretâ* age only Brâhmanas and Kshatriyas could become *tapasvins*, not Vaishyas and Shudras.

In recalling the story of the martyred child-sage of Vaishya-Shudra extraction, it may not be out of place to say a few words about the social concept, *varna-sankara*. People coming under that category were usually regarded with disapproval. The term is often taken to mean the offspring of a mixed marriage. But it should be noted that mixed marriage when sanctioned by law and usage cannot fairly be included among the three causes specially mentioned by Manu<sup>41</sup> as giving rise to the *varna-sankara*, viz, *vyabhichâra* or illicit intercourse, *avedyâ-vedana* or marrying a girl in violation of law (e.g., incest hinted at in the *Rigvedic* story of Yama and Yami and the tale of the Sâkyas in Buddhist literature), and

<sup>35</sup> *Manu*, X. 64-65.

<sup>36</sup> IX. 43.

<sup>37</sup> Bangavâsi edition, XV. 152 ; XXIV. 11.

<sup>38</sup> *Râmâyana*, II. 63. 51 ; 64. 1 and 32.

<sup>39</sup> *Râm.* 50. 32 and 36.

<sup>40</sup> *Râm.* III. 74. 6-7, 18.

<sup>41</sup> X. 24.

*svakarma-tyāga* or neglect of one's appointed duties.

Cf. व्यभिचारेण वर्णानामवेद्यावेदनेन च ।

स्वकर्मणां च त्यागेन जायन्ते वर्णसंकराः ॥

The Gita<sup>42</sup> also emphasizes the ethical aspect of the matter in the passage—

स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वाष्ण्या जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥

*Varna-sankara* in reality suggests social anarchy, as *mātsyanyāya* connotes political chaos. The concept should not be confounded with that underlying inter-caste or inter-tribal marriage sanctioned by law or usage. Gautamiputra Shātakarni, emperor of the Deccan, who claims to have been a Brāhmana and a ruler who put an end to *varna-sankara*, is known to have had matrimonial relationship with the Sakas of Western India.

To conclude, the higher thought of the country meant the *varna* system of ancient India to be a code of social and socio-ethical discipline. Its basis

according to this view was *guna-karma* or *vritta*, spiritual quality and conduct, and not mere birth or ceremonial correctness.

A man born in a higher caste could be degraded even to the status of a Shudra when his unrighteous acts demanded this punishment. Similarly a man born in a lower caste was raised through his virtues to a higher social status. That flexible code of social discipline which brought unity out of diversity, tended to degenerate in the hands of certain writers into a watertight set of rules based on birth and not character and conduct, thus sapping the dynamic force of Indian society and reducing it to a stagnant state.<sup>43</sup>

It is wrong to invoke the authority of the *Mānava Dharmashāstra* as the last word in social matters, as there were other authorities of equal or even greater weight whose point of view was different. 'There is nothing nobler than *Mānusha*', whatever may be his birth or rank. This sums up the higher thought of India.

<sup>43</sup> Summary in *Modern Review*, Sept. 1943, p. 174.

<sup>42</sup> I. 40.

## RELIGION AND COLLECTIVE ECONOMIC LIBERATION

BY PROF. GOVINDA CHANDRA DEV, M.A.

We are prone to believe that there is a necessary conflict between religion and the theory of collective economic liberation. This incompatibility is generally supposed to be so extreme that any effort at an adjustment of the claims of the two appears more often than not to be foredoomed to disappointment. Nevertheless, in the present paper, an attempt has been made to show how religion as a consciousness of spiritual identity of the universe can leave scope for collective economic liberation. In this connection, I beg to draw the attention of the reader to my paper *Consciousness of Identity in Collective Life* published in the *Prabuddha Bharata* of last December. From a logical

standpoint, the present study is the legitimate corollary of the analysis of religion made in that paper.

### PSEUDO-RELIGIOUS CHARACTER OF OBJECTIONS AGAINST COLLECTIVE REALIZATION OF EMPIRICAL VALUES

It is useless, even if it be desirable, to emphasize the importance of the spiritual interest of mankind over and above their material interest, because the spiritual urge in its explicit form is a very rare phenomenon. An exclusive emphasis upon spiritual interest in collective life might be very effective as a diplomatic gospel, but being based on an entirely mistaken reading of human psychology, it will never be a workable

theory and must give rise to interminable troubles. If it is true to say that man does not live for bread alone, it is completely false to say that he can live without it. Yet, curiously enough, pseudo-advocates of religion attempt to appease the hungry by an appeal to spirit. Thus, they add lie to injury.

Spiritual interest being the concern of the negligible few and the material interest a collective concern, no reasonable exception can be taken on any moral, religious, or psychological grounds to the demand for a legitimate distribution of wealth and all that it implies on a collective scale. There is possibly no Jacob's ladder connecting the throne of God in heaven with an exclusive reservation of the material comforts for the privileged few. Vested interest does not seem to possess any necessary angelic halo round it. Rightly understood, the demand for an equitable distribution of wealth is not only not irreligious but in the light of a legitimate exposition of the notion of spiritual identity of the universe furthers the cause of real religion. If Christ was right in emphasizing the need of renouncing wealth and all that is associated with it for taking up the cross, if 'it is' really 'easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven', interest in spirituality is not only not inconsistent with a collective distribution of wealth but it also contributes considerably to the same.

Again, material values being the dominant concern of the vast majority, it is quite natural that they would play a prominent role in human history, in the formation of man's aspirations and ideals. So an economic interpretation of history is to a great extent acceptable and no exception need be taken to it on the ground of religion. Religion has nothing to get from a rejection of the obvious role of matter in man's life even though it holds good that it is necessarily opposed to realization of material values. But if it can be demonstrated, in addition, that it is

compatible with the collective realization of material values, as I think it is, even this apprehension becomes nullified.

It is also asserted at times that the doctrine of collective economic distribution wants to kill all differences and as such attempts the impossible. If it is possible for the doctrine to kill all differences on the economic plane, at least, religion has nothing to fear from this since the last word of man's spiritual realization seems to be the recognition of identity which has rightly been interpreted by the author of the Gita as an awareness of equality (*samatva*): it is a consciousness of the same reality in the midst of empirical differences constituted by the high and the low. As a matter of fact, none need be afraid of a levelling-down of all differences and a consequent transformation of plurality into a colourless unity. Nature, as she stands, is for differences, for inequalities and any betterment of human society in any phase must fight against this cruel decree of Nature and contribute to a consoling sense of unity in the midst of diversity. This unity takes in the spiritual plane the shape of a supra-logical intuition of identity and its counterpart in the material plane is a social structure that leaves full scope for collective economic security. As a matter of fact, collective economic liberation does not seem to stand for absolute economic equality; it is, rightly understood, a conception of class-less society, a society without either any privileged class or any trustees to look after the vast majority; and its ultimate aim is to supply to each man, according to his needs, the material comforts of life, thereby leaving adequate scope for his higher ideational growth, consistently with his own instinctive bent, but never in conflict with the collective security.

If religion can tolerate, more appropriately, submit to a benevolent patriarchal monarchy, it is inconceivable why it should nauseate at a conception of State which does not leave the collective interest to the mercy of

a particular individual or a group of individuals (which in this world of change is after all an inconstant quantity) but makes each man responsible for his own welfare. With proper educational facilities, perhaps, I can look to my own interest in a much better manner than all the Ashokas and Akbars, Solomons and Charlemagnes ever born can possibly do. If *Râmarâjya* is superior to autocracy, self-government is incomparably and infinitely greater than any *Râmarâjya* whatsoever. It is an unjustifiable pride, apparently immoral and unspiritual in character, which, because of the empirical differences on the surface, ignores the hidden unity of spirit behind all and arrogates on the basis of this false premise the right of permanent guardianship of the vast majority. Spiritual pride is the greatest possible contradiction in terms, and this lurks behind the so-called notion of mercy which in the absence of a better ideal is undoubtedly quite welcome but nevertheless in the light of a more penetrating entrance into the spiritual possibilities of mankind must be substituted by a superior notion. And this implies a readiness to part with power and not an assumption of other's responsibility on an exaggerated estimation of one's own limited self. Consequently, it appears that on whatever other considerations the notion of permanent trusteeship be justifiable, it is farthest, at least, from a spiritual outlook.

#### INADEQUACY OF COMMUNISM IN ITS PURELY PHILOSOPHICAL ASPECT

But yet it is difficult to share official communism in its philosophical implications. It is not very easy to discover any plausible logical connection between a materialistic interpretation of history on the one hand and an emphasis upon a balanced distribution of wealth and the demand for a class-less society on the other. If the proposed economic standard is consistent with a spiritualistic metaphysics, communism cannot claim to be the inevitable corollary to

its own particular conception of reality. A class-less society can be demanded on purely psychological considerations irrespective of any metaphysics whatsoever, since the instinct of hunger is not the exclusive possession of any particular section of humanity. Consequently it seems that the metaphysical duel that the communist invites by advancing a conception of reality rather hampers its practical interest: it would be better for a communist to practise under the circumstances a spirit of silence, if not indifference, to metaphysics just as Buddha and Socrates did. It might be objected to on behalf of communism that if it has at all any metaphysics, it is solely constituted by an unqualified hostility to the same as a study of the supra-sensible. But in that case, communism, on its metaphysical side, is no better than empiricism pure and simple. If dialectical materialism is a bare statement of facts of history and a merely empirical analysis of them, it is, then, no philosophical specification of reality but merely supplies data for the same. An economic interpretation of history is acceptable as an indisputable specification of relevant facts of history, but if it claims to be a system of philosophy, as it at times does, despite its obvious hostility to metaphysics, it has then to be evaluated as a dialectical construction of thought, and, as such, its speculative worth must be estimated in the light of the fundamental intellectual standard. As a speculative construction, it draws its inspiration from Hegel's dialectic with its notion of a logical synthesis of opposites. Leaving aside the Hegelian Absolute and confining its attention solely to empirical facts of history, communism claims to have formulated a philosophy out of them on the basis of the aforesaid principle of synthesis. The absurdity of the notion of such a synthesis as a logical construction is quite obvious: on the strength of the discovery of contradictions in fact, it cannot be maintained that they constitute a synthesis of discrepancies.

The question of a synthesis of opposites comes in only when the highest demand of logic is fulfilled in the supra-logical intuition and yet, side by side, experience with its plurality presses its claim in the scheme of reality. The synthesis of opposites, rightly understood, constitutes the highest phase of philosophy, viz, the synthesis of reason and through that of supra-logical intuition with experience of plurality. Hegel utilizes the notion in restricting the operation of intellect, and Marxism claims to base its philosophy upon this unproved assumption. Yet, in a sense, Marxism is more logical than Hegelian dialectic, since consistently with the thesis of a discovery of opposites in the field of experience, which it confuses with a synthesis of opposites, it confines itself to the empirical sphere and does not ideally superimpose the absolute as a pure thought-construct upon this empirical heap of discrepancies.

The unqualified antipathy of Marxism to idealism as such, is also traceable to its allegiance to Hegel. In Hegel and most of his followers, the concept of the whole differs from empirical particulars merely in degree. In consequence, they reduce, consciously or unconsciously, their absolute into an extended edition of the empirical particulars, and this amounts with different degrees to an idealization of the real. This leaves little scope for a practical use of philosophy. Hegel exhibits this by his metaphorical suggestion that the owl of Minerva takes its flight when the twilight shade has already fallen, i.e., philosophy, in going to make the world straight, finds that it is already so. This has led Hegel to justify the existing order, the climax of which is traceable in his deification of the Prussian State. Starting with the premise that Hegel is the specimen of idealism at its best, Marx, annoyed at his idealization of the real, is led to hold that any effort at the betterment of society is incompatible with idealism. But this reading of idealism cannot hold good with reference to absolutism in so far as it holds

that the difference between the world as a whole and the empirical particulars is mainly qualitative. This is definitely the note of Spinoza and the concrete absolutists of the East and, to a considerable extent, it seems to be true of Bradley and Bosanquet. And owing to a clear demarcation of appearance from reality in it, the same remark applies with a greater force to Vedantic idealism. The unambiguous emphasis of representative idealism of the West in Plato<sup>1</sup> upon the necessity of a realization of the ideal, leaves little scope for the apprehension of Marx. It might have been correct to observe that idealism is after the realization of an archetypal ideal whereas communism has before it an ectypepal one, that idealism is interested in a retrospective evolution whereas communism in a prospective march. But even this much cannot be said against idealism, if it is maintained, as it should be, that the ideal of identity, despite its archetypal character as a metaphysical reality, is from the individual standpoint an emergent to be brought into existence. The notion of identity being consistent with plurality, the ideal, in so far as the ever-realized character of identity is concerned, is archetypal but with reference to plurality of experiencing centres, it is ectypepal. These considerations, perhaps, prove beyond doubt that there is no necessary hostility between idealism as such and communism as an economic theory.

#### SYNTHESIS OF THE NOTION OF IDENTITY WITH COMMUNISM IN ITS ECONOMIC ASPECT

In the light of a proper orientation of the metaphysical notion of identity and its bearing upon collective life, communism, with all that is really important in it, can, perhaps, be assimi-

<sup>1</sup> The controversy as to whether Plato is an idealist in a technical sense is immaterial, since from the standpoint of Marxism, the conceptions of an all-inclusive spiritual whole and a world of forms are alike ideal structures, leaving scope for no progress.

lated most effectively into the body of idealism. Idealism, properly understood, is not afraid of matter but of an idealization of it without the transcendent awareness of its identity with spirit as the fundamental stuff of reality. In fact, what is matter empirically, is spirit from the standpoint of intellect which is finding its fulfilment in a supra-logical apprehension; and what is mobility from the purely empirical perspective, is the ever-real stability from the logico-extra-logical angle of vision. Judged in this light what is, from one standpoint the expression of a natural need, is, viewed from another, the expression of a supernatural urge. The materialistic interpretation of history (with its exclusive emphasis upon change and the dialectic evolved out of it) being a reading of reality from the empirical standpoint in its most widened shape, is only a sectional study which a synthetic idealism, demanding a harmony of reason and experience, can easily assimilate. Due to its loyalty to experience, despite its rigorous adherence to a transcendence of the same in the extralogical intuition, such idealism does not ignore the empirical differences as trivial. Its thesis, on the contrary, is the effacement of empirical differences as far as practicable in the light of the metaphysical identity intuited. In the divine, there is a synthesis of the empirical plurality with the transcendent identity, and though it is from the cosmic standpoint of an archetypal character, yet, in the sphere of experience of the finite centres, it has to be effected. So the ideal of life is not a mere ascent of the individual to transcendental identity but it is also a persistent effort for a descent of the same into the empirical sphere. So awareness of the transcendent, spiritual identity and equality should inevitably lead to a realization of the same in the material, psychological, and vital spheres in the shape of a social structure discouraging differences discordant with the ultimate identity. Highest idealism as the recognition of the identity of

spirit, is consequently quite consistent with a materialistic reading of the universe from a purely empirical standpoint in so far as it aspires after a healthy adjustment of empirical differences. So the future of humanity seems to lie in a *rapprochement* of the most exalted idealism, as the recognition of pure identity as the ultimate reality, with the most dignified materialism demanding economic equality, in the communist's understanding of religion in the true sense and in the religionist's understanding of communism and its spiritual implications; perhaps more in the latter than in the former because of the obvious urgency of the material needs of the vast majority without the satisfaction of which no idealistic inspiration can really be roused in them. This much-needed synthesis would serve religion by fostering a true sense of objective imperfection in those who are fit for spiritual culture; and it would also serve the cause of economic distribution, since in the absence of a group of absolutely disinterested persons, the distribution of wealth on an equitable basis would prove to be an impossibility.

#### FUTURE OF ORGANIZED RELIGION

Whether we believe that the identity of spirit is the reality behind plurality or not, experience ere long makes us conscious in varying degrees of an objective imperfection inherent in things; and consequently objective joy following, from possession of material comforts, cannot satisfy us. This demands an ideal satisfaction in imagination, and this is religion. Before actual realization of the highest truth in supra-logical intuition, this remains as the poetry of spirit in us. In fact, organized religion, on its bright side, is a social specification of this individual demand. So it would be short-sighted not to recognize the higher spiritual values of life in the name of communism. Being based on a deep-seated psychological basis, viz, a sense of inherent imperfection of things, it cannot be

undone; and any effort to the contrary would give rise to strife and defeat the very end that communism places before itself. It would be unfair to say that communism is necessarily opposed to such a private, personal, idealistic culture; but it is definitely indifferent to it. This attitude of indifference should systematically be overcome by an awareness of spiritual values of life, though it should never be superimposed upon the majority. The mistake of the past is to be avoided; but its lessons should not be forgotten. Even organized religion has to be tolerated with some reserve; though an urgent recognition of spiritual necessity is a rare phenomenon, yet some sort of experience of objective imperfection is more or less a common experience. As such, most men at some time or other feel in some degree the necessity of an ideal satisfaction in spirit, and this would be the function of organized religion. But it should never be utilized as a weapon for superimposition of spiritual values side by side with an underestimation of the empirical ones upon the collective life; and its general form must be made consistent with the demands of the time and the pressing needs of society. There can be nothing individual if it is not somewhere and somewhen social, and consequently practice of delight in spirit in individual life logically leaves scope for its collective use, if of course, proper individuals can be selected. So organized religion must change its shape, but nevertheless it must remain a reality. Again, if religion be treated, as it should be, as a promoter of the material interest of the vast majority in consonance with the spiritual interest of the minority, organized religion in its new shape should be allowed an all-absorbing role. On the basis of the idealistic scheme already suggested, it might fairly be observed that a spiritually inspired structure of collective

economic distribution is what we should strive for as our ideal of the future.

#### PERPETUATION OF DIFFERENCES IN AN IDEAL FORM

Spiritual values of life have in the past been invariably rewarded with material privileges, a procedure which has greatly hampered the spiritual interest by making it from the earthly standpoint a convenient gospel. Its disastrous consequence has been that those who required empirical values most, could enjoy it least. Consistently with the recognition of superior worth of spiritual values, a principle must be laid down that those who are superior must get the least material reward whereas those who are inferior should get the most of it. The weak should be allowed to enjoy life most in the material plane so that a sense of objective imperfection may speedily dawn on them. In keeping with the demand of spirit in man, and with his moral and religious sense, privileges of life in the lower plane must be reserved for the weak, the backward, whereas the more a man gives expression to his superior worth, the less should he get of material enjoyment and the more should he be allowed to live a life in spirit with the irreducible minimum of matter. The standard of superiority must not be material possession, but the capacity to reject it and to get it distributed absolutely in the interest of those who are at the lowest rung of the ladder. This is, perhaps, the sublimest form of perpetuation of differences without which life, it is said, cannot go on and not a callous deprivation of the weak and the low from the material comforts without which it is difficult for them to breathe. 'First shall be the last and the last shall be the first in the kingdom of heaven', as Christ cryptically puts it.

# SCIENCE AND WAR

BY MALCOLM SUBHAN

In the lives of the peoples of India religion and art play a vital and integral part. Here have been born some of the world's greatest religious faiths; and here, too, men have contemplated on the infinite and searched for Truth for countless centuries. And, therefore, it is but natural that India should regard contemporary Western science with suspicion: religion and art are an expression of the emotional; science of the intellectual.

The civilization of the West is often considered a typical product of science. For over three hundred years science has been cultivated intensely in Europe and, more recently, in the United States and Canada. 'The result has been the rise of materialism, agnosticism, and anarchy of every sort,' claim those averse to science. But is science responsible for the deplorable state of affairs which exists in the West? Perhaps the world today would have been in very much the same stage it was in eight hundred years ago had man not stumbled on to science. But he did. The intellectual in him craved an explanation of everything that went on around him; the emotional attributed the mysteries of the universe to an all-powerful Being. And science satisfied the intellectual in him. Unfortunately, when man grasped the tremendous possibilities of science, he attempted building the longed-for Utopia on it. The men who created science out of the mass of data which presented itself before them, are not to be blamed for the chaotic condition of the world: *the fault lies rather in the masses, who failed to understand, and hence misinterpreted, science.*

It is often claimed that science is responsible for this war as well as the last. 'Science, by ruthlessly sacrificing the emotional to the intellectual, has

reduced man to the stage where he has become an automaton, a complicated chemical structure governed by the laws of science. It has ridiculed the things of the spirit not amenable to it, and has regarded them as mere superstition. The result has been that with the affective parts of his mind suppressed by science, man has been forced to revert to wars and destruction.'

Yet there are several apparent flaws in this reasoning. Ever since the dawn of life on the face of the earth there has been ceaseless struggle for existence. In man there still is a trace of the animal, of this instinctive fight for life. Of course, he has attempted to hide it beneath an elaborate integument of culture. *But, because his economic system is entirely unorganized, he lives in constant fear of being eliminated altogether from the scheme of things.* And he indulges in wars because there is within him the vague idea that provided he can annihilate those whose hold on the economic system is stronger than his, he will be able to live in comparative peace and security.

George Santayana, the American philosopher, poet, and author, wrote:

... For the glories of war are all blood-stained, delirious, and infected with crime; the combative instinct is a savage prompting by which one man's good is found in another's evil. The existence of such a contradiction in the moral world is the original sin of Nature whence flows every other wrong. He is a willing accomplice of that perversity in things who delights in another's discomfiture or in his own, and craves the blind tension of plunging into danger without reason, or the idiot's pleasure in facing a pure chance. To find joy in another's trouble is, as man is constituted, not unnatural, though it is wicked; and to find joy in one's own trouble, though it be madness, is not yet impossible for man. . .

While it is true that science, by creating a complex civilization, has destroyed any tendency to isolationism the differ-

ent nations of the world might have had, and has thus made the consequences of war more terrible and far-reaching, it is also true that science has thereby laid the foundations of an efficient economic system. The cave-man of 2,000 B.C. had an economic system of the crudest and simplest type: he fought against his neighbours because he sensed dimly that for him it was a case of the survival of the fittest. But progress was inevitable. Hence we find that the civilizations of several centuries later possessed a religion far more refined than that of their ancestors and had a true appreciation of art and beauty. But the economic system had already caught them in its meshes. Due to the fact that the production and distribution of commodities was carried on in a comparatively haphazard manner, even as it is today, and also to the fact that life in some parts of the world is easier than in others, the nations were in a constant state of turmoil. All through the history of the world, before the days of the decline and fall of Rome, before there was such a thing as organized science, nation has been fighting nation in a mad attempt to retain its hold on the economic system. With the coming of science these futile struggles did not cease, for though science created a complex civilization, the situation as far as the production and distribution of goods went, remained practically unaltered.

'Then why has science failed to give the world an effective economic system?' Einstein, in his letter to posterity, gave the answer. *Because the intelligence and character of the masses are incomparably lower than the intelligence and character of the few who produce something valuable for the community, the result is wars, industrialism, mass production, communism, strikes, crime, and a host of isms.* Science can eliminate wars, but the emotional in man rebels against the methods it would

have to employ to do so. Given the present economic system, wars are safety valves: the world can only make provisions for a certain number of people, and as during the course of the years of peace and prosperity the population increases, an already overburdened economic system cracks under the additional strain. Science can give the world an efficient economic system, but only when the intelligence of the masses is more highly developed will this be possible. Wars are an expression of the emotional: it is necessary that they be regarded intellectually if they are to be extirpated.

One of the charges frequently brought against science is that it is radically wrong for 'it quickens the intellect, while leaving the conative and the affective parts of the mind undeveloped'. It is true. But only partly so. During the centuries before science became known to man he relied to a great extent upon the affective part of his mind, with the result that he developed emotionally far more rapidly than intellectually. With the coming of science the reverse became true and the same state of affairs existed as before. However, now that man has realized that the cognitional and the emotional are both equally important, the adjustment of the balance will not long be delayed.

Those who believe science to be a specialized discipline calculated to breed narrowness and intolerance, err greatly. Breadth of vision is not sacrificed for depth of knowledge—rather depth of knowledge increases breadth of vision. A glance at the list of names of men of science will suffice to show that it is international: it is the masses who, because they fail to understand science, are responsible for the chaotic condition of the world.

Science has not failed. As yet the masses can but blunder on, for only through years of painful experience will they understand its message.

# THE SPIRIT OF INDIAN CIVILIZATION

BY SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

## IMMORTAL INDIA

The debt which the world owes to our motherland is immense. Taking country with country, there is not one race on this earth to which the world owes so much as to the patient Hindu, the mild Hindu. 'The mild Hindu' sometimes is used as an expression of reproach, but if ever a reproach concealed a wonderful truth it is in the term, 'the mild Hindu', who has always been the blessed child of God. Civilizations have arisen in other parts of the world. In ancient times and in modern times, great ideas have emanated from strong and great races. In ancient and modern times, wonderful ideas have been carried forward from one race to another. In ancient and modern times, seeds of great truth and power have been cast abroad by the advancing tides of national life, but mark you, my friends, it has been always with the blast of war trumpets, and with the march of embattled cohorts. Each idea had to be soaked in a deluge of blood; each idea had to wade through the blood of millions of our fellow-beings; each word of power had to be followed by the groans of millions, by the wails of orphans, by the tears of widows. This, in the main, other nations have taught; but India has for thousands of years peacefully existed. Here activity prevailed when even Greece did not exist, when Rome was not thought of, when the very fathers of the modern Europeans lived in the forests and painted themselves blue. Even earlier, when history has no record, and tradition dares not peep into the gloom of that intense past, even from then until now, ideas after ideas have marched out from her, but every word has been spoken with a blessing behind it and peace before it. We, of

all nations of the world, have never been a conquering race, and that blessing is on our head; and, therefore, we live. There was a time when at the sound of the march of big, great battalions, the earth trembled. Vanished from off the face of the earth, with not even a tale left behind to tell, gone is that ancient land of the Greeks. There was a time when the Roman eagle floated over everything worth having in this world; everywhere Rome's power was felt and pressed on the head of humanity; the earth trembled at the name of Rome. But the Capitoline Hill is a mass of ruins, the spider weaves its web where the Caesars ruled. There have been other nations equally glorious that have come and gone, living a few hours of exultant and of exuberant dominance, and of a wicked national life, and then vanishing like ripples on the face of the waters. Thus have these nations made their mark on the face of humanity. But we live; and if Manu came back today he would not be bewildered, and would not find himself in a foreign land. The same laws are here, laws adjusted and thought out through thousands of years; customs, the outcome of the acumen of ages and the experience of centuries, that seem to be eternal; and as the days go by, as blow after blow of misfortune has been delivered upon them, they seem to have served one purpose only, that of making them stronger and more constant. And to find the centre of all this, the heart from which the blood flows, the main-spring of the national life, believe me when I say from my experience of the world, that it is here. To the other nations of the world, religion is one among the many occupations of life. There is politics, there are the enjoyments of social life, there is all that wealth can

buy or power can bring, there is all that the senses can enjoy; and among all these various occupations of life, and all this searching after something which can give yet a little more whetting to the cloyed senses—among all these there is, perhaps, a little of religion. But here, in India, religion is the one and the only occupation of life. (C. W., III. 105-107).

#### THE MISSION OF INDIA

Sceptres have been broken and thrown away, the ball of power has passed from hand to hand; but in India, courts and kings always touched only a few; the vast mass of the people, from the highest to the lowest, has been left to pursue its own inevitable course, the current of national life flowing at times slow and half-conscious, at others, strong and awakened. I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps—my motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.

Aye, a glorious destiny, my brethren, for as far back as the days of the Upanishads we have thrown the challenge to the world—‘न धनेन न प्रजया त्यागेनैके  
अमृतत्वमानुशुः—not by wealth, not by progeny, but by renunciation alone immortality is reached.’ Race after race has taken the challenge up, and tried their utmost to solve the world-riddle on the plane of desires. They have all failed in the past—the old ones have become extinct under the weight of wickedness and misery, which lust for power and gold brings in its train, and the new ones are tottering to their fall. The question has yet to be decided whether peace will survive or war; whether patience will survive or non-forbearance, whether goodness will survive or wickedness; whether muscle will survive or brain; whether worldliness will survive or spirituality. We

have solved our problem ages ago, and held on to it through good or evil fortune, and mean to hold on to it till the end of time. Our solution is unworldliness—renunciation.

This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being, the *raison d'être* of her very existence—the spiritualization of the human race. In this her life-course she has never deviated, whether the Tartar ruled or the Turk, whether the Moghul ruled or the English.

And I challenge anybody to show one single period of her national life when India was lacking in spiritual giants, capable of moving the world. But her work is spiritual, and that cannot be done with blasts of war-trumpets or the march of cohorts. Her influence has always fallen upon the world like that of the gentle dew, unheard and scarcely marked, yet bringing into bloom the fairest flowers of the earth. This influence being in its nature gentle, would have to wait for a fortunate combination of circumstances, to go out of the country into other lands, though it never ceased to work within the limits of its native land. As such, every educated person knows that whenever the empire-building Tartar or Persian or Greek or Arab brought this land in contact with the outside world, a mass of spiritual influence immediately flooded the world from here. The very same circumstances have presented themselves once more before us. The English high-roads over land and sea and the wonderful power manifested by the inhabitants of that little island, have once more brought India in contact with the rest of the world, and the same work has already begun. Mark my words, this is but the small beginning, big things are to follow; this I know for certain, that millions, I say deliberately, millions in every civilized land are waiting for the message that will save them from the hideous abyss of materialism into which modern money-worship is

driving them headlong, and many of the leaders of the new social movements have already discovered, that Vedanta in its highest form can alone spiritualize social aspirations.

#### THE RESULT OF ENGLISH CONQUEST

Of course every conquest is bad, for conquest is an evil, foreign Government is an evil, no doubt, but even through evil comes good sometimes, and the great good of the English conquest is this : England, nay the whole of Europe, has to thank Greece for its civilization. It is Greece that speaks through everything in Europe. Every building, every piece of furniture has the impress of Greece upon it; European science and art are nothing but Grecian. Today the ancient Greek is meeting the ancient Hindu on the soil of India. Thus, slowly and silently, the heaven has come, the broadening out, the life-giving, and the revivalist movement, that we see all around us, has been worked out by these forces together. A broader and more generous conception of life is before us, and although at first we have been deluded a little and wanted to narrow things down, we are finding out today that these generous impulses which are at work, these broader conceptions of life, are the logical interpretation of what is in our ancient books. They are the carrying out, to the rigorously logical effect, of the primary conceptions of our own ancestors. To become broad, to go out, to amalgamate, to universalize, is the end of our aims. And all the time we have been making ourselves smaller and smaller, and dissociating ourselves, contrary to the plans laid down in our scriptures.

#### NARROW PATRIOTISM

Several dangers are in the way, and one is that of the extreme conception that we are the people in the world. With all my love for India, and with all my patriotism, and veneration for the ancients, I cannot but think that we have to learn many things from other

nations. We must be always ready to sit at the feet of all, for, mark you, every one can teach us great lessons. Says our great law giver, Manu:

Receive some good knowledge even from the low-born and even from the man of the lowest birth, learn by service the road to heaven

We, therefore, as true children of Manu, must obey his commands, and be ready to learn the lessons of this life, or the life hereafter from any one who can teach us. At the same time we must not forget, that we have also to teach a great lesson to the world. We cannot do without the world outside India; it was our foolishness that we thought we could, and we have paid the penalty by about a thousand years of slavery. That we did not go out to compare things with other nations, did not mark the workings that have been all around us, has been the one great cause of this degradation of the Indian mind. We have paid the penalty; let us do it no more. All such foolish ideas, that Indians must not go out of India, are childish. They must be knocked on the head; the more you go out and travel among the nations of the world, the better for you and for your country. If you had done that for hundreds of years past you would not be here today, at the feet of every nation that wants to rule India. The first manifestation of life is expansion. You must expand if you want to live. The moment you have ceased to expand, death is upon you, danger is ahead. I went to America and Europe . . . , because that is the first sign of the revival of national life, expansion. This reviving national life, expanding inside, threw me off, and thousands will be thrown off in that way. Mark my words, it has got to come if this nation lives at all. This question, therefore, is the greatest of the signs of the revival of national life, and through this expansion our quota of offering to the general mass of human knowledge, our contribution to the general upheaval of the world, is going

out to the external world. Again, this is not a new thing. Those of you who think that the Hindus have been always confined within the four walls of their country through all ages, are entirely mistaken; you have not studied the old books, you have not studied the history of the race aright if you think so. Each nation must give in order to live. When you give life you will have life; when

you receive you must pay for it by giving to all others, and that we have been living for so many thousands of years is a fact that stares us in the face, and the solution that remains is that we have been always giving to the outside world, whatever the ignorant may think. (C.W., III. 272-273).

*(To be concluded)*

## ICY HOME OF THE GANGES

BY SWAMI APURVANANDA

*(Concluded)*

### THE LAST MARCH

With the approach of dawn we left our damp shelter and began to make our way through the thick jungle. It was still drizzling; but we could not keep even our umbrellas open, because we had no regular path and had to cut our way through the dense undergrowth. We were consequently drenched by the continual falling of water from the branches of the trees; and it was a test of endurance for our wet bodies to put up with the intense cold of the early morning at that high altitude. We came out of the jungle in about an hour and reached a kind of plateau where, with great difficulty, we lighted a fire. We all sat round it and were intensely thankful for the warmth it brought to our benumbed limbs. Nothing could have been more welcome to us at that moment than this warmth, and we took advantage of the fire as long as it lasted. The rain at last stopped, and after having tea and breakfast we left that place, much refreshed. The sky gradually cleared and the warm rays of the rising sun brought new life and hope to us. We walked as fast as we could in order to cross a stream called Bhojbasha before the sun's heat caused its current to become so

strong, on account of the melting snows, as to make it impossible for crossing. Our way to this stream which was about six miles from our night shelter lay mostly over boulders; and climbing up and down at that altitude soon exhausted us and made our legs very shaky. While I was jumping from one boulder to another, one of them suddenly got loose just when I had stepped on to it, and before I could realize what was happening I was rolling down with that boulder at a dangerous speed. I must have rolled down about fifteen feet when I luckily caught hold of another boulder and thus checked my fall which would otherwise have hurled me to certain death into the bed of the Ganges down below. Seeing me rolling down, my companions got terribly alarmed, thinking there was no hope for me. But when they reached the spot where I was lying and carefully lifted me up, they found to their surprise that I was absolutely unhurt. They wanted to carry me; but I told them smiling that I was not at all hurt.

It was about eleven o'clock when we reached the bank of the Bhojbasha. When we first saw this rivulet from a little distance it looked as if we could jump across it, but this close view of the rushing torrent made us realize how

difficult the crossing would be. As we had been told at Gangotri that at one place on this stream two long tree trunks had been thrown across to serve as a bridge, our guide went up and down the bank in search of this 'bridge'. When he was satisfied that there was no longer any trace of those trunks, we tried to find out some spot in the rivulet where the crossing would be least dangerous. After a long search, we discovered a place on the bank where there was a trace of human footprints, and the guide following them, at last found the missing tree trunks, lying under knee-deep water. He accordingly decided, with the help of those buried trunks, to wade across to the other side, and finally succeeded. By throwing across a stout rope and using it as a handle, the rest of us also managed to go over to the other side. It had taken us nearly an hour and a half to cross that rivulet and it was past noon when we sat down on the other bank under the canopy of the blue sky to take our meal. The sun shone brightly and we were full of joy because Gomukhi was at last within our reach. Our joy at the certainty of reaching our long cherished goal was heightened because of the grandeur and unique beauty of the scenery which now met our gaze. It seemed as if we had come to some celestial region. The whole place was studded with rocks and boulders of varied shapes and of a greyish colour, which reflected the bright rays of the sun and made them shine with a kind of unearthly light. But the most unique sight of all was the carpets of wild flowers of various colours and shapes that spread at our feet. Had our eyes not actually feasted on this riot of colour and form, we would never have believed that such a wealth of beautiful flowers could exist at this high altitude.

On the guide telling us that Gomukhi was now only four miles away, we at once got up and resumed our walk with great enthusiasm. We were in such a mood that the difficulties of the road could no longer affect our speed or cause

us fatigue. Our virgin path now lay over a vast, barren plateau, full of rocks, where the only vegetation was the profusion of flowers at our feet. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when we came to a place from where the guide pointed out to us a high, snow-clad mountain and said Gomukhi lay at its foot. A little further off was a place which looked like an oasis in our rocky desert. It was a grove of Bhurja trees and when we reached it the guide advised us to camp there for the night as there was now no other place where fire-wood would be available. It was accordingly decided to pass the night there, and our clever Bhutiâ cooly soon discovered the skeleton of an old shelter under one of the Bhurja trees. This was evidently the remnant of a shelter erected in this place probably by former pilgrims and we began to rebuild it for our use. While we were doing this, one of the monks of our party suddenly remembered it was *ekâdashi* day (the eleventh day of the new moon). We all agreed that we must have our *darshan* of Gomukhi on this auspicious day, and as the whole evening was still before us, it was decided to start forthwith. As we advanced cautiously, it seemed as if we were entering into some awe-inspiring forbidden sanctuary. An uncanny sound which almost frightened us now rose at frequent intervals from the depths of the Ganges stream flowing by our side. The guide attributed this weird sound to the collision of the boulders lying deep under the icy waters of the Ganges,—so near its home in this place—with huge slabs of ice falling into the stream from the glacier of Gomukhi. As we slowly approached that glacier, our difficulties increased and there seemed to be no end to the obstacles of various kinds which confronted us. We had to cross innumerable little streams of icy water and our shoes could no longer keep our feet dry. The cold was so intense that, in spite of the bright sunshine, we shivered as we stumbled along. The rocks and boulders all around us were in a tottering condition

and seemed to threaten us, all the time, with instant destruction if they chose to roll down. The place which the guide pointed out as Gomukhi now appeared to be only about three hundred yards away, but the nearer we came the further it seemed to recede from us. The only indication that we were actually coming closer and closer was the increasing volume of that strange sound which still issued from the hidden depths of the Ganges stream.

#### GOMUKHI

As we approached our goal, we forgot all the dangers and difficulties which surrounded us and the only feeling we had was one of tense excitement at the thought of what Gomukhi would actually be like. We, at last, came to a rocky elevation from where we had our first real sight of Gomukhi. We were thrilled beyond measure by what we saw, and I find it impossible to describe my feelings at that moment. The Ganges appeared to issue, in silent calm, from inside a cavern of ice; and all around its birthplace, as far as the eye could see, was a vast glacier of shining ice. The rays of the late afternoon sun made this glacier and the snow-clad mountain on the right shine with a golden, purple tint. The ethereal beauty of the whole scene enchanted us and held us spellbound. When we were about a hundred and fifty yards from Gomukhi, the sight of a huge avalanche frightened us. Large slabs of ice broke away, at short intervals, from this avalanche with an awful crunching sound and crashed into the stream as it came out of its ice cave. The sight and sound of these continually falling ice blocks terrified my companions, and even the guide refused to proceed any further because of the danger of being hit by splinters flying out of the crash. As I was determined to go as near Gomukhi as possible, I began to advance alone in spite of the guide's warning, and was soon joined by the other Sannyâsin and Tekram who could not resist the temptation of going with me.

We finally reached a spot within fifty

yards of the real Gomukhi and saw more clearly than before the original Ganges stream gushing out from the depths of its ice home. The opening through which the stream was flowing looked like a tunnel, the diameter of which might have been about fifteen yards, the distance from the top of its arch to the water level being about ten yards. All three of us stood on a big slab of ice of a bluish tint and performed our worship of Mother Ganges with flowers and other offerings which we had carried for this purpose. Although our bodies shivered with cold, I was determined somehow to take my ceremonial bath in the sacred waters of the Ganges at this holy spot. Practically the whole of the surface of the stream, as it came out of the tunnel, was covered with floating ice and I could not discover any open space of water for taking a plunge. There was, however, no time to lose as the guide was shouting to us repeatedly to turn back. In the excitement of the moment I stripped myself, and stepped on to a floating piece of ice which sank under my weight. When the freezing ice water first touched my feet a kind of electric shock went through my whole body; but I was already waist-deep in the water; and, in a mad haste, I began to remove the ice with both hands to make a little space sufficient for a dive. In breast-deep water, I took three plunges, with the name of Gangâ Mâi on my lips, and rushed out, with equally mad haste, to save myself from being frozen to death between the floating ice slabs. It is impossible for me to describe my feelings on coming out of the water because, the excitement being over, I seemed to have lost all consciousness for the moment. My brother Sannyâsin also wanted to have a similar bath, but he almost collapsed as soon as he was waist-deep in water and had to be dragged out. Tekram had hardly been knee-deep in the frozen stream when he jumped out with a terrible shriek that his legs had been cut off by some monster!

As the evening was fast approaching,

we could not stay where we were much longer; and after making our obeisance to Gangâ Mâi, and offering Her our heartfelt thanks for permitting us to enter Her sacred abode, we started to rejoin our companions. They were all sitting where we had left them, huddled up under a large blanket and trying to keep warm with the aid of a small fire which had been lighted by the guide with the fuel that he had carried with him. After warming our own 'iced' limbs at this welcome fire, we all started together for our camping ground. When we reached that place at dusk, we were greeted by a roaring fire which had been lighted by our good Bhutiâ porter who had collected a large quantity of wood from the Bhurja jungle. By the time we had finished our meal and completed the unfinished shelter, it was quite dark and the moon gradually came out. As we all sat round the fire inside the shelter, we felt the sanctity of the atmosphere around us and began to chant from the Upanishads and the Gita. One of the Sannyâsins sang Shankara's Hymn to Mother Ganges beginning with: 'Oh, Goddess, Thou Exalted One among the gods, the Divine Gangâ of sportive waves, who hast made your abode on the head of Lord Shankara; and who with your pristine holiness bringeth emancipation to the three worlds—may Thou be pleased to give me devotion to Thy Lotus Feet!' The other Sannyâsin, under the influence of the all-pervading silence, recited Swami Vivekananda's famous invocation to the Universal Brahman: 'One Mass, devoid of form, name and colour—timeless, devoid of time, past and future—spaceless, voiceless, boundless, devoid of all—where rests hushed even speech of negation!' Our songs resounded through the silent night air of that snowy region; and we were so elated by that inspiring atmosphere that it was not before midnight that anyone thought of sleep. Even then, I was feeling so thrilled at the memory of my afternoon plunge at Gomukhi, that I could not sleep at all.

I was seized with a longing to go once more to that celestial home of the Ganges, and I waited impatiently for the dawn in order to carry out my desire.

As soon as the night was over, I woke up the Sannyâsin who had already experienced with me the thrill of Gomukhi, and told him of my plan to start immediately for that glacier. He decided to accompany me once again. The rest of the party had also got up by now, and one of the two Pâhâris also decided to come with us. The temperature outside seemed to be well below freezing point when we started, and a thick mist hung over the whole place. We shook with cold as we proceeded, and stumbled among the rocks in the blinding mist. As we approached Gomukhi, there was absolute silence and even the avalanche produced no sound now as it had done the previous afternoon. The very stream of the Ganges was flowing noiselessly at this silent hour. This time we went much closer to Gomukhi than on the previous day and finally stood on an ice slab only a few yards from the Ganges cavern. There was no breeze and no movement of any kind whatsoever. It seemed as if even the Lord of the universe had stopped breathing for a moment! The same thick veil of mist hung over the whole unearthly region. I again felt an irresistible desire to take a plunge in that icy stream, and after breaking a thin layer of ice, dived in as I had done the previous afternoon. I had, however, forgotten, in the excitement of the moment, the difference in temperature between the two occasions; and when I dragged myself out I was almost in a state of collapse and the Pâhâri had to rub my benumbed body to restore circulation. My brother Sannyâsin's attempt to follow me, had an amusing result. As the temperature of the air was, at this time, about the same as the atmosphere of the water, he thought the water had reached his head when he was actually only waist-deep in the stream, and he made movements of

diving in the air instead of in the water ! Even in my exhausted condition I could not help laughing when I saw those queer movements. When he came out I told the excited Swami what had actually happened, and having understood, he himself laughed heartily at the illusion. Our Pâhâri companion, after seeing the plight of each of us, did not dare touch that frozen stream at all ! We again performed the ceremonial worship of Gangâ Mâi, and at last turned back with the greatest reluctance.

It was just then that the first rays of the rising sun fell on the glacier above us and on the snow-capped peaks around. The eternal beauty of that vast glacier, stretching for miles before us, was revealed to our astonished gaze for the first time, and we gasped in wonder that a sight so sublime could ever be witnessed by human eyes ! The sun's rays now began to play on the frozen waters of the Ganges stream, and we gazed at another scene of beauty in Gangâ Mâi's fairy-land. The breathtaking beauty of these scenes following one another had such an influence on our minds that we became completely oblivious, for the moment, of all our physical sufferings and difficulties. The idea of leaving that heavenly region made us very sad, and we looked back at Gomukhi again and again as we finally dragged ourselves away. It was after we had the last sight of that celestial region that the reaction of the dip into that icy stream began to be felt. The lower part of our bodies had become so numb on account of the exposure that we had very little control over our legs. We constantly stumbled against stones and our feet began to bleed. It was nearly ten o'clock when we at last reached the camp. Our companions were standing in a group by the side of the Ganges, gazing intently at some

object; and on joining them we found they were looking at a herd of some seven or eight strange animals. The guide said these were Barârs, a kind of deer which roam in the high snows. During the winter months they are actually said to live without food or drink—hibernating in some cave to protect themselves against the heavy and frequent snow-falls.

#### FAREWELL TO GANGA MAI'S ABODE

We had at last achieved our goal; and finally we bade farewell to Gomukhi with our hearts full of gratitude to the benign River Goddess for allowing us to enter Her celestial abode and to witness its sublime beauty, once in the afternoon glow and again in the ethereal height of a magical morning. My own gratitude to Gangâ Mâi was beyond expression because of Her kindly indulgence to my repeated invasion of her innermost sanctuary. Was She not kind because She knew that mine was, after all, the daring of love for Her lotus feet ?

From the day we left Dehra Dun till the morning of my second plunge into Gomukhi's frozen stream, time had registered a period of only twenty days. But so many unforgettable experiences were crowded into that brief interval, that their memory has left indelible marks on my mind. Though it is now more than five years since I made that memorable pilgrimage, I often feel as if I had seen Gomukhi only yesterday ! And even today in my quiet moments the blessed memories of that sacred place—Gomukhi—bring inspiration and joy in my mind. Gangâ Mâi often beckons to me to visit Her 'Icy Home' once more. It may be possible only by the blessings of Lord Shiva from whose matted locks the holy Ganges first sprang.

'Jai Gangâ Mâi Ki Jai !'

## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

The religious ideas of ancient India have stood the test of time for centuries. But they still stand in need of being examined afresh in the light of modern developments in society and State, if they are to play an important part in contemporary history. The present number of the *Prabuddha Bharata* discusses this matter from various points of view. The editorial shows that India can make substantial contribution to modern civilization, provided the proper frame of mind is brought into existence in the West. . . . Swami Nirvedananda looks at the same question from another standpoint and shows that in the West, under a thin integument of culture, the cave-man still lives an unregenerate life. . . . Prof. Hem Chandra Ray Chaudhuri's scholarly article brings into prominence some social ideas which are not rightly comprehended in modern India. . . . Prof. Govinda Chandra Dev finds that the spiritual values of India have nothing to lose even if the most up-to-date theory for the economic betterment of the masses, including socialism, is given the fullest play. . . . Swami Pavitrananda has culled some valuable passages from the works of Swami Vivekananda bearing on *The Spirit of Indian Civilization*. . . . Mr. Malcolm Subhan of Aligarh touches on a different theme and argues that so long as the masses are not fully enlightened it is useless to blame the scientists for the ailments of the world.

### HINDU VIEW OF LIFE

In an illuminating article on 'The Aryan View of Life' in the *Indian Review* for December 1943, Dr. M. H. Syed writes:

This (the Hindu) view of life fills one's heart with indomitable courage, unshakable faith in man's creative nature and his final success. One endowed with such insight into

his inner capacities and divine potentialities is never afraid of any change of social, religious, or political outlook. He is ever ready to reform himself and the social fabric which is the outcome of his own erstwhile creation. Anyone who accepts this outlook on life and believes in his divine nature, need have no fear of any transformation which is the law of changing life. He should ever be ready to renounce effete and outworn ideals which have had their day, and should never hesitate to adopt any new scheme of life which may conduce to his happiness, and promote the well-being of his race or community.

It is not unoften that Hindu religion and philosophy are misunderstood and misrepresented by Western thinkers and also by some Indians. Hindus are sometimes looked upon as visionary idealists and their philosophy of life is said to be unreal and unpractical. The imperfections in Hindu society are attributed to this 'wrong' outlook on life and to the influence of religion. In his article in the *Aryan Path* for December 1943, Mr. Madan Gopal thinks that 'the real problem of India is, at its root, the problem of our fixed attitude towards life and its problems'. He observes:

Rationalism and a scientific outlook are shunned. Implicit faith in Fate and absolute resignation to God's will are extolled. Contentment with the lot one is placed in is held to be the ideal. . . . All latent originality and initiative are stifled. . . . Life is looked upon as an unwelcome burden, never as a privilege. Our highest-class literature, plays, and cinemas harp upon the same pessimistic attitude towards life. The most popular tunes are pregnant with such ideas as: 'The world is an illusion,' 'Man is like a bubble on the surface of the sea,' . . . 'Shun sagacity and follow God.' . . . To bring about regeneration on the social plane, which largely determines the economic and political complexion, it is imperative that we undermine the influence of religion, for the progress of religion and of the social or political order cannot go hand in hand.

Individuals or groups may be guilty of such allegations as above, but by no means can these be laid at the door of Hindu religion and philosophy as such. Even an elementary knowledge of Hindu philosophy as expounded in the

Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, and restated by the *achâryas* and, in our own times, by Swami Vivekananda will prove that these charges against the Hindu outlook on life are baseless and untrue. Dr. Syed has admirably presented a true picture of the Hindu view of life, and points out how it offers immense possibilities to every man in the field of creative activity as well as practical wisdom. Hinduism, while placing before man a 'glorious and inspiring' ideal, has always stressed the need for self-effort in the attainment of that ideal and has urged everyone to 'stand on one's own legs'. He writes :

This ideal of the divinity of man leads us to believe, unlike the teachings of some of the religions of the semitic stock, that he is not to lean on or depend upon an external agency for his salvation or liberation. In all conscience, he has to work out his own salvation. . . . There is no uncertainty about the steps the seeker takes stage by stage. His success or otherwise depends entirely on the amount of effort he applies and the energy he devotes to its pursuit.

Those who take pride in possessing a 'scientific outlook that strictly adheres to reason and logic' think that happiness consists in the attainment of material comforts and sense-pleasures. But experience tells us that it is not so. True happiness can come only through self-knowledge, infinite and absolute, which is to be experienced and realized. It is beyond the reach of the senses or ordinary logical reasoning, though not contradictory to these. Some persons are often carried away by the force of Western intellectualism and the glamour of scientific advancement, and carelessly dismiss our own time-honoured philosophical truths, religious ideas, and social institutions as unpractical, fatalistic, and meaningless. Dr. Sir S. Radhakrishnan truly observes that 'in India today we are faced by a real danger of ignoring the importance of ideal values in our anxiety to incorporate scientific conceptions and political devices into our national life.' He says,

In spite of scientific backwardness, social inefficiency and political ineptitude, our

ancient sages possessed a true perception of the right values which make for human happiness. . . . The roots of all great thinking lie deep in life itself and not in the dry light of mere reasoning. Creative work in science and philosophy, art and literature, is due to this something which is greater than mere knowledge.

And there are those who desire root-and-branch reform to be effected overnight, and demand the displacement of religion by science and politics. But they seem to forget that religion, in its true sense, is the backbone of the Indian nation, and human nature cannot be hurried into change. Political and scientific ideas, unless tempered by the fire of spiritual force, may prove formidable engines of destruction for mankind.

#### CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA

Writing on 'The Contribution of Christianity to Indian Nationalism' in the *Aryan Path* for December 1943, Mr. A. J. Appasamy holds that Christians in India have played a large part in the sphere of education, medical relief, and rural reconstruction. It is a fact that in this country Christian missionaries have been running schools and colleges for boys and girls, maintaining dispensaries and hospitals, and carrying on 'reconstruction' work in selected areas among village folk and also among certain groups of people called 'aboriginals' and 'depressed classes'. But we would have been glad if this was all that was done. An American missionary once wrote :

They (the missionary schools) represent the leaven of Christianity in India. They furnish excellent opportunity to present Christ and His Gospel of salvation to a large host of young people under very favourable circumstances. . . . And I fearlessly maintain that more conversions take place and more accessions are made through these schools than through any other agency.

Christian solicitude for the regeneration of the masses of India is commendable, but not completely above reproach. For with the Christians proselytism has always been, and still is, one of the main objects to be achieved. The writer himself gives expression to this when he says,

They (Christians) have introduced Christ to India. Through the Christian schools and colleges in India, the knowledge of the Gospels has spread widely. Multitudes of young people have been taught the Bible, and have come to know of Christ. The seed sown has in many cases produced no fruit at all, but in a great many others it has yielded fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold, or even a hundredfold.

Many Hindus adore the spiritual personality of Christ with no less regard than most Christians themselves do. That is why the Hindu readily accepts the teachings of Christ, but finds it not easy to fall in line with organized Christianity which confines itself to the Church. One can understand the missionary zeal to 'spread the faith,' and voluntary conversions through personal conviction are never objected to. But

those who make proselytism their platform of work and wean away illiterate and aboriginal classes from their mother faith by allurements of social and economic betterment can hardly be looked upon as contributing to the best interests of India. In the past, India has been ill-served by foreign Christian missionaries who spared no pains, through their speeches and writings, to slander Hinduism and expose only the faults and failings of the Hindus. We hope that Christians of our own land, today, will do their best not to follow this example, but to give their contribution to the country's progress, in the true Christian spirit, with sympathy and toleration towards non-Christians.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

**BHAGAVAD GITA—AN INTRODUCTORY STUDY.** BY K. NAVARATNAM. WITH A FOREWORD BY S. S. SURYANARAYAN SASTRI. *Published by the author from the Kala Nilayam, Jaffna. Pp. 95. Price Re. 1.*

Mr. Navaratnam's apology for adding this short treatise to the treatment of the Gita is that he wants to popularize the message of the Gita among the students of Ceylon. Indeed the universal and catholic teachings of the Gita should reach them by all means. Specially the Gita should be the very foundation of our character-building. Naturally, Mr. Navaratnam has done a great service for the welfare of the students of Ceylon by publishing this simple but learned introductory study to the Gita. The *Foreword* by Sri Suryanarayana Sastri and the appendix at the end of the book have enhanced its worth. We are glad to see that the writer has referred to all eminent scholars—classical and modern—while explaining the teachings of the Gita. He thinks the commentaries of Sri Aurobindo and Tilak to be the 'most outstanding commentaries written to suit the spirit of the twentieth century' and has been guided by them, though he has referred to Shankara and Ramanuja as well. We hope that this little book will create interest for a deeper study of the Gita in the young minds of the unbiased students, irrespective of caste, colour, or creed.

**HINDU MYSTICISM, PART I.** BY MAHENDRA NATH SIRCAR, WITH A FOREWORD BY SIR N. N. SIRCAR. *Published by Bharati Mahavidyalaya, Calcutta. Pp. XI+171. Price Rs. 3-8.*

The hazy notions which the scientific rationalists entertain about ultimate values, have, in their confused minds, led to the unjustifiable identification of mysticism with mystification. There is, however, no excuse at the present day for the persistence of such confusion. Bergson it was who first showed to the Western world the real significance of intuition and mysticism. And the recent works of Underhill, Francis Young-husband, and others of the West, and the monumental works of Professors Radhakrishnan, Ranade, and Belvelkar of our own country have, between them, covered the whole ground of religious and philosophical mysticism. And now, the great scholar Dr. Mahendra Nath Sircar has, with the publication of the work under review, joined the noble band of interpreters of Hindu Mysticism.

The book is the first part of Dr. Sircar's larger projected treatise, and is divided into nineteen chapters. Each chapter is a gem of exposition, complete in itself, and sets forth, in the main, the mystical significance of some aspect of Vaishnava religion. Commencing with a discussion of the place of revaluation in true religion, the gifted

author treats us to a series of discourses on *Ethical and Moral Mysticism, Psychism, Personalistic and Activistic Mysticism, Divine Aestheticism, Time and Reciprocity in Spiritual Life, God, Love, Grace, Yoga*, and subjects of similar import. The several topics are directly based on Vaishnava teachings and practice, but the presentation is 'free, following the spirit and the inspiration, rather than the details of teachings'. The nature of mysticism as it ramifies into the various aspects of the living dynamic spiritual life is the theme *par excellence* of Dr. Sircar's work. 'Mysticism is a live inspiration.' It 'deals with life in its utmost stress of creative expression and Being in its unfathomable stillness'. 'Vaishnavic mysticism is personalistic. It rises in the height of being, definiteness and wide expression as it grows in its essential nature.' The mystic 'becomes a piece of living poetry, beauteous in form, rhythmical in the beats of being. . . . He has the unique experience of the iridescence of light, the efflorescence of bliss, the ease of life, and the cosmic stirring of will.' The chapters dealing with aestheticism in Vaishnava religion, and with love, grace, salvation, and the nature of Godhead are remarkably profound, and fresh, and at the same time, not beyond the comprehension of the average reader.

It is a great mind, a master-mind in fact, that is at work in *Hindu Mysticism* revealing to us its unique reactions to the foundations of a religion which has stirred the hearts of millions of our countrymen in the North as well as in the South, to its very depths. Who can withstand the ravishing tunes of the hymn *Vaishnava Janatho* beloved of Gandhiji? Treatises there are, lay and learned, philosophic and popular, in endless variety on the teachings of Vaishnava *âchâryas, azhvars*, and *gurus*. Some of them are of forbidding aspect by reason of their terse aphoristic style or of their quaint *manipravala* language. One has only to think in this connection of the writings of Pillailokacharya, Jamunacharya, and Manavalamamuni to realize the utter hopelessness, as expounded in these works, of any law attempt at understanding the fundamentals of the Vaishnava faith. Dr. Sircar's work, therefore, satisfies a real need in the life of every cultured Hindu who is not altogether carried away by the materialism and meliorism of modern times. This invaluable brochure ought to find its way into the home of every Vaishnava; and I would strongly recommend it to every research scholar in philosophy who is seeking a fresh and illuminating approach to the problems of comparative religion and of philosophy of religion.

P. S. N.

## SANSKRIT-ENGLISH

**RAMANA-CHATVARIMSHAT.** By KAVYAKANTA GANAPATI MUNI. Published by Niranjanananda Swami, Sri Ramanashramam, Tiruvannamalai. Pp. 16. Price one anna.

*Ramana-chatvârimshat* or forty verses in praise of Shri Ramana Maharshi is an excellent panegyric composed by the late poet Ganapati Muni. The poet was a devoted disciple of Ramana Maharshi, the celebrated saint of South India; hence, every verse is marked with a clear stamp of devotion which is so apparent that even a casual reader will not fail to notice it. To read the verses is a pleasure, not only for their devotional tone but for the poetic imagination manifested in them as well. We recommend these verses to the devoted public.

DINESH CHANDRA GUHA

## SANSKRIT

**UMASAHASRAM.** By VASISHTA GANAPATI MUNI. Published by Sitaram Vighneshwara Bharati, Nandini Press, Shirasi, Canara. Pp. 464. Price Rs. 5.

*Umâsahasram* or thousand verses in praise of the Goddess Umâ by the late poet Ganapati Muni is a masterpiece of poetry. Ganapati Muni was a natural poet, gifted with sublime poetic imagination and penetrating inner vision. He was a poet of devotional temperament, and these thousand verses unambiguously prove his deep devotion to the Goddess Umâ whom he worshipped as his ideal. The poet was a philosopher of no mean order as his philosophical insight can well be imagined from a perusal of these thousand verses.

The commentary on *Umâsahasram* is lucid and faithful to the original work. Expositions by direct disciples generally become reliable, and the commentator who is a direct disciple of the poet may be relied upon in his exposition of the philosophical view-points of his preceptor. Subtle points of philosophical interest have been aptly justified by the commentator. This fact clearly demonstrates his wide range of study and mastery over the various philosophical systems.

Both the *Umâsahasram* and its commentary can be whole-heartedly recommended to the poetry-loving public in general and the scholars of philosophy in particular. But here and there, there are some observations which cannot be justified from an orthodox standpoint of Indian philosophy. Of course, if the work claims to establish a new system

of philosophy, nothing can be said against it from that point of view.

Supreme *Chit* (consciousness) has been divided into three forms, e.g., wish, activity, and knowledge (10th verse, 2nd *stavaka*, 1st *shataka*). This division is arbitrary and is not supported anywhere in the authoritative orthodox philosophical treatises. The *mâyâ* of the Advaita system of Vedânta philosophy has been assumed as *shakti* (11th verse, 3rd *stavaka*, 1st *shataka*), which is unwarranted. It has been argued that if *shakti* cannot create a sportive body (*lîlâtanu*) for her, she is not omnipotent (13th verse, 3rd *stavaka*, 1st *shataka*). A little reflection will expose the hollowness of this argument. God, though omnipotent, cannot indeed deduce five from two plus two. This sort of incapacity does not in any way affect his omnipotence, for certainly God should not be expected to break all the laws of truth and consistency to establish his omnipotence before his critics. If consciousness is the only supreme entity, which it certainly is according to the scriptures, God can never make it otherwise. The body of *shakti* has been described as deathless (*amritam*) and that of God as *pranava* (*Om*) (17th verse, 3rd *stavaka*, 1st *shataka*). Evidently some sort of difference between the two bodies has been imagined. This also is unauthoritative. Is then *pranava* perishable? If by the term *amritam* the author means nectar, then also the question may be put to him to explain what he exactly means by nectar. Mythological explanation will never be accepted in a philosophical treatise. The world manifestation, as it is experienced by us during our waking stage, is conceived as the transformation of the aggregate consciousness (17th verse, 1st *stavaka*, 10th *shataka*). This view cannot be justified by argument. Strictly speaking, there can be no *parinâma* of consciousness in the technical philosophi-

cal sense of the term. The example furnished to establish the view-point has rendered the cause weaker. Is dream ever conceived in any authoritative philosophical treatise as the coarse form of the subtle consciousness?

In some places the commentator also has tried to convince his readers with fallacious arguments. Transitoriness (*nashvaratvam*) has been supposed to be the argument to prove the instability (*anityatvam*) of the body (commentary on the 8th verse, 3rd *stavaka*, 1st *shataka*), and in so doing the commentator has clearly committed the fallacy of begging the question. Feminine and masculine forms of God have been inferred from the same argument (commentary on the 15th verse, 3rd *stavaka*, 1st *shataka*), which is impossible. Can two contrary terms be ever predicated of the same subject by the same argument?

In spite of all these drawbacks, the work with its commentary is on the whole agreeable. The reader will simply be charmed with the poetic imagination of the author. The tone of devotion is predominant in the entire work. The poet-philosopher Ganapati Muni was a real lover indeed. He had unshakable faith in the name of the Lord, and hence temperamentally he did not like to enter into rituals and logical discourses (16th verse, 3rd *stavaka*, 8th *shataka*). It must also be admitted that the poet had an inventive capacity and the Sanskrit-knowing world will surely be sorry to think that a poet of such an eminence is no more on this earth. It is to be expected that all other works of the poet will be published without delay.

We whole-heartedly recommend the book under review to the Sanskrit-knowing world in general and to the poetry-loving public in particular.

DINESH CHANDRA GUHA

## NEWS AND REPORTS

### THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ON DISTRESS RELIEF

Optimistic talk about the recent *Āman* crop seems to have created an impression among the public that Bengal has turned the corner and that the end of the distress is in sight. Nothing is farther from the truth. Hopes raised by the last crop have proved false. Hunger, disease, and destitution continue in the countryside. Destitutes have even started coming to towns again. If the present relief activities of the

different organizations are discontinued or even curtailed, people will begin to die wholesale again.

Appeals are pouring to us from our various relief centres and also from other quarters insisting upon the necessity of continuing and even extending our relief operations. All the reports draw the same dismal picture. Worse still, there is the general apprehension of a far worse catastrophe in the coming months of April and May.

Large deficit areas of Bengal are in awful plight. Rice is not only dear, but the total

quantity available is also quite insufficient for their needs. Licensed merchants do not feel prompted to buy rice and transport it to deficit areas, since they have usually to buy it at prices which leave them very small margin of profit.

Landless labour of all descriptions, artisans of all classes, small traders and middle-class wage-earners are the people who have been worst hit. The majority of them, who are now living on doles, will die of starvation even if the price of rice goes down considerably. Most of them have no market for their goods; others are idle because of the lack of implements and trade materials. Having sold their all, they are utter destitutes, without proper cover or shelter, stricken with diseases and living upon doles. It has been roughly estimated that at least 30% of the population in most of the localities where we are giving relief will starve, if our relief is discontinued at present. The severe economic dislocation of the country will have to be repaired and its economic life restored to some extent before relief can be discontinued or curtailed.

It is evident in the light of all this that the need for relief work continues and is even greater in some of the districts. Not only are the destitutes to be fed and clothed, but houses have also to be built and work provided for them. Workers who have lost employment and have been uprooted from their homes and villages have to be rehabilitated. Gradually the economic life of the village communities will have to be built up anew.

Diseases like malaria, small-pox, and cholera are still taking a heavy toll of lives. The need for medicines and the services of qualified medical men is great and urgent.

In view of the slight improvement in the situation in some districts but more particularly for want of funds our Mission from 50 centres covering 19 districts is at present conducting gratuitous relief work in a restricted form by giving free doles of rice to a large proportion of the destitutes especially those who are infirm or unable for any other

reason to work just now, as well as giving rice etc. in exchange for work of some sort such as paddy-husking, cane work, etc. We are also distributing medicines and diet among the diseased.

We, therefore, appeal to the generous public to send us help so that relief may continue till confidence returns and the crisis is over.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

*Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission,  
Belur Math, Howrah.*

15. 2. 1944.

#### PRIZE DISTRIBUTION AND SPORTS AT THE BELUR RAMAKRISHNA MISSION COLLEGE

The annual sports and prize distribution ceremony of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandira came off on the 31st January last. A short but neat function providing some entertainments in the shape of songs, recitations, and comic skits was organized for the occasion. Dr. R. C. Majumdar, lately the Vice-Chancellor of the Dacca University, presided and gave away the prizes. The Principal, in welcoming the president, referred to Dr. Majumdar's great services in the field of historical research in India and pointed out as well the justification for starting a residential college at Belur. He dwelt upon the ideas with which the Institution was started and how it aimed at providing an education calculated to develop the whole personality of a boy.

The president in the course of his speech remarked that the vital necessity of developing in our boys an appreciation of the moral and spiritual values of life, so essential for the real art of living, has been grossly neglected in our educational institutions. He was one of those who watched with keen interest and delight the growth and development of this residential college and hoped that the Vidyamandira, inspired as it was by the great ideas and ideals of the Mission, would fill up the lacunae in the educational arrangements of our day.