

# PRABUDDHA BHARATA

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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Dry periods in spiritual life—Tenacity—*Japa* and constant remembrance of the Lord—Self-control and discrimination—Pilgrimage to holy places—Life of an itinerant monk—Practice of dependence upon the Lord—Rules of monasticism—Ramakrishna monks, a new type—Essentials of monasticism, renunciation of lust and greed.

(Place: *Belur Monastery*. Time: *September 1923*.)

Saturday. Swami Shivananda was seated in his room at the monastery at Belur, his face beaming with spiritual fervour, his eyes radiating love and compassion. There was profound peace in the room. Since it was Saturday, several devotees came from Calcutta for a visit. Most of them were young men working in offices who made it a custom to avail themselves of every holiday to come to the monastery to see Mahapurushji and listen to him. From his precious words of wisdom they drew much inspiration. That day the conversation turned upon spiritual practice.

A devotee said: ‘Maharaj, on some days I enjoy my meditation, but on other days I do not. What accounts for this?’

The Swami replied: ‘Yes, truly it happens like this. For some days we enjoy meditation, but other days come when we do not. In the initial stage all aspirants have to go through this experience, but one should not stop practice for that reason. Did not the

Master speak of the hereditary farmer? Even as he sticks to the family profession, so you must stick to your spiritual practice and in trying periods pray fervently to the Lord. Say: “Lord, we are in the world, we are weak and devoid of spiritual discipline and practice. We have neither time nor energy. We have none else to call our own. Do Thou graciously set our mind right that we may call upon Thee properly. Feeble as we are, unless Thou givest us strength, how shall we think of Thee?” Pray to God thus, my boy. Prayer, earnest prayer, is what is necessary. Cry to Him as you pray. Then He will be gracious, and respond.

‘Don’t you remember how the Master used to pray to the Mother? He would rub his face against the ground, crying, “Another day of this life is gone and I have not seen Thee!” How ardently did Sri Chaitanya say, “O Lord, I find no joy in repeating Thy name!” Crying thus, he too would rub his

face on the grass. One should take the name of the Lord in this way with great earnestness. His name, my child, is the very essence. Repeating it brings strength to one's heart. Never forget to repeat His name and pray to Him constantly."

Devotee : 'Can one take His name always, as for instance, while walking ?'

Swami : 'Certainly. *Japa* is not bound by temporal considerations. You can repeat His name whenever you find time. While walking repeat it mentally, you cannot then count the repetition on your fingers or rosary without being conspicuous. The repetition of the Lord's name must be practised very secretly so that no one knows anything about it.

'Practise constant recollection and contemplation of God. One has to form the habit. Remember and think of Him continually, while walking, eating, lying down, and even when you are actively busy. Let it be as if an undercurrent is all the time flowing. If you practise in this manner for a while, remembrance and contemplation of Him will go on unconsciously within you ; you will be repeating His name even while asleep.'

Devotee : 'It is so hard to control the mind ! Sometimes when I am telling my beads, uttering His name orally, my mind wanders here and there, indulging in ideas I never before thought of.'

Swami : 'That is true. The rascal mind causes all the trouble. You must control this mind, or it will take you here and there. However, sincere efforts will bring self-control. When disciplined, this wicked mind behaves right ; it functions as the guru, repeats His name, guides the aspirant along righteous ways and gives him inspiration in noble undertakings. Practise self-control constantly, pray sincerely to the Lord, and discriminate between the real and the unreal. My child, self-control cannot be accomplished in a day. Rightly has the Lord said in the Gita :

Doubtless, O mighty-armed, the mind is restless and difficult to control ; but, O son of Kunti, through practice and dispassion it can be conquered. Practice, continual practice, and discrimina-

tion are what is needed. God alone is the one eternal substance, the abiding reality. It is necessary to be fully convinced of this in one's heart.'

As the conversation progressed, Swami Shivananda gradually became indrawn. Very soon he fell silent, with eyes closed in meditation. After remaining a while, one by one the devotees started leaving for devotions in the chapel or on the bank of the Ganges.

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Tuesday. About 7.30 this morning Swami Shivananda had just returned from the chapel. Nowadays he meditates long in the morning. At the very hour of dawn, when Sri Ramakrishna is first offered worship, the Swami goes to the chapel with a deerskin and sits there on it meditating. Sometimes it is quite late in the morning when he returns to his room. Today, after coming from the chapel, he was seated in his chair. The intoxication of meditation lingered, and he seemed still very much absorbed. The monks and novitiates of the Order as well as the lay devotees came to pay their respects to him. He greeted them and made inquiries about their well-being very briefly, as if he were in no mood to carry on conversation.

A monk of the Order returned only yesterday from a pilgrimage to Rameshwar, Dwarka, and other holy places. The moment this monk entered and saluted him, Mahapurushji, with folded hands, bowed to God, saying, 'Glory be unto Lord Rameshwar, glory be unto the Lord of Dwarka !' Addressing the monk, the Swami continued : 'Meditate upon these subjects. When you meditate, try to think of what you saw in holy places. This is certainly the object of going on pilgrimages. If one undertakes them like a tourist, he gains nothing from them. Genuine devotees purify their minds by recalling and meditating on such things. It is the Lord who has become everything. The holy places are indeed His glories. While thinking of Him one should also think of the manifestations of His power. In holy places there is a special manifestation of Him. He



is not seated in our chapel only. He, the Lord of the Universe, is all-pervasive and exists everywhere, but He is specially manifest in holy places and in His saints and devotees.'

Monk: 'After my little wandering this time, the conviction has become deep-rooted in my mind that He is specially manifest in holy places, and I have truly understood that at every step He holds us by the hand and protects us. I remained for three days at Kanyakumari (Cape Comorin) and enjoyed my stay very much. I used to spend considerable time in meditation, *japa*, worship, and reading. So exquisitely beautiful was the place, that it was difficult to leave. Through the grace of the Lord, in an unaccountable way, excellent arrangements were made for my lodging.'

Swami: 'Once in a while one should go out and live the life of an itinerant monk, dependent solely on the Lord. That is how genuine resignation is acquired. Without this resignation to God, nothing can be accomplished. All the spiritual practices and disciplines have one aim, to develop resignation. He who seeks refuge at the feet of the Lord with undivided mind is fully taken care of and protected by Him. That is why in the Gita the Lord promises:

Those who worship Me and meditate upon Me without any other thought—to these ever steadfast devotees I carry what they lack and preserve what they have.

Gradually the conversation turned upon monasticism and the life of a monk. A newly initiated sanyasi said: 'Maharaj, please tell us the rules and codes that we should observe as monks. While conducting works of service it is not practicable to abide by the orthodox monastic rules and regulations mentioned in the *Paramahansa* and *Narayana Upanishads*. Last evening we had a discussion on this subject with Swami Suddhananda.'<sup>1</sup>

Swami: 'Yes, there are many monastic rules of the kind you mention, but since they are not meant for you, it is not necessary for you to observe them. You represent a differ-

ent type of monk, a combination of Karma Yogi and sanyasi. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) has left a new ideal for you. You are expected, in addition to your spiritual practice, dispassionately to carry on activities conducive to spirituality. Naturally it is not practicable for you to observe the rules of which you speak, literally. They are meant for sanyasis who do not believe in any activity other than exclusive contemplation, self-analysis, and discrimination. But you know, my child, if one is true in the essentials, the rest will take care of itself.'

Monk: 'Maharaj, what are the essentials?'

Swami: 'They are renunciation of lust and greed. If one can renounce lust of the flesh and greed for wealth everything will be all right. What counts is not the mere renunciation of external attachments; inner attachments must also be given up. Remember that at the time of your monastic vow you offered oblations in the sacred fire, symbolically making a holocaust of desires. At the base of all desires are lust and greed. Above everything else a monk should observe the vow of chastity and poverty. Be sincerely resigned to the Lord. He will give you all knowledge. In time everything will be revealed through His grace.'

Monk: 'But Maharaj, so long as the body lasts should one not have some desire for self-preservation?'

Swami: 'Yes, he should. The scriptures contain injunctions to that effect. In the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* there is a passage which says, "Realizing the Self and renouncing desires for progeny, wealth, and popularity, the knowers of Brahman take to the life of itinerant monks subsisting on alms". One can have that much desire as is absolutely necessary for self-preservation. Begging for alms should provide only bare necessities. Nowhere do the scriptures say that a monk should have sumptuous meals or live in luxury. The main object of self-preservation is to be able to call upon the Lord wholeheartedly and to do works in his service—that is all.

<sup>1</sup> A senior monk of the Order.



Monk : 'Well, Maharaj, is it possible for dualists to practise renunciation ?'

Swami : 'Why not ? Renunciation means doing away with the three foremost desires.

A devotee accepting the dualistic view renounces all desires except the desire for God. He alone is to be desired in life. The desire to realize Him is not really a desire at all.'

## SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINE—II

BY THE EDITOR

### I

There is a school of thought which holds that *vairagya* even in its merely negative aspect is superior to a life of mere worldliness. They ask : Even if we are not blessed with the vision of God, and true love for Him, is it not better to be free from the enslaving clutches of anger, greed, and lust ? It certainly seems a better course to continue struggling upwards rather than accept defeat; because one has failed to realize God, one need not, in a fit of despair, throw himself into the hands of Satan. Most people, however, think that, since realization of God is not sure or so easy, it is better to plunge into the pleasures of the world and make merry while life and youth last. Alas, how misguided we are ! As if drunkenness could ever be cured by greater addiction to drunkenness !

By a sincere practice of *vairagya* even in its negative aspect, the mind is turned back on itself, has to gradually fall back on its own resources, and at last attains the state of cessation of all desires, more and more peace, nirvana. This is the path followed by Buddhism, which does not require the conception of a personal God as necessary for the attainment of spiritual freedom. This is the path followed by the *jnanis* of the Vedantic school of thought, whose aim is also the formless and unmanifested nature of Reality.

### II

It is fashionable nowadays among politically-minded people and others en-

grossed with the concerns of only this life and this world to designate *vairagya* as but a method of 'escapism', a running away from the real problems of life, and trying to live in a world of make-believe. It has been criticized as akin to the method of the day-dreamer, the drunkard, and the opium-eater, who find in the oblivion of the outside world and the attendant pleasant dreams a suicidal substitute for escaping from the worries and difficulties of life into an intoxicated state of pleasant wish-fulfilment.

But this charge of 'escapism' against the advocates of *vairagya* is but a cheap gibe hurled at religion. It is the result of an imperfect study and understanding of the true nature of the aims and methods of religion. A seeker after religious truth is no more an 'escapist' than the professor in his study, or the scientist in his laboratory, or the artist in his studio. Nobody would call Einstein an 'escapist', and yet how far removed he is from the actual toils and turmoils of this world ! Similarly the withdrawing from the ordinary activities of the world by a spiritual aspirant is but a step of preparation, a retreat for gathering strength to overcome finally the sources of all grief and sorrow by gaining right knowledge which will lead to right action. To earn money, to marry and to beget—these do not form the dominating impulse or aim in the life of the spiritual aspirant. The unregenerate man runs after money and the enjoyments of the flesh like a wild beast after its prey. His instincts and passions are so strong that his brain is unable even to entertain the idea that there can be a



higher purpose in human life. To such people the man who refuses to wallow in the mire of sense-attachment, who refuses to be stampeded into following the actions of the herd may indeed seem an 'escapist', one who is not like themselves, but a strange creature who will not identify himself with the aims and methods of the masses, but wants to reach after something different. Psychically unable to comprehend that it is possible for a man to rise above the enslaving allurements of the senses, the protagonists of worldliness seek to dub the votaries of religious truth as extremely selfish, as men morbidly concerned with the salvation of their own souls, and dead to all the nobler instincts of sympathy and service of humanity. But sublimation of the instincts brings with it not degeneracy, as some of these learned critics would claim, but a higher birth; not a falling down into the hell of greater selfishness, but a rise into the unlimited and bright regions of self-ness; a loss of the personal idea of self, and an entrance into the higher realm of selflessness. By their fruits ye shall know them.' Wherever and whenever a person has been imbued with the true religious spirit, we always find, as a matter of objective experience, not a contraction of the self but an expansion of the self: not a retreat from the world's forbidding frowns, but a sharing with the world the sorrow-dispelling fruits of spiritual truth. Man lives not by bread alone.

### III

Is the charge of 'escapism' levelled against religion entirely without foundation, then? The answer is 'yes', if the charge is levelled against the true religious aspirant. But against a certain class of people this charge may be made with some degree of justice. These are the pseudo-religious misanthropes, who under the cloak of religion want to drag on a weary existence, because life has denied them their heart's desires. They take to religion, not because they have been satiated with the enjoyments of the world, but because they are unable to obtain in full

measure, or in any measure at all, the means for a full-blooded worldly life. Confronted by the terrifying responsibilities of their past unrestrained conduct, or burdened by a cruel fate with incapacities and troubles beyond their power of endurance, and unable to face these squarely like brave, patient, honest men, they cut the Gordian knot of all their troubles by taking shelter for the moment under a false *vairagya*. But such people are not really seekers after spiritual truth. They are like insolvents taking shelter under the Law of Insolvency. Like economic insolvents, these spiritual insolvents will go back to their old ways of life, once they have managed to secure a respite from their overwhelming cares and troubles. But critics of religion must be careful to sift the wheat from the chaff, if their remarks are to be just and fair.

### IV

Of all religions Hinduism has been the greatest opponent of 'escapism' of all kinds, economic, political, or religious. With a truly cosmic vision, it understands correctly the individual human being's place in the scheme of things, and urges on him a strenuous fulfilment of all his duties and responsibilities. The doctrines of the Law of Karma, and of Reincarnation indicate the futility of any attempt to escape the results of one's past actions except through intelligent and indefatigable efforts to nullify their effects by present actions. Personal responsibility for any action cannot be evaded by any means so long as the individual feels and knows he is the doer. The laws of the spiritual order of the world seem to be as rigorous as those of the physical, and even if a man seems to escape, apparently, the punishment for his evil deeds in this world, he is but postponing the day of reckoning. Such a philosophy gives but scant support for 'escapism', especially in the religious field. The Bhagavad Gita, one of the noblest religious scriptures of the world, is a long sermon, from beginning to end, against 'escapism'. Arjuna is exhorted to die fighting



like a warrior, and not to run away from the performance of his duties. We strongly recommend to all those who glibly talk of religious 'escapism' to study the Gita, and assimilate its teaching. Then they will learn that, while 'escapism' is bad enough, 'modernism' or the plunging headlong into an unrestricted orgy of titillation of the senses with war, women, and wine and all their concomitants is a greater danger to the future of human civilization,—a danger which right-minded men ought to join together to combat by all the forces in their control.

### V

*Vairagya* is a positive force. Patanjali's Yoga Sutra, I. 15, says: 'Non-attachment is the state of the mind in which one becomes conscious of one's power of control of the objects of enjoyment. This power comes as the effect of giving up the thirst for enjoying objects of the senses, either seen or heard.' It is the absence of the thirst for all enjoyments of this world or any other world, now or at any other time that leads to the power born of self-control. This develops in the individual a spiritual strength that automatically saves him in the path of spiritual progress. There are two forces called *avarani shakti* and *vikshepa shakti*, which lead to delusion and activity of all sorts, and obscure the clear vision of God. Individualized experience is the result of the interplay of these forces. These create the whole universe as it appears to the individual by making the Self somehow appear as identified with the non-self. As Shankara says in

a beautiful verse: Of the tree of *samsara* ignorance is the seed, the identification with the body is its sprout, attachment its tender leaves, work its water, the body its trunk, the vital forces its branches, the organs its twigs, the sense-objects its flowers, various miseries due to diverse works are its fruits, and the individual soul is the bird on it (*Vivekachudamani*, 145). This bondage of the non-self springs from the deluding or blinding force of *avarani shakti* which makes one identify himself with the various states of the *buddhi*. Then *vikshepa shakti* or the power that makes a man act, begins its work; his mind, by attachment to outside things, becomes filled with greed and lust, and then he begins drifting up and down in the boundless ocean of *samsara*, now sinking, now rising, in its bitter waters of sense enjoyment. *Vairagya* destroys the power of these fettering forces. To quote Swami Vivekananda, 'the worldly-minded teach us that the attainment of sense enjoyments is the highest ideal in life and in course of time that appears to us as a tremendous temptation. To deny one's self of such enjoyments and not allow the mind to come to wave forms with regard to them is renunciation. . . . Such waves of the mind should be controlled by me, and not I by them—this sort of mental strength is what is called renunciation or *vairagya* and that is the only way to freedom.' By *vairagya* the spiritual aspirant comes to know in the fullness of time that he is the Self,—pure, of the essence of everlasting unalloyed bliss, indwelling, supreme, effulgent. Then he realizes the truth of the scriptural saying 'That thou art'.

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It is by means of reason that one comes to the knowledge of truth; and by means of truth that he gets the peace of his mind; and it is the tranquillity of the mind that dispels the misery of men.

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—*Yogavasishtha*

# A BACKWARD GLANCE AT PRABUDDHA BHARATA'S FIFTY VOLUMES

BY ST. NIHAL SINGH

(Continued)

Women walked into the pages and out of them, as they do in the home and in life. With some of them—Sati, Savitri, and the like—I had been, I thought, almost as familiar as I was with my mother and sisters: but the sketches, after all only thumb-nail, added to my store of knowledge details that were as essential to my understanding of the ideality of these beings as they were to me ennobling.

There was more, however, to the notes, articles, and interviews pertaining to women—some from the pen of a woman, not of our blood but (what is even better) of our faith, of whom I shall speak. They drove home, at least to my mind, a fact, unpleasant—ugly. Measured by what we said of women and what we did to them and did not do for them, our degeneracy was abysmal. We excused ourselves by citing some dogma. It formed part, however, of some superstition that then passed as Hinduism. It was largely *puranic*—post-Buddhistic in origin.

The original Aryan, the pristinely pure, canon, had laid down the principle that 'a man cannot perform a religious action without a wife'.<sup>11</sup> As, however, Maharshi Dayananda Sarasvati had pointed out, a wife was these days considered so degraded as to be debarred from even touching 'the *Sakigram-Shila*'<sup>12</sup> adored as the Lord Shiva's veritable image.

To man, Vivekananda gave but 'one right' (mark the word) in woman's domain—to educate woman. The rest he left to her. 'Women must be put', he ordained, 'in a position to solve their own problems in their

own way'. This, he insisted, 'no one can or ought to do...for them'.<sup>13</sup>

This concept of Swami Vivekananda was new to most of my contemporaries. It remains, I fear, even now new: for few of us who delight in calling ourselves men, have yet caught up with a standard raised for us in 1898! It is to me, however, a pleasure to add that even half a century ago Vivekananda was convinced of the 'Indian women's' capacity to re-order their own lives and (I may add) by so doing, re-order ours.

Vivekananda carried the interviewer down a vast number of steps to the Rajarshi Janaka's court.<sup>14</sup> There sat the erudite Yajnavalkya. He is confronted by an orator, Gargi Vachaknavi—a *brahmacharini* (maiden)—*Brahmavadini* (a name in itself significant). 'Like two shining arrows in the hand of a skilled archer are', she exclaims, 'my questions'. (*Vide Brihad. Up. III. viii*).

As the Swami remarked: The questioner's (*Brahmavadini's*) '...sex is not even commented upon. Again, could anything be more complete than the equality of boys and girls in our old forest universities? Read our Sanskrit dramas—read the story of Shakuntala and see if Tennyson's "Princess" has anything to teach us.'<sup>15</sup>

Drawing upon his observations and experiences in the occident, the Teacher added:

...There is many a burden bound with legal tightness on the shoulders of Western women that is utterly unknown to ours. We have our wrongs—but so have they. We must never forget that all over the globe the general effort is to express love and tenderness and uprightness, and that national customs are only the nearest vehicles of this expression. With regard to the

<sup>11</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 66.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>14</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. III, No. 4, p. 66.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.



domestic virtues I have no hesitation in saying that our Indian methods have in many ways the advantage over all others.<sup>16</sup>

The Swami always insisted, in fact, that, morally, Indians were the most exalted among humans. To solve the problems that perplexed us, he would 'draw out' our women's faculties—not compel them to carry another load—the burden of words. By so doing he wished to give India once more '...great fearless women—women worthy to continue the traditions of Sangamita, Lila, Ahalya Bai, and Mira Bai. Women fit to be the mothers of heroes, because they are pure and selfless and strong, with the strength that comes of touching the feet of God.'<sup>17</sup>

He exhorted the women—as he did the men—to '...Believe in India and in our Indian faith. Be strong and hopeful and unashamed, and remember that with something to take, Hindus have immeasurably more to give than any other people in the world.'<sup>18</sup>

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The idealist could be intensely practical. Women, he knew, had to be protected from men—girls, even infants, from men with the beast roused in them. To persons who, in the name of religion, expected Vivekananda to range himself against the Act fixing 12 (only 12) as the 'age of consent', he remarked :

...The rulers passed the Age of Consent Bill prohibiting a man, under the threat of penalty, to live with a girl under twelve years, and at once all the so-called leaders of your religion raised a tremendous hue and cry against it, sounding the alarm, 'Alas, our religion is lost! As if religion consists in making a girl a mother at the age of twelve or thirteen! Our boys should no longer be burdened with the cares and anxieties of the family life before their body attains its full growth, and their mind is developed enough to take up the duties and responsibilities that are so often thoughtlessly thrust upon them at quite an early age.'<sup>19</sup>

Some years earlier he had rebuked a crowd in Madras in these words :

...I am asked again and again what I think of the widow problem, and what I think of the woman question.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* p. 67.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 67-68.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.* p. 69.

<sup>19</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, July 1922, Vol. XXVII, No. 312, p. 251.

Let me answer once and for all. Am I a widow that you ask me that nonsense? Am I a woman that you ask me the question again and again? Who are you to solve woman's problems? Are you the Lord God that you should rule every widow and every woman? Hands off! They will solve their own problems.<sup>20</sup>

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India did not yet have, Vivekananda frankly admitted, 'great women'. We, therefore, 'must borrow them from other nations'.

These words he penned at Almora on the 29th July 1897. They were addressed to an Irish woman—Miss Margaret Noble. At the time of his first visit to London she had been engaged in teaching. With intuitive sympathy that even then distinguished her, she had taken to the idea of bringing up children in a healthy, artistic atmosphere—in a 'child's garden' (kindergarten), as it was called. Children entrusted to her loving care took to her quickly. She could do anything with them.

While thus engaged, Margaret Noble went to hear the Swami speak in a Mayfair drawing-room. She found that he, too, was conducting a kindergarten—only his garden was for children who regarded themselves as grown-ups.

Within her Celtic breast—highly emotional for all the calm that often sat upon her brow—an impulse soon rose. Why should she not shift her being to that kindergarten? Dwelling in an exhilarating spiritual environment, why should she not help Indians with such experience as she had been enabled, by favourable circumstances, to acquire?

She was precisely the type the Swami wished to 'borrow'. She was 'a real lioness to work for Indians, women especially'. Her 'education, sincerity, purity, immense love, determination, and, above all, the Celtic blood' made her 'just the woman' helper India needed.

He would not have her come out to our motherland, however, under false pretences. So he told her of the difficulties. They were many. To give her an idea, he wrote :

...You cannot form any idea of the misery, the superstition, and the slavery that are here. You will

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.* p. 252.



be in the midst of a mass of half-naked men and women with quaint ideas of caste and isolation, shunning the white skin through fear or hatred and hated by them (? the whites) intensely. On the other hand, you will be looked upon by the white as a crank and every one of your movements will be watched with suspicion.

Then the climate is fearfully hot: our winter in most places being like your summer, and in the south it is always blazing.

Not one European comfort is to be had in places out of the cities.<sup>21</sup>

If, however, she would brave all this, he would 'stand' by her 'unto death whether after essaying the task she became disgusted and fell away, whether' she worked 'for India or not, whether' she 'gave up Vedanta or remained true to it'.

Margaret Noble came out to India. She stayed here. She entered the Ramakrishna Order. In token of her dedicating her all to India, the Swami called her Nivedita—the Dedicated One.

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Sister Nivedita's coming was to the *Prabuddha Bharata* a gain of inestimable value. In its pages appeared reports of the important lectures she delivered, also her impressions of the Master's work in London, descriptions of her pilgrimages to such sacred places as Amarnath, Kedarnath, and Badri Narayan; notes about Vivekananda's tours; and studies of India and Indians.

These were the delight of my young life. Her quick, nervous deft dabs, vivid in colouration, against a background solid with the shining guinea-gold of a warm-hearted convert's devotion to our culture, captivated me. In my college days and even after, I would quickly leaf through a new issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. When I arrived at something from her pen in it, I would halt in that operation and avidly devour the pages.

One of the earliest pieces I read was headed 'Chicago Notes.'<sup>22</sup> I hardly dreamt that in half a dozen years I would be wandering through the streets and stockyards of

that city, attending conventions, meeting sleuths and statesmen, and discussing 'Monism' with Paul Carus, a scholar of central European origin devoted to the *Advaita* philosophy. I never forgot, even in those moments of ready journalistic triumph, that this Irish disciple of Swami Vivekananda had written of liberty as she had found it in Chicago in these terms:

'Indeed this principle has long ago ceased to be a social conception only in this country. It has soaked down, now, into the national and individual consciousness, as an ethical, spiritual truth'.<sup>23</sup>

When would I be able to write of India in similar terms? I asked myself that question then. I do so now—45 years later.

Nivedita had written of Hull House, Chicago:

...this is a social settlement. Let me describe it first. Hull House must once have been the home of a wealthy merchant, comfort and beauty have both been considered in the building of the oldest part of it; to-day it stands in the heart of Chicago slums, and this old dwelling is now only the central feature of a mass of buildings which include a lecture hall, a gymnasium, a workshop, a concert-room, a school, and a host of other things. There is a nursery, too, where mothers going out to a day's work may leave their babies, and near by is the home for working women of which I spoke before, while last but not least is an excellent coffee house, or restaurant, where good and well-cooked food may be had at the lowest prices, most attractively served. And all the clubs and classes and manifold activities are served by some twenty men and women who make their home in the central building.<sup>24</sup>

Why could we not have such institutions in India, too? So I asked. One of the articles I contributed to an Indian review while sojourning in Chicago related to this theme.<sup>25</sup>

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Some of the notes that Nivedita penned in the pages of the *Prabuddha Bharata* pained me. From these it was clear that the giant was breaking down. The Master went on teaching and organizing: but he was ailing, much of the time, seriously ill, in fact.

There was one item, taken from the *Hindu* (Madras), with which paper I was soon to

<sup>21</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, May 1922, Vol. XXVII, No. 310, p. 181.

<sup>22</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1900, Vol. V, No. 43, pp. 25-27.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.* p. 26.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.* March 1900, pp. 41-42.

<sup>25</sup> *The Modern Review* (Allahabad, now Calcutta), May 1910, pp. 446-457.



be intimately associated for years, that roused in me resentment. In fast failing health, Vivekananda proceeded abroad from Calcutta, where bubonic plague had recently broken out in a virulent epidemic form. As his ship—*Golconda*—touched Madras, he saw the pier

....crowded with an eager throng of spectators anxious to see Swami Vivekananda.... But to their great disappointment they were told that the vessel having arrived from Calcutta, an infected port, was under quarantine, and that the Swami would not be allowed to land. The numerous people who had gathered together, of all ranks and ages, had, therefore, to go away considerably vexed.

Some there were who were determined to have a glimpse at least of the Swami, and with that view they went in boats alongside the vessel, from whose deck the Swami was accorded a distant but cheerful welcome by his friends and admirers. Some days ago a meeting was held at Castle Kernan under the presidency of the Hon'ble Mr. P. Ananda Charlu, when it was resolved to address Government praying that Swami Vivekananda be permitted to land at Madras and stop there for a few hours before embarking again. Message after message was despatched to the Blue Heights, but the Swami's friends and admirers got some vague replies, but no sanction was wired to the Port Health Officer and the result was that the Health Officer would not allow him to land....

It is said, however, that the Captain of the vessel was permitted to come ashore, and that he was seen in various parts of the city. If this is true, I would like to know if the Captain had undergone any singular process of immunization from infecting other people. It is hoped that Government would call for a report from the Port Surgeon as to why the Captain was allowed to go about the town and under whose authority,<sup>26</sup>

while the Swami was denied the like privilege.

A little while prior to his being made the victim of such bare-faced invidiousness, Vivekananda had blessed plans for inaugurating 'Plague Service' in Calcutta. The Swami Sadananda, detailed to organize it, had the active assistance of the Swamis Shivananda, Nityananda, and Atmananda.

Vivekananda had himself addressed a body of students, urging them in words that visibly stirred them, to engage in social service. Some fifteen students actually formed themselves into a small band of helpers for door-to-door visitation of huts in selected *bustees* (settlements). They dis-

tributed sanitary literature and gave quiet words of advice and counsel.

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This was but one of the noble endeavours of which the *Prabuddha Bharata* brought us tidings. It told us, for instance, that a *Seva-shrama* had been started at Kankhal (now comprised within the Hardwar municipal area) in July 1901.<sup>27</sup> A little later a similar institution began its work of mercy at Benares.<sup>28</sup>

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There was news, too, of developments not directly connected with the Mission. The Central Hindu College that had opened its doors in Benares in the autumn of 1899, was hailed as a symbol as well as a vehicle of regeneration. Mrs. (later Dr.) Annie Besant, responsible for its foundation, belonged to the organization which would have been *anathema maranatha* to Vivekananda had he been small-minded. Had not its President (Colonel Olcott) cold-shouldered the Swami and even denounced him as a charlatan? *The Prabuddha Bharata*, however, declared:

....We regard the institution as epoch-making, destined to produce manifold benefits, educational, social, and religious.

....The Central Hindu College scheme should be regarded as epoch-making from three points of view. Firstly, educational. It will supply a want which is more and more being felt in the present system of education, namely the absence of any provision for imparting religious instruction....

....The Central Hindu College professes to teach to the highest standard attainable in any Indian university, nay, to reproduce some of the best features of English universities in the matter of endowments for scholarships, fellowships, etc....there can be no denying that, even if it be not a panacea for all the maladies of the present system of education, through it a means will be found to make the ethical ideas of Hinduism mould the life of the coming generation of Hindus and thus make them doubly better....The anomaly of Hindu students studying in mission colleges whose avowed and prime object, with some honourable exceptions, is the conversion of the *heathen*, must be put an end to....Any institution which professes to be anything like national is bound to become what may be called, for want of a better expression, a great social *idea*. Believing as we do that the present Revival of Hinduism is highly conducive to national progress in all its forms and that religious and social reforms rightly viewed, have identical

<sup>26</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, Vol. IV, No. 37, August 1899, p. 128.

<sup>27</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, October 1901, Vol. VI, No. 63, p. 177.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* June 1901, Vol. VI, No. 59, p. 97.



objects to work for and identical results to achieve, we sanguinely hope that the Central Hindu College scheme, if it attains to its fruition, will give new vitality to Hinduism and will be a landmark in the history of the Hindus in the latter part of the nineteenth century...<sup>29</sup>

Young Indians who had earned, through sheer merit, scholarships for study abroad, found encouraging mention in *Prabuddha Bharata*. One of these was Balak Ram, who distinguished himself at the Indian Civil Service examination of his year, then exclusively held in London. He was said to have married an alien: but the rumour proved untrue to the editor's delight.

Another Indian awarded a scholarship was C. (Now Sir) Ramalinga Reddy, from North Arcot. After a brilliant record at Cambridge, he engaged in educational work in Mysore, later entered politics, and has, for years, been running the Andhra University from Madras.

The scholarships founded by Nusserwanjee Jamsetjee Tata, the patriotic Parsee who ushered in the industrial age, were highly commended. Anent this great scheme for creating Indians capable of carrying on scientific research, the magazine had to say:

We are not aware if any project at once so opportune and so far-reaching in its beneficent effects was ever mooted in India, as that of the Post-Graduate Research University of Mr. Tata....

If India is to live and prosper and if there is to be an Indian nation which will have its place in the ranks of the great nations of the world, the food question must be solved first of all. And in these days of keen competition it can only be solved by letting the light of modern science penetrate every pore of the two giant feeders of mankind—Agriculture and Commerce.

The ancient methods of doing things can no longer hold their own against the daily multiplying cunning devices of the modern man. He that will not exercise his brain to get the most out of Nature by the least possible expenditure of energy, must go to the wall, degenerate and reach extinction. There is no escape...<sup>30</sup>

Vivekananda's was, indeed, a far-seeing eye! He had grasped the nation's fundamental needs half a century ago.

William T. Stead, who was soon to take me under his powerful editorial wing, was described as striving to have the benefit of the Rhodes Scholarships extended to India. The *Prabuddha Bharata* gave William Digby,

a true friend of India and himself a great journalist, the credit for passing this information on to Indians.

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The magazine directed attention to linguistic, literary, and journalistic movements in the motherland. Here are few items:

The Olcott Press at Saugor (Central India) had begun publishing a Hindi monthly—*Prabhat*—devoted to the Hindu religion which, it was noted, might be expected to bring 'light to those for whom it has been started'.

Shrimati Hemanta Kumari Chowdhury had, it was noted, succeeded Shrimati Vanalata Devi as editor of *Antahpur*, a Bengali monthly conducted solely by ladies. Now she, fast travelling towards 80, lives near me and calls me brother.

Journals conducted in Indian languages had great value in our eyes because of the homily that had appeared in the January 1899 issue of the *Prabuddha Bharata*. It pointed to the relationship existing between vernaculars and nationality. Reviewing two books by C. Swaminatha Aiyar—*Vernacular Studies in Madras* and *The Encouragement of Vernaculars*, the reviewer wrote:

...The language of a nation represents the entire past of that nation—embodies in itself the impulses and forces, political, social, intellectual, moral, etc., which have acted upon it through the ages. It is, in a word, the product of a process of evolution, a process of conflict, a process of adaptation which leaves its mark upon the finished product of a growing, living language, with all the peculiarities of sound and diction. So that it only requires to be mentioned to be accepted on all hands, that both physiologically and psychologically it is far more natural and therefore easier for a child to learn his mother tongue, to acquire the rudiments of knowledge and develop its powers of thought and speech through that language than any other.<sup>31</sup>

How tardy are the framers and administrators of our educational policy! Even today this ideal remains largely an ideal.

Not that journals conducted by Indians in English were forgotten. There was, for instance, the *Indian Ladies Magazine*, edited by Mrs. Kamala Sathianadhan, M.A., from

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* September 1899, Vol. IV, No. 38, pp. 139-141.

<sup>30</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, April 1899, Vol. IV, No. 33, p. 60.

<sup>31</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, January 1899, Vol. IV, No. 30, p. 13.



Madras. This publication came in for its meed of praise. 'Judging from the contents of the last ten months (for it is not any older)', the editor wrote, 'we have no hesitation in saying that it is one of our best monthlies. The chief contributors are ladies, Eastern and Western. Illustrations, mostly of women, short, original poems and stories, interesting news and notes, studies of ideal women, and papers on general education form its standard bill of fare. Its pages are replete with much that is thoughtful and valuable.'<sup>32</sup>

The reviewer waxed almost lyrical over the record achieved by the *Indian Review* (Madras), edited by Mr. G. A. Natesan who soon became my friend. He remarked :

...We are now extremely happy to be able to say that Mr. Natesan's paper has proved by the first year of its existence, that a first class monthly in India conducted solely by Indians, is not an impossibility. This magazine marks an epoch in the history of journalism in our country.<sup>33</sup>

Of the scholarly works commended, I must refer to the Pandit (Later Sir) Ganganath Jha's *Upanishads*, Vol. IV—*Chhandogya*. The magazine declared :

...We have...little doubt that Mr. Jha's labours in the field of translating the *Upanishads* will be productive of immense good both at home and abroad'.<sup>34</sup>

There was a Bengali wizard—Professor (Later Sir) Jagadish Chandra Bose. He had scientific attainments that even his rivals in Europe were forced to respect. He had come to the conclusion that 'the underlying phenomena of life are the same in both animals and plants'. He had constructed delicate machines for registering responses. With these he had lectured at the Linnean Society and a report of his discourse had been published in *Nature*. '...with the aid of his assistants a series of interesting experiments had been carried out. These showed "electric response for certain portions of the plant organism".' From these it was clear that 'in respect of fatigue, behaviour at high and low temperature and the effects produced by

poisons and anæsthetics, the responses' were 'identical with those hitherto held to be characteristic of muscle and nerve...'<sup>35</sup>

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There appeared, too, sayings and poems that whipped up zeal in one cause or another. William Penn, the Quaker founder of Pennsylvania, where my good lady's ancestors first settled upon emigrating from Suffolk (England), had, for instance, said :

'I abhor two principles in religion, and pity those who use them—the first is obedience to authority without conviction, the other is persecuting those who differ from us for God's sake. Such a religion is without judgment, though not without teeth.'<sup>36</sup>

Ella Wheeler Wilcox, who told me soon after my arrival in the States that she had sat at the great Vivekananda's feet, had written :

Whoever is begotten by pure love,  
And comes desired and welcome into life,  
Is of immaculate conception. He  
Whose heart is filled with tenderness and truth,  
Who loves mankind more than he loves himself,  
Who cannot find room in his heart for hate,  
May be another Christ. We all may be  
The Saviours of the world, if we believe  
In the divinity which dwells within us,  
And worship it, and nail our grosser selves,  
Our tempers, greeds, and our unworthy aims,  
Upon the cross. Who giveth love to all,  
Pays kindness for unkindness, smiles for frowns,  
Lends new courage to each fainting heart,  
And strengthens hope, and scatters joy abroad,  
He, too, is a Redeemer, Son of God.<sup>37</sup>

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One day—to me the saddest day that far in my life—the news came that the great heart from which had issued the energy, a particle of which went into the making of the *Prabuddha Bharata*, had ceased to beat. The Swami Vivekananda had departed from the field of his earthly endeavours. 'This happened in the Math he had built alongside the Ganges (Hooghly to Europeans and europeanized Indians) at Belur, then just outside Calcutta. It is now a part of the city and serves as the nerve-centre of the Ramakrishna Mission, while the culture power-

<sup>32</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, June 1902, Vol. VII, No. 71, p. 107.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.* February 1901, Vol. VI, No. 55, p. 29.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.* April 1900, Vol. V, No. 45, p. 62.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.* June 1902, Vol. VII, No. 71, p. 109.

<sup>36</sup> *Prabuddha Bharata*, February 1900, Vol. V, No. 43, p. 17.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.* January 1899, Vol. IV, No. 30, p. 3.



house remains in the Almora Himalya—at Mayavati.

The issue for July 1902, gave a brief account of the Swami's last hours. According to it :

Our beloved Swamiji entered *Maha Samadhi* on Friday night, the 4th of July, at the Math, Belur. On that morning he meditated for more than two hours. During the day he held a class on Panini Grammar for about three hours, and remarked how much better he was feeling. In the afternoon he took a short walk. In the evening he went to his own room ; a Brahmacharin was in attendance. He took his beads and did *japam* and directed the Brahmacharin to sit outside and do likewise. About 45 minutes later he called the Brahmacharin in and asked him to fan his head and then went to sleep. At about nine he gave a sudden start and then drew two long breaths. The Brahmacharin, unable to understand what the matter was, immediately called an aged Sannyasin, who, on coming, felt for his pulse but found it stopped.

At first it was taken to be a *Samadhi* and a brother

repeated the name of the Master (Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa) in his ear. Seeing no sign of return of life, however, a doctor was called in who tried to induce breath artificially, but without success. The next day Swamiji's body was cremated under a *Bel* tree standing on the brink of the Ganges, in the Math grounds.

In the issues of the magazine that followed, there were pages and pages of obituary notices. From every corner of the motherland and from abroad poured forth tributes to India's Awakener.

As I read these at the time I wondered if the great heart had actually stopped beating. How could it do so while the beat of that great heart could be felt through the pages of the *Prabuddha Bharata* ?

I have kept on asking this question. Never have I been in doubt as to the answer.

(*To be continued*)

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## ONE ASPECT OF POST-WAR RECONSTRUCTION

BY SWAMI LOKESWARANANDA

So at last the war is over and the curtain is rung down on that grim drama of death and destruction that was being enacted all these years, and what a relief it is ! The world is thankful that the catastrophe has ceased and once again there is peace and it is possible for men and women to go about their business with a light heart and without the thoughts of the war weighing on their minds. But the end of war does not exactly mean rest and relaxation, for, there are so many other problems facing the world—the problem of occupied Germany and Japan, the problem of inter-Allied relations, and over all towers the problem of reconstruction. This has been the costliest war imaginable and it has caused such a dreadful drain on our resources and the task of reconstruction is going to be far more formidable than any ever tackled. But this need not cause despair, for man is now much more clever than ever before and

whatever may be the magnitude of the task on hand, with his scientific knowledge and experience of life he can accomplish it and of course this task of reconstruction he is going to accomplish by all means. Progressive countries are already at it, for there are no demands of war now and they are now able to divert most of their time and effort towards tackling post-war problems and they are busy drawing up plans and are even carrying them out where possible. Russia, they say, has already launched forth on her reconstruction program and her factories and workshops are humming day and night turning out goods according to her peace-time needs. Other countries also will follow suit as soon as their hands are free and they can get going. Some countries are very ambitious and they intend to produce not only enough things they want but more, so that they can compete in foreign markets and recover lost trade and open



new channels of expansion, if possible. In short, all countries are determined that they will reconstruct life on a sounder basis and they will increase their wealth and prosperity and will have everything more than they ever had.

So far it is very good and one wishes nothing but god-speed to all their plans and ambitions. But is it all to rebuild industries, to recover lost trade, and to increase material prosperity and comforts? Does reconstruction mean nothing but repairing the damages that the war has caused to our material life? Must it be confined to our material life only? What about the unseen but colossal damage that the war has wrought to our moral and spiritual life? Has not the war drained us of our spiritual wealth as it has of our material possessions? Are we not very much the poorer spiritually as materially because of the war? And shall we do nothing to regain our lost spiritual wealth, to rehabilitate our much mutilated spiritual life and so to reinforce it that it may be safe against any onslaughts that may be made on it again? Is it not true that these periodical outbursts of brutal passions which engage us in mutual slaughter are essentially a spiritual problem? Can we ever hope to stop this folly unless we are able to improve our inner nature, to subjugate our passions which blind us to all our moral and spiritual obligations, and are able to govern ourselves strictly in accordance with the principles of religion? In order to promote peace and understanding in the world is it not necessary that we learn, individually as well as collectively, to overcome selfishness and jealousy and greed and accept a view of life in which differences of race and colour and creed boil down to one basic unity such as religious ideals visualize?

But the question may be asked: How does war affect us spiritually at all? The damage it causes us materially is obvious but not so the alleged spiritual damage. True, but if we look closely and if we think hard a bit, it will be crystal clear and we will be aghast at the enormity of it. What happens to a man when he lets go all restraint and

surrenders himself completely to his passions? Is it not the immediate result that his power of restraint weakens and he becomes more and more prone to orgies of passions? And if he goes on always giving in to his passions, does he not eventually become lost to all moral appeals and descend to a level in which he is hardly better than a brute—all his spiritual virtues shrunk and deadened and passions running riot? To give an illustration, all normal men respect life; they do not think of committing a murder unless they are thrown off their balance and passions take complete hold of them. But once they do commit a murder, life has ceased to be sacred to them and they are ready to commit the next murder at a much less provocation and with much less compunction. And gradually they are so hardened that taking life becomes a child's play to them and they enjoy it and even find it hard to resist.

Take the case of the soldier. He kills because it is his duty and because it is sanctioned by law. But that does not mean he completely escapes the psychological change that accompanies such action. When he has his first victim of the enemy, he is profoundly shocked and for days together he is sick and the sight of blood and the dead haunts him. But when he kills next time, it is not so much upsetting and he is not much troubled in mind. And as he kills more and more, as he must it being his duty, he finds it is not only easy but even pleasant and perhaps he smiles at himself that at one time he used to dread the act so much. The change that occurs in him is obvious and of course it is most profoundly detrimental to the moral foundations of his character. It may be argued that whatever he may do as a soldier, his fundamental attitude towards his fellow men does not change and when he returns to civilian life, he will be his old self again. It is absurd to talk like this, for his experiences in the battle-field—the horrors of death and mutilation, brutalities and man's incredible callousness to them, inhuman suffering and hardship, are bound to harden him and his sense of moral values will suffer a complete transfor-



mation and he can by no means be the same man again. He will return from the war the ghost of his old self, maimed in spirit, if not in body too, and it is impossible for him to fall back into the old ruts of life again. He will have new tastes, new habits and new ideas and he will have formed a new code of life, and life itself may have changed its meaning to him. He will be a misfit in his old environments and he will find people around him do not understand him as he does not understand them and even his wife and children have moved away from him. And he will find the whole atmosphere around him most hostile and suffocating, for he cannot act as he would like to and there is too much restraint and too much insistence on manners and habits which to him are most silly and meaningless, and perhaps in his heart he will long for a return of the conditions of war.

This is most tragic, but this happens almost to everybody who goes through the dreadful experiences peculiar to present-day war, and this happens, because spiritually he is all but killed, because his higher nature which distinguishes him from the brute is deliberately suppressed, almost annihilated, and he is rendered into an instrument of death, of all forms of coldblooded brutality.

But in this war not only a few million soldiers are undergoing this kind of change but almost the whole human race. It is not only they who actually fight that have their higher nature suppressed but also those who stay back at home. For in every sense this is a total war and it involves the civilians as much as the soldiers. Every one has to take a share in it in some form or other and even women and children are not exempted. In every heart there is anger and hatred and an anxiety to kill and to destroy everything of the enemy that hands can lay on, and psychologically, therefore, the reaction is the same in the civilian as well as in the soldier. Passions are worked up to the highest pitch and the propaganda machinery of the state sees to it that they never cool off. If necessary, false stories of enemy atrocities are cooked up and facts are distorted and figures are

exaggerated. And whatever cruel measures the government may take against the enemy, as a loyal citizen you must support them, and even if they appear to you contradictory to all canons of humanity, you must pretend they are not and even law and religion may be invoked to sanction them. No matter what brutalities your country's forces perpetrate, you must acquiesce in them and pretend that they are right and justified. The whole atmosphere is so charged with all the animal passions that even the things most obviously wrong and wicked pass as good and decent and the social conscience is stifled and reason and good sense completely disappear. The soldier and the civilian alike suffer high tension and their nerves are always on an edge and they become completely incapable of restraint in anything. Old values change and old standards and codes of conduct are thrown to the winds and there is a complete break-down of all moral safe-guards. People become, with rare exceptions, selfish and irresponsible and they behave as they like—in the most insensible and irrational way. And they become reckless and frivolous and there is nothing they will not be prepared to do to suit a moment's fancy. And the worst part of it all is that this state of affairs is condoned and encouraged. The stock argument of course is that there is a war on and it has to be kept going and it will not do therefore to let people bother too much about morals, about what is right and wrong. It is, on the contrary, necessary that they should be kept so preoccupied with the pursuit of the war and the manifold duties it entails, that they would have no time to be troubled by qualms of conscience. But it is not recognized that this lowering of standards, this abolition of values, leaves a permanent wound on society and it does not heal up all at once, for these values, these standards society has evolved through centuries of experience and once they are destroyed, they cannot be restored overnight.

Indeed the spiritual loss that man suffers through war is terrible, most alarming. It is, in fact, more alarming than any loss that man



may suffer materially. It is true that the present war has taken a staggering toll of man's material possessions and it can be estimated only in terms of billions and billions of sterlings. But however great the loss, it can be and will be made good in, say, two generations, given wise planning and a cautious and smooth direction of affairs. This, however, cannot be said of spiritual loss, for man's progress on the spiritual plane is very slow and it involves more time, more effort, more attention. And what is worse is that the fact of the spiritual loss due to war is not appreciated by those who have the direction of affairs in their hands and nothing is therefore done to repair it. That man has a spiritual side and it is by far the most important side is seldom recognized and even if recognized, problems relating to it are never properly grasped and tackled, for man's tendency is to be occupied with what is obvious and spiritual problems are never very obvious. The result is we neglect them and our spiritual progress remains arrested after each war and we are confronted with more and more problems and in spite of our desperate efforts to get away from war and violence we never get away from them.

After the horrors of World War I there was a universal anxiety shared alike by the victor as well as the vanquished that there should be no more war, and all safe-guards were taken to prevent recurrence of the mad folly that is war. But in spite of all they did there has been another war on us sooner than anybody ever expected and it has been by far the grimest war man has ever fought. And it was there, chiefly because we lacked that spiritual vision, those higher qualities of reasoning and understanding and toleration that alone could assure cessation of war once for all and that could make it appear so stupid and absurd that clash of arms as a means of settling quarrels would be altogether ruled out from the civilized code of human conduct. After the ordeal of the last war we expressed great abhorrence of war and professed high ideals and talked of self-determination and international co-operation and it seemed as if we would never

go to war again, but when the question arose and the moment came to decide, inevitably we chose the path of war. And how could we help it? The temptation was too great and we could not possibly resist it, for resistance in the face of great provocation is possible where there is great spiritual strength—a thing to which we have always been strangers, particularly after the last war. We could perhaps have escaped war then, if we had an abundance of spiritual qualities, but the last war had denuded us of them and it was impossible for us to act in a way other than we did. The degree to which we had been impoverished in our spiritual qualities by World War I is fully reflected in our activities during the period immediately following the war. In everything we did then and in every sphere of life, we exhibited a singular lack of common sense and discrimination, and we were up for anything that was cheap and vulgar and we cared only for the sensational. In arts and literature, in political ideology and social movements—everywhere, we showed a callous disregard for the abiding values of life, a complete and tragically stupid negation of the time-honoured traditions. A Hitler and a Mussolini and all they imply are possible only in a society such as was ours and they are symbols of the depths to which we had descended in our spiritual degradation.

It is clear, therefore, that if we are to secure peace and if we are to build up a better world—a world in which relations between class and class, between race and race, between country and country, will be happier and more friendly, we must then improve our spiritual nature, must so augment our spiritual qualities that we are never carried away by our passions and our judgement is never clouded and we are always motivated by reason and all that is best in us. It is not conceivable, at least as the world is constituted now, that clash of interests between one nation and another shall ever be completely eliminated, but this at least can be guaranteed, given of course enough good sense in the nations concerned, that such a clash shall not lead to war and violence. There can never



be any decent and fair settlement of a quarrel through brute force. Such a settlement can be reached, if at all, through appeal to the higher nature of man. In the past any two men who had a quarrel to settle between themselves would fight a duel. And often they would accept the result of the duel as the verdict of justice. Resort to war as a means of deciding on which side lies justice is a similar example of crudely perverse human logic. Victory and justice are not necessarily found at the same place. They may be as far apart as day from night. The idea of maintaining peace through armed force is at best a negative idea. It is like flogging a schoolboy or threatening him with it in order to teach him to behave. If nations are to be prevented from committing acts of violence and aggression, the best method to be adopted is to convince them of the utter stupidity of such a thing, to make them see that it is a disgraceful breach of the code of decent and civilized behaviour, a sin against God as well as man, and that judging by the long-term result it never pays. The remedy must be applied to the root of the disease, otherwise there is every risk it will recur again and again as opportunities present themselves. All our problems, individual or communal, have their origin in the forces within ourselves, and unless we direct our attention to them and set about controlling them and using them for better and higher purposes of life, no extraneous measures, however perfect and ingenious, will be sufficient to solve those problems. The mistake that has been committed again and again in our attempts to reform the world is that we have concerned ourselves far too much with external things and far too little with our own minds. A perfect world with a corrupt man is certainly not the solution; much better than that is a perfect man in a corrupt world. The best solution is of course that both man and the world should be perfect. But while it is doubtful if the world will ever be perfect, it is possible—and it is a matter of experience too—that, if not the whole race of man and all at the same time, an ever increasing

number of individuals can be made to progress rapidly towards perfection. And if this happy result can be brought about, three-fourths of our problems will then have been solved. The task before us, therefore, is to work for this result. We have spent enough money and time trying to improve the world, with results none too satisfying to us. Let us now try to improve ourselves a bit.

But how can we improve ourselves? The answer is: By education and by the practice of the basic principles of religion. The scheme certainly sounds very trite and one imagines this will provoke a smile of amused incredulity on many faces, for although many will be willing to admit some slight importance of education in this matter, they will definitely refuse to recognize that religion has anything to do with it. But whatever that may be, no scheme purporting to reform man can be considered adequate and sensible, which does not include both education and religion, which does not, on one hand, so educate man that his mind is liberated from the narrow and stupid prejudices of race and country, and, on the other, make him so deeply inspired by religious spirit that under all circumstances his reaction is nothing but that of tolerance and sympathy and goodwill. It is impossible to deny that education and religion are the most potent factors in our life and we are largely as they shape us. Given a sound and liberal education and a deeply religious outlook, man's chances of success in his struggle against greed and anger and hatred and other elemental characteristics of man are increased, and unless a majority of us have succeeded in this struggle, conflicts shall not cease in the world and there shall not be peace and happiness. At present education serves no other purpose than that it produces intellectual arrogance and racial pride and jealousy, and religion does nothing more than to make man bigoted and self-sufficient; they do not help to bring people together and to make them conscious of their common ties and common heritage. Instead, they accentuate their differences and teach them to hate and distrust one another. The sad state of affairs



to which the world has come now is largely due to wrong education and wrong religion. Nazi Germany is the creation of an education in which the dominant notes are pride and ambition and her ally Japan is the creation of a religion in which king takes the place of God and service to him is the ruling passion of the heart. If these two countries are to be kept from going to war in future, they have to be taught the right sort of religion and the right sort of education, and that of course applies to other countries as well. In fact, in every country religion and education have to be so organized that service to and sacrifice for fellow men may become the common rule of life and each man and woman in society naturally and easily accepts the higher values of life. We have to build up a society in which any act of violence, any act prompted by the sordid desire of personal aggrandizement will be abhorred and men and women will learn to love one another and feel that they are essentially one and that they are responsible for one another's happiness. It must not be thought that this is an impossible ideal. This is possible and must be achieved. It is called realism to be pessimistic about man. No mistake has cost man more dearly than this. The assumption that man is essentially wicked and is not capable of much improvement is wrong and sinful. With emphasis on right things man can be improved almost to any extent. Russia has demonstrated this. There man has been taught to think more of the community than of his self. This is a tremendous achievement. More shall be achieved if Russia continues to give her people the right sort of education—and if religion, true religion, of course, is added to it. It must be understood that religion cannot be excluded, for religion alone gives man all the higher impulses of life and it is a discipline which draws out the best in him. We have enough good ideas and enough good intentions, but they never lead us anywhere, for we do not know how to work them out and it is religion which shows us the way. Religion alone enables us to train our feelings and our

emotions, our reason and our judgement, and to so direct them that they may help us forward and not hinder us, as they do now, in our attempt to do what is right and best for us and the community. Let us by all means try and be better men and women, and that is the only way we can save the world and, incidentally, ourselves too. It is a fatal mistake to think that we can save the world by perfecting our systems and our administrative machines, for however good they may be, they cannot function as they are expected to and they are bound to break down after a while, unless we ourselves are good and are ready to work them true to their spirit. The failure of the League of Nations points to that. In spite of all good intentions and soundness of organization it did not succeed, because we ourselves were not ready to act up to the high ideals it embodied and to make the sacrifices that its success demanded. This will be the fate of any other machinery we may set up for safe-guarding international peace and justice, for although we mean well and do really want to see the end of war and violence from the earth, we are not prepared to display that amount of magnanimity and disinterestedness and that sense of fair play essential for all international differences to be composed amicably. What the proposed peace machinery is going to be at the best is that it will be a body which being dominated by the Big Powers as it must be, will so function that the smaller powers will have no effective voice in any matter and they will always be bullied and coerced and forced to do things which they would not do of themselves and which are perhaps contrary to their own interests. This will mean that there will be no real justice but only a mockery of it and that there will be peace so long as it suits the Big Powers. And as long as the Big Powers are able to pull their weight together, this arrangement will work very well, but if they fall out as they are bound to seeing how wrong their basic outlook is, the whole thing will fall to pieces as did the League of Nations, and the world will once again be plunged into a deadly



war. Democracy is a good ideal and so is also communism, but experience has shown that, however good they themselves may be, they do not succeed unless people who accept these ideals are fully aware of their implications and are ready to act up to them. And acting up to them means much more than simply being educated in the doctrines of these particular brands of political philosophy. It means, among other things, a tremendous amount of goodness of character, of integrity, of sense of responsibility, of the spirit of service and sacrifice, of forbearance and goodwill towards others, and, above all, of incorruptibility. But this goodness of character does not come all of a sudden. It has to be acquired and it can be acquired only through intensive education and through the intensive practice of religion.

It is a pity that leaders of nations do not grasp this. They are content with planning for national prosperity and international peace, but they do not realize that their plans

will remain inadequate and have no chance of succeeding unless they include in their plans steps which will improve man's moral and spiritual nature. As it is urgent that the material loss sustained by man in course of the war is repaired, so also is urgent, and perhaps more so, that the spiritual and moral loss man has suffered because of the war is made good. That there has been an enormous decline of man, morally and spiritually, is patent enough and it will be a grievous omission if nothing is done to secure man's improvement in these directions. The point has come in man's material progress when he is dangerously near the brink of self-annihilation and the only way he can save himself is to raise a spiritual bulwark, and on this task, therefore, men responsible for post-war reconstruction must concentrate themselves if they are going to avoid the catastrophe that threatens mankind as well as the world now.

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## THE DANCE-DRAMA OF KERALA

BY L. K. BALA RATNAM

If the cultural standing of a country is to be gauged by the glory of her arts, then Kerala surely stands on a unique pedestal. The country is very intriguing indeed, especially to students of art and anthropology. Here you find quaint customs, strange usages, singular social laws, differing from those of the rest of India. Here you meet also some of the oldest dance and dramatic arts of India—the *Kathakali*, *Thullal*, *Chakyar Koothu*, *Koodiyattam*, *Kaikottikali*, etc. which speak greatly of the aesthetic culture and the emotional faculties of our ancients.

Among the many popular and interesting entertainments, evolved by Kerala's indigenous theatre, and provided for the spectators during the *utsavams* in temples, is the *Thullal*, which belongs to the realm of story-telling.

It is more delightful and pleasing to the people than the rather slow-moving and ponderous *Koothu* of the Chakyar. The credit of its invention goes to Kunjan Nambiar, one of the greatest of Malayalam poets, who lived in the first half of the eighteenth century. Performed during day-time, unlike *Koodiyattam* and *Kathakali* which are performed at night, there is only one actor in a *Thullal* play. The actor wears a simple costume consisting of a frilled skirt, some arm and chest decorations. His face is painted and he wears a head-dress. He is assisted by a songster who plays on a musical instrument known as *maddalam* and a follower who keeps time by sounding the cymbals. The actor not only sings but also dances and makes appropriate gesticulations which are of a simple



nature. *Thullals* are composed in such easy language that even the man in the street is able to understand them.

A slight drumming announces the show and the auditorium which is generally an open ground, is rapidly filled with people. There are no tickets to buy. The audience is a jolly good gathering of men, women, and children, picturesquely clad and ready for the delights of the entertainment. They quickly react to the happenings on the stage and register their delight often with hearty laughter, remarks full of pep, or with absorbed calm. It is not unusual to find the tired, quietly stretching themselves to snatch a few hours of sleep or busy in their dream-lands. But the narration of the story goes on regardless of these interruptions.

Mention has just now been made that it was Kunjan Nambiar who gave to the world the *Thullal* form of dance recital. Nambiar is only a caste name and the time-honoured duty of this caste, according to the *Shastras*, is to play on the *mizhavu* (a kind of drum) in temples during the performance of the *Chakyar Koothu* which also belongs to the realm of story-telling. The Chakyars are keen-witted, and they narrate the *puranic* stories, repeating the Sanskrit verses and explaining them in Malayalam—of course, enlivened with frequent sallies of wit and humour, most of them at the expense of the hearers. The recitation of the *shlokas* is aided by two musicians, one who leads the song and plays on an instrument, and the other who keeps time by beating cymbals.

#### *Origin of Thullal*

There is a very interesting story told of the origin of *Thullal*. On one occasion, Kunjan Nambiar went to the court of the Raja of Ampalapuzha (the *porca* of the Portuguese and the Dutch writers) to seek his fortune there. One day Nambiar was commanded to assist a Chakyar on the drum in the local Sri Krishnaswami temple, the usual drummer being otherwise busy that day. Unfortunately Nambiar was not fully well up in the art and so missed the *tala*

(rhythm). The Chakyar was much annoyed and so, in the course of his discourse, ridiculed the drummer for his shabby performance on the drum. Nambiar in his turn was annoyed and swore that he would wreak his vengeance and humble the proud Chakyar for his audacity in insulting him publicly.

The cut of reproof seemed to whet Nambiar's imagination. He prayed to Lord Sri Krishna for help and worked hard the whole night through with a heavy heart and evolved a new form of story-telling. The next day after the stinging reproof, Kunjan Nambiar went as usual to the temple. Near the place where the Chakyar was staging his performance, there could be seen to the surprise of all a figure adorned in picturesque costume singing to the accompaniment of a drum and a pair of cymbals. Well, that was Kunjan Nambiar himself at his new *Ottan Thullal*. The sight no doubt was so thrilling and impressive that he had the whole of the audience listening to him, while the amazed and perturbed Chakyar had to face an empty hall. With Nambiar's revenge there arose the new form of entertainment which has maintained with unparalleled splendour till now its popular appeal, combining as it does simple Malayalam language, dance, song, and acting. All attracted by the novelty of the performance soon admitted that Nambiar had produced something infinitely more delightful and appealing to the people's own heart, than the greatly ponderous *Koothu*.

The *Koothu* was completely eclipsed by the new art. The conservative section among the public invoked royal intervention, and, as a result, Nambiar had to shift the scene of his activities to Thagazhi. Maharaja Marthanda Varma conquered and annexed the principality of Ampalapuzha in 1754 and Nambiar accompanied him to Trivandrum.

It is claimed that the *Thullal* 'drew its life from the *Koothu* and borrowed its plumage from *Kathakali*.' As in the *Koothu*, episodes in the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* form the subject-matter of *Thullal*. The stories afford both spiritual and aesthetic satisfaction to the people of Kerala as it does to the



inhabitants of Siam, Cambodia, Java, Bali, or Burma. Humour and satire are frequently indulged in, though not in the caustic vein of the Chakyars. At his first appearance Nambiar recited in simple Malayalam verse, unencumbered by too many Sanskriticisms, the story of *Kalyana Sowgandhikam*. It is an episode from the *Mahabharata*, wherein at Draupadi's behest, Bhima goes to Kubera's garden lake in quest of the divine flower called *Sowgandhika* and secures it after a series of thrilling adventures. The recital was freely mixed with songs and flashing lines of wit and humour. For accompaniment Nambiar had a drummer and a cymbal-player. The dance and the gestures, the simplicity of the language employed, the swift movement of the verse and song, the very frequent switch-over to avoid monotony,—all made a distinctly powerful appeal to the mass mind and gave *Thullal* a remarkably great popularity. In his costumes, facial make-up, dance, and gestures, the actor indents considerably on the technique of the famous dance-drama of Malabar, the *Kathakali*. The indebtedness must end here. Nambiar adopted what he desired from the existing forms of the dance and dramatic art, and the dance recital that came out from the crucible of his genius was really something striking and original. The flow and grace of the language, the variety of vigorous and rapid metres, the many literary embellishments, and keen sarcasm contributed to the popularity of the new art form.

### *Three Types of Thullal*

There are different varieties of *Thullal*. At present, there are three distinct forms known by the names of *Seethankan*, *Parayan*, and *Ottan*. The recital is, in the first two, in a less rapid style than in the third one named *Ottan*. The make-up of the actor is also less elaborate. On the head, wrists, and biceps, the actor wears young coco-nut fronds, and ties a lot of broad tapes of red and white colour, forming loops at the bottom over a short skirt, round his waist. Jingling anklets are worn at the ankles. When he is

dancing or doing his steps, these help to keep time in a pleasing manner. The *Seethankan* variety has greater quickness of movement than the *Parayan* one. The latter is well suited for the narration of pathetic stories.

*Ottan Thullal* is the most popular. The majority of *Thullals* are written in this form. The make-up of the actor is an elaborate affair. The face is painted green and a head-gear, resplendent with little mirrors and gilt-work, is worn. The eyelashes are smeared with collyrium which is also used to draw two lines from the corners of the eyes to the ears across the temples. A vertical mark *gopi* adorns the forehead. An ornamented breastplate hangs from the neck to the waist. Two little plaques adorn the shoulders. *Kankanams* (bangles) are worn on the wrists while tiny little bells in the legs tinkle rhythmically as the actor dances. A red skirt with a large quantity of looped tape is worn round the waist.

As noticed already, the actor is helped by a musician who leads the song and works on a *maddalam* (drum), and another who keeps time to the song with a cymbal. Before the performance is actually given, invocations are made to Ganesha, Saraswati and the gurus. Then comes the recital of the story for the day. The actor sings a few songs. The drummer repeats them and while he does so the actor acts out the meaning by use of appropriate acting, gestures, and facial expressions. It is really strenuous work and to avoid monotony the metre of the compositions is varied now and then.

It is an admitted fact that the pure *Ottan* is more vigorous than the *Seethankan*, while the *Parayan* is the best suited for the pathetic style. Kunjan Nambiar began with writing the *Seethankan* and *Ottan* styles of *Thullals* and finally took to writing those of the *Parayan* type. While the first two varieties of *Thullals* are overburdened with literary embellishments, 'are avowedly outstanding for their beauty of sound, sweet cadence, and uncontrolled outbursts of caustic humour, and are mainly intended for attracting audiences, the *Parayan* style of *Thullal* excels in



literary craftsmanship and artistic perfection.'

The new art has inspired many poets to write verses suitable for presentation in this form, and Malayalam literature has been enriched richly thereby.

#### *An Estimate of Kunjan Nambiar's Work*

Kunjan Nambiar was a prolific writer who achieved outstanding success by attempting many forms of composition prevalent at the time, *Kilipattu*, *Manipravala Kavyam*, *Thiruvatirapattu*, *Kirthanam*, and *Vanchipattu*. Though his works, in each of these types, are commendable and perused by many, his chief fame rests on his *Thullal* works. He wrote more than 60 *Thullal* plays on epic and *puranic* themes as usual, but overlaid with much local colouring, and humorous though penetrating criticism of the manners and customs of the times in which he lived. In all of them he used the Malayalam of his day, with only such an admixture of Sanskrit words as would go easily with the vernacular. He called it *Manipravala* (pearls with rubies) meaning that the language should be a garland strung of Malayalam pearls with an occasional Sanskrit ruby—Malayalam terms and idioms with occasional Sanskrit expressions. And by perfecting the *Thullal* form of dance recital, he not only created a new type of histrionic art, but liberated the Malayalam language from the shackles of Sanskrit and enabled it to find its own soul. At the same time, he enriched Malayalam by introducing new metres.

Among his miscellaneous works, *Pathinalu Vratham*, *Silavathi*, *Pathu Vratham*, *Irupathinalu Vratham* (*Bhagavatam*), *Sri Krishna Charitham*, *Nala Charitham Kilipattu*, and *Panchathanthram Kilipattu* are the prominent ones. He has written some *attakathas* as well.

Nambiar's poetic genius was uncommon and vast. He was like a great fountain from which issued forth copious streams of poesy

which pleased his contemporaries and enriched his mother tongue. Though he wrote for the delectation of his audience, 'he has woven into the fabric of his poems, very clearly, some excellent didacticism, splendid spiteful stuff, satirically humorous, which applies the lash to the evils of contemporary society, effectively, without leaving, however, any lacerating wound behind.' In fact, he used poetry as a social reformation. In telling *puranic* stories, he made use of scenes and situations to put into the mouths of his characters home truths about events and personalities of his own day. There is not a single prominent community in Kerala which has not had its share of flagellation of his irony and satire. 'The falling away of the brahmins from their great ideals, the idleness and intemperate habits of the Nairs, the suicidal warfare among the chieftains, the incompetence of the soldiery, the advent of the European nations and their interference in the country's affairs, the intrigues of the courtiers and their vile flattery—all these are castigated effectively.'

And this was not all. Marvellous indeed was Nambiar's descriptive skill. An observer of men and manners, a keen lover of nature, he was able to stir in the minds of his hearers the feeling of reverential faith and love towards God in a remarkable manner.

Beyond doubt, Nambiar was in his age the greatest literary figure in Kerala. He did not of course reach the same height as Ezuthachan in the sublimity of his thought, the grandeur of his expression or the enthralling spiritual fervour which transports the reader and the listener into high elevations of religious awe and devotion. But in his own time, in giving instruction by pleasing, he stands supreme. His rich imagination and penetrating insight, direct and forceful expression, violent outbursts of sparkling humour and subtle nuances, great understanding of human mind and society, and deep love of sights and sounds of nature—all mark him out distinctly as the foremost literary genius of his age.



# LIMITATIONS OF INTELLECT

BY PROF. D. N. SHARMA

To think is to judge. A judgement is a relation or correlation of facts: it is the affirmation or denial of something about something. The human intellect can hardly aspire to greater heights. It is at best a flash-light that illumines facts and things before it endeavours to establish their relations. It is completely devoid of any capacity to sense or infer relations that do not actually meet the eye, much less to create new ones: to it things are given once for all, not to be changed or altered in any material respect. Its objects are essentially and irrevocably fixed. Intellect, however, presumes to be the measure of all things. In a way, and to a limited extent, its claim is justified. By its nature it is armed with an unflinching and unerring power to find out the relations, and subsequently the usefulness, of objects in our work-a-day life. It has a rare grasp of things and phenomena that surround us and can, with confidence, point out to us the best way in which we can employ them so as to produce results conducive to our material well-being. It has the highest practical value.

The intellect works by inches and leaves no gaps since it can fill none. It works studiously and industriously, bit by bit, and step by step. It builds, constructs and accumulates: it gathers, hoards, and garners. It proceeds on a sure basis and seldom, if ever, takes risks by treading an uncertain path. It seeks to pierce no mists, it strives to penetrate no mysteries. It walks abroad cautiously and warily within a well prescribed and clearly defined horizon: it is circumscribed. It takes no leaps: it makes no jumps. No doubt it progresses and extends its field of discovery, but its highest activity is like the steady and gradual revealing to view vista after vista by extremely slow degrees. It moves at a snail's pace.

All thought is motivated: we think of

necessity. Life, stripped of its complexities and obscurities, presents no problems or difficulties. Their elimination makes life an easy affair and takes away the necessity of thinking or reflection. All thought is in the service of action. Action, however, is not merely reaction, usually of a reflex nature, to the external stimuli: it is much more than this. It implies, in addition, the element of choice or a voluntary decision. This creates the necessity of intellect. Life is a continuous and ceaseless process of making choices and this implies or pre-supposes the existence of some standard or test by which to judge. This test usually, consciously or unconsciously, takes the form of a question: "Shall it work in life?" This is the motive that springs eternal in the human breast and gives birth and shape to all human activity. The answer to this question is provided by the intellect. It compares and contrasts, it analyses and synthesizes, and finally it formulates and decides. 'Fiat', or intellectual assent is the most essential and invariable antecedent of all voluntary actions.

The intellect works on a given data supplied by the immediate needs of life. 'The world is too much with us,' and all our activity is inevitably determined by its calls. It dries up and deadens all springs of creativity. 'We have given our hearts away, a sordid boon' in the uncertain hope of obtaining doubtful joys and comforts that this mundane existence can afford. The intellect ever hunts after the evanescent and the shortlived, based, as it is, on facts which are merely a passing feature of an abiding reality that underlies them. Unmotivated thinking is a myth and motivated thinking is an 'irritable reacting after fact'. Keats condemns this attitude of the intellect since it strikes at the root of poetry. 'Newton,' he remarks, 'has destroyed all the poetry of the rainbow by reducing



it to the prismatic colours.' He deploras this tendency of intellect as a result of which the 'rainbow is deprived of its mystery.'

The intellect works through two channels: induction and deduction. It knows no method other than generalization or the application of general laws to particular facts. Oscar Wilde says that 'to generalize is to be an idiot', and application is only a form of relation. No new knowledge can be gained by the employment of either of the two processes. Intellect is hedged round securely by these and is at home only in handling the old material, of course in a variety of new and divers ways determined by the 'coming into ken' of a new element or the appearance of a new exigency. Intellect would stagnate if no new situations arose to disturb the calm placidity of life. It would become stalemate if the necessity of making new adjustments were not the rule but the exception of life. Intellect is surrounded with the halo of inventiveness and glow of freshness simply because of its reactions towards the constantly recurring commotions or upheavals in the sea of life, ever creating new situations and raising new problems. The constructive and assimilative capacity of intellect to apprehend a new situation and to meet it on its own ground, equipped with resources carefully husbanded in the past, is simply astounding though obviously natural.

The intellect may construct, build, and formulate but it is just beyond its powers to create. It plays on and round the surface of things. 'It gives,' says Coleridge, 'a knowledge of superficies, without substance.' The glories of life that lie hidden below the surface are a forbidden realm to its devotees. In a moment of righteous indignation Keats admonishes them for this 'limited gaze' in a language at once instinct with religious fervour and sincere emotion:

Ah, dismal soul'd !

The winds of heaven blew, the ocean roll'd  
Its gathering waves—ye felt it not. The blue  
Bared its eternal bosom, and the dew  
Of summer nights collected still to make  
The morning precious : Beauty was awake !

Why were ye not awake ? But ye were dead  
To things ye knew not of,—

True, the intellect reigns supreme, with its sovereignty unchallenged, in the domain of facts. It has an undisputed sway in this kingdom which is its close preserve. Here at least it is the monarch of all it surveys. But it would be too presumptuous, if not hazardous, to assume that all is right with this world: it would rather be safe to assert that the Kingdom of Denmark is disjointed. There are internal disruptions and factions that endanger its safety. Nor is it invulnerable from without. It is open to seriously damaging attacks and has many loopholes in its apparently strong and impregnable bulwark. Facts are known and understood, even related and adjusted among themselves, but what about the broader principles of adjustment and relation. Mere proximity of time or space and similarity hardly suffice to account for the entire framework: the task presents unsurmountable difficulties. The brambles and bushes of life make the path still more risky and dangerous. Irreconcilable conflicts and contradictions arise and unbridgeable gulfs and abysses yawn before the intellect. Even a great poet is perplexed and speaks with different voices when face to face with destiny. Sometimes

As flies to wanton boys are we to Gods ;  
They kill us for their sport ;

On another occasion,

The Gods are just, and of our pleasant vices  
Make instruments to plague us.

One sits dazed and stupefied before these blood-curdling oppositions and the intellect receives a rude shock: its self-confidence and self-complacency are completely shaken. It is violently aroused from its deep slumber of self-sufficiency and its professed all-round competency. It stands baffled and stunned before the dark and evil forces and inscrutable ways of life which gather force and momentum and overpower it with their vehemence and magnitude. The sense of 'the burthen of mystery' dawns on it with a unique shock. Intellect finds itself in dark narrow passages and can discover no way to extricate itself



from the intricacies of the labyrinthine maze created by itself. Life at once becomes a mystery and the intellect stands self-startled before its own limitations.

The intellect feeds upon and is nourished by the material supplied to it by the sense-impressions. Here it moves about freely, untrammelled by any impediments or hindrances. But there is a world beyond, an inadequate knowledge or complete ignorance of which makes a right understanding of even this world, especially its complexities and intricacies, impossible. It is a lovely and beautiful world but one needs to see more clearly and feel far more intensely than usual before it reveals its joys and delights to any one. It cannot be grasped by the intellect: it is beyond its reach.

'Intelligence,' says Mac Dougal, 'operates only and always in the service of the instinctive impulses to action'. Contemporary psychology has demonstrated beyond any shadow of doubt that reason and rationality are but feeble and fragile tools of probing into the depths of reality. The intellect has given a poor and self-damaging account of itself in the very fields where she was expected to achieve striking results. As the eye reveals to us only the 'Vibgyor' range, intellect is operative within a very limited range of experience yielding knowledge of a very restricted validity. We have to transcend intellect if we need to get at the higher reaches of existence: the intellect can lead but to the outermost gateway of real knowledge.

#### *Imagination*

Imagination is that faculty of the mind which apprehends things in their larger relations. It is mind freed from the dead-weight of the 'lethargy of custom'. It is heightened awareness, an awareness that is more comprehensive and amplified than intellectual apprehension which is confined to the humbler task of perceiving the immediate, intimate, and necessary links that exists between facts and phenomena. Under the stress of a centralized will, the mind, like a colossus, rides astride the whole universe and

views things from imperceptible heights and dizzy summits which are beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. The petty, and therefore negligible, details that blur and enfeeble the vision and thus restrain the free activities of the mind vanish: only those things that really matter in life and are of permanent value appear large and vast in their broad outlines. Contradictions are still there but they are seen in their true perspective, so that far from hindering and dwindling life they add to and enhance its richness and wealth. They are reconciled in a richer and higher harmony. Facts and phenomena are invested with a glow and freshness of novelty engendered by a broadened, enlightened and extended mental vision. 'It is a multiform power which acting with its permeative, modifying, unifying might on the thoughts and images specificates the poet.'

Facts begin to be related not to facts but to governing laws and principles, to forces spiritual and divine, so that they begin to be located in a vaster and more comprehensive scheme of values and assume a dignity and significance to which we are ordinarily indifferent, if not actually averse or blind. The mind is at once furnished with the magical power of endowing even commonplace things with a beauty and truth unthought of before. The entire face of the universe is transformed and reveals glories and charms which a close proximity is bound to screen from view. Life is no more a mere aggregate or accumulation of things and facts, it is viewed as a never-ceasing flow or flux in which the seeming contradictions, which from a nearer point of view are so perplexing and bewildering, rise and fall like eddies for a moment simply to be re-absorbed the next instant in the all-engulfing native current. They are its temporary phases: they are evanescent and transient and their momentary appearance is a sign of life rather than an emblem of decay and dissipation. Imagination is thus the getting, by a forceful, vigorous and energetic will, out of the wheel of life to see it entire and whole, not as a part of it but as an observer and spectator. This



out-going tendency of the whole of the mind to have a clearer, brighter, and more vivid vision of the world is imagination. It is an intense passion for the universal vibrations of life and search for moral strength and intellectual power and 'joy in widest commonalty spread'. Under the spell of this burning passion the poet's eye-balls begin to roll in a fire-frenzy, his cheeks glow, his mouth quivers, his whole body begins to tremble. His eyes begin to wander from heaven to earth and earth to heaven, and he sees a light and receives a life which 'gives to airy nothing a local habitation and a name'.

Life's forces are scattered and dissipated in consequence of the numerous channels into which it flows. It is vivisected as a result of the varying demands of the multitudinous forms which the practical life assumes. Thus distributed and confined into watertight compartments it loses its primitive mobility and original vigour and intensity. No fragmentary study of these scattered forces can be pieced together and woven into a complete whole. It can be possible only if the life-force, with one supreme effort, rallies all its forces by completely withdrawing itself from its distributaries and concentrates itself on its potentialities and immensities. Only then can an adequate estimate be made of its real nature and scope, its powers and possibilities, being enfranchised from all those encumbering elements that make cross-sections on the one continuous whole and present it piecemeal to the human view. By virtue of this freedom it is at once lifted to a higher plane by its added vigour and intensity and is naturally characterized by a heightened consciousness of its capacities. Life-force, thus released, becomes ungovernable, immeasurable, and uncontrollable. The ordinary vision finds itself too impotent to understand or comprehend its significance. The only faculty of the mind that can undertake this mighty and supreme task is imagination. It is a light that springs from within and sheds its lustre on all and transforms everything.

Imagination is adventurous and forward-looking. Unlike intellect it does not move

in a circumscribed and circumscribing circle of facts. It spurns the housewife's dreary and monotonous task of industriously arranging and organizing things in a regular order in conformity with the laws of juxtaposition, proximity, and similarity. It shakes off all restraints and 'freely flies' and 'does strange deeds on the clouds'. 'It is the beginning of poetry to abolish laws and methods of the rationally proceeding reason, and to plunge us once more into the ravishing confusion of fantasy, the original chaos of human nature.' By repudiating and brushing aside the life-diminishing and soul-dwindling laws that curtail liberty it does not show disregard of or disrespect for all law. It has simply abolished the 'musty laws' to replace them by new ones necessitated by its regained liberty and extended range. The angle of vision is wholly changed, the outlook is enlarged. It has formulated its own values, its own standards, and its own measures which have a universal validity and application and do not 'fly at the mere touch of cold philosophy'. It switches on to newer paths, sails on 'uncharted seas' and scales loftier heights, so that one gifted with this power could say with a mingled feeling of surprise and satisfaction, 'behold, it is a new creation, all is become anew'. The world has become new or is seen in a new way. The world may continue to be the same, yet it is not the same. Under the spell of its magic wand it has put on an ethereal dress. It is that light from within which spreads its light all around, illumines everything and enhances the worth of even the most insignificant and trite objects.

And from the soul itself must be sent

A sweet and powerful voice, of its own  
birth

Of all sweet sounds the life and element.

Rhythm and harmony are deeply rooted in the soul: they dominate it, fill it with beauty and transform life into a thing of beauty. In consequence, man partakes of the beautiful, relishes it, realizes it and is finally saturated with it so that he moulds his life in conformity with its laws and demands. These inner harmonies and



symphonies are apprehended and brought into activity by the Imagination. It transcends intellect and dives deep into the innermost and subtler chords of life. It covers vaster areas and its sweeping reach extends beyond the present: it is here, there, and everywhere. It spreads its vast wings over the entire field and soars freely into the vast expanse of heaven. It has a free access everywhere, yet it has its own limits. It has an external reference. It penetrates deep into the nature of reality and fathoms unmeasurable depths, yet it is not completely identified with life. This supreme task—the final efforts to know and to become life itself instead of playing round it—is the province of intuition. It is the soul cutting into the soul. By an apparent torture it gains wisdom which would otherwise be denied to humanity as it falls outside the domain of human intellect.

#### *Intuition*

Intuition is the complete merging of one's individuality or re-absorption into and complete identification with the transcendental reality or the essence of being—reality *par-excellence*. It is the attainment of the joy of harmony, the joy that 'never was given save to the pure, and in their purest hour'. It is only when even the creative activity of the imagination is laid at rest and the 'body almost suspended' that the primal energy, when we 'become a living soul', enjoys a transcendental poise and tranquillity. This however is to be distinguished from placidity or vacuity since it has a metaphysical content, the revelation of the Infinite. Besides it has a psychological content, the irrepressible craving for crossing the boundaries of limitations and projecting itself forward beyond the present and the now in order to melt away into eternity and reach beyond the Doors till space itself melts away into Infinity: the microcosm enlarges its dimensions and itself becomes the macrocosm. It is the uncorrupted original native force of the soul which surpasses itself to realize itself. The intuitive experience is

also poetic since poetry has for its material what is most intense and profound in human experience and also because poetry is the communication of the incommunicable, it is ultimately the only medium for the expression of what is otherwise ineffable.

When the consciousness of 'I am' attains a certain fulness, reaches a certain intensity, it brings our individual personality into touch with the supreme reality, whereupon from the Infinity comes, in turn, the response, 'I am'. At this level our being rises above all distinctions of pleasure and pain into the ineffable bliss of supreme realization. As in his work-a-day world man is occupied with endeavour to fulfil his needs, to add to his possessions, to increase his knowledge, so in his literature and art he is persistently striving to enlarge and enrich the content of his consciousness in order to raise his soul to higher and higher levels, to become more and more his true Self.

Imagination and intuition differ from intellect only by virtue of their scope, intensity, and range. Yet the difference is so profound that even great intellects have been deluded into the belief that they are contradictory and hostile faculties of the mind. In fact they do not exist in mysterious detachment from one another. The intellect, whose proper domain is but the cataloguing, marshalling, and classification of facts, when emancipated from its blindness engendered by its own self-complacency and coxsureness as regards its conclusions, as also from its arid abstractions, and purified and inflamed by uncorrupted feeling and supplemented by an onrush of spiritual emotion and quickened sensibility, becomes imagination. Imagination removes all sensuous dimness and obscurity and by the vividness of its visions and impressions becomes a 'manifestation of spiritual principle' that 'gives outward expression to the harmony of personal and divine will'. A passion for a broader and a deeper vision is the genesis of imagination, freedom is its 'breath and spirit' and symbolism is its root and fruit. It underlies the 'impassioned meditations' of a Wordsworth, gives birth to



the 'fine excess' of a Keats, and provides wings to the eagle-like flights of a Shelley. Free imagination 'within no banks to stagnate and to be imprisoned' becomes the 'integral spirit of the regenerated man'. Intellect turned completely inward, when life is completely stripped of all out-going agencies, gains spiritual rights and becomes the organ of spiritual insight and grasps the highest truth. It is man's glorious prerogative and is conducive to his highest good. It is a dip into that 'permanent serenity underlying the changing affections of a soul which has either

resolved, or has never known the strife of opposing elements'. It is the sublime achievement attained by the pure heart, a fruit tasted only by the pure.

O pure in heart, thou need'st not ask of me  
What this strong music in the soul may be  
What and Wherein it doth exist.

This light, this glory, this fair luminous  
mist,

This beautiful and beauty-making power?  
Joy, blameless poet! Joy, that ne'er was  
given

Save to the pure, and in their purest hour.

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## THE POWER OF MEDITATION

BY A. DOROTHY BARRS

Many Western people find difficulty in the early stages of meditation, so they fail to lay the foundation for living the spiritual life.

Meditation is the control and use of thought and is divided into three parts: concentration, meditation, and contemplation. In the East one who attains perfect control is called a yogi and the method of attainment is known as yoga. Before starting on a course of mind control there are several questions the novice should ask himself. First, what is the constitution of man? Secondly, why is it necessary to attain control? Thirdly, how can control be safely achieved by one of Western origin?

Through study and experience one learns that man is threefold, and uses three component parts in his evolutionary progress—spirit, soul, and body, as St. Paul says. Spirit is the divine spark within, and is part of the One Life. This divine spark manifests through the soul which is the evolving life in man; to some it is known as the individuality; others name it the higher mind which deals with all abstract qualities. The individuality is in itself threefold, but the higher mind is the only aspect which struggl-

ing humanity can use at this stage of its development. This, in turn, manifests in each life through the personality which is composed of the lower mind or concrete thought, the desires, and action; this is the only part of himself of which the average man is consciously aware.

By further study we find that in the process of man's planetary evolution he is destined to function in other worlds or states of matter. This is a deep study and cannot be enlarged upon in a short article, but even a conception of this scheme of the evolution of life and form enlarges one's vision and understanding of the purpose of life. One begins to realize that this universe is a cosmos, not a chaos, that the life of man is a microcosm in itself. Then one sees the importance of the injunction of all the great teachers of humanity—'Man, know thyself—and thou wilt know God and the Universe'.

In the early stages one must beware of confusion of thought because the various schools of thought use different terminology. The student, after much study, will find that behind this terminology there is the same underlying truth expressed in different words



and sometimes shown in different aspects.

Why is it necessary to attain control? Until man has complete mastery over his personality he cannot hope to use it but will be used by it. Man is the slave of his desires, and uncontrolled thought drives those desires into action. These three aspects of man's conscious life must, therefore, be brought under control and man's higher consciousness must be awakened to take command.

To achieve this is the purpose of existence, and each life that is lived brings to the soul an additional strength through the lessons learned and the experience gained. No soul can travel this vast evolutionary pathway and learn all the lessons involved in one short life. Like the prodigal son who, in a far country, at last arises and returns to his Father's house, so the soul, at a given stage of its evolution, awakes and seeks to control the personality and to gain its co-operation in returning to its Father—the divine spark within.

So the questing mind of humanity at first stumbles in darkness and searches for a method which will enable it to live in conscious unity with the soul. The mind is the link between the soul and the personality; so the mind must be controlled, for only with the steady hand of the charioteer (the soul) on the reins of his steeds (the mind) will he drive the chariot (the personality) in the direction he wishes to take, thus steering a clear course through the rocks and obstacles encountered.

We come to our third question—Can control be safely achieved? The answer is: Only by the strong and pure of heart. There are many methods of yoga practised in the West and most of them are dangerous and unsuitable for the Western mind. Those who are sincere in their search will find many books and teachers to help them on their way, but discrimination is the first quality to build into one's life. Concentration is

the holding of the mind on a particular object or idea and to hold at bay all thoughts not appertaining to the object of concentration. This is difficult to achieve and will call out all the patience and perseverance of the student. Meditation is to brood or soliloquize upon a subject, a verse, an idea, or a problem in order to seek its larger meaning, until that which one meditates upon becomes part of one's consciousness. One then begins to find the essence of things. Contemplation is a rapt absorption into that which is meditated upon, usually an idea of God, or of the spirit within. Truly has it been said by the world teachers, 'The Path is sharp as a razor edge', and 'Straight is the way and narrow is the gate and few there be that find it'.

The practice of meditation leads to a life of absorbing interest: even in its early stages, with all its set-backs and disappointments, there are many compensations. Once the light of the spiritual life has been glimpsed there is no going back to the narrow confines of the purely material and worldly pleasures and ambitions. Once the soul has awakened to the Light there is always that inner urge to know at-one-ment with the God within. According to one's temperament and type does one find concentration, meditation, or contemplation the easiest way of approach to the goal. In reality they are but three processes of the same method—the most ancient practice that the world knows, and has been used by all the sages of the past in one form or another. Meditation is the safe and certain method which will enable man to unfold the divine potentialities within himself, to find the way, the truth, and the life, and to know the Kingdom of Happiness which all humanity today is seeking—many by devious and tortuous ways. Meditation gives power to understand the eternal verities of life, to control all that limits the soul's progress, to transmute the dross of the personality into the pure gold of the spirit within.



## ON THE DRAFT HINDU CODE.

BY RASHBEHARI MOOKERJEE, M.A., B.L.

The statement of the four judges of the Calcutta High Court<sup>1</sup> is a weighty, authoritative and most timely reminder that the passion for comprehensive codification may be carried much too far, and that so-called 'piecemeal legislation', which is somewhat of a fashionable taboo, is about the most appropriate form of remedial treatment suited to the genius of a system of law of such ancient lineage, historical continuity, and synthetic complexity of structure as the personal law of the Hindus. To define and enforce the Hindu married woman's property and other rights in respect of the husband's and the family estate to all legitimate extent; to make suitable provision for maintenance of indigent daughters and spinsters out of the paternal estate; to give statutory validity and precision to the liability of the paternal estate for the marriage expenses of a maiden daughter as a priority charge thereon; to revise the sequence of succession by a re-adjustment of terms between the two governing principles of spiritual benefit and propinquity of relationship in a manner more consistent with modern ideas; to soften and liberalize certain limited features of the institution of marriage—these and such like topics are reasonably indicated as the most fruitful field wherein reformist legislation may confine its ameliorative activities for the present. But on the crucial question of the daughter's co-heirship with the son in respect of the paternal estate, the learned judges return a decided negative. It may be just worth while to go into this question a little more closely here.

The claim of the daughter's co-heirship with the son as now urged, carries an undoubted appeal to natural affection and sentiment, and the reaction of the average Hindu, man or woman, is not conditioned by any

insensibility on their part to this aspect of the case. The Hindu has a soft place in his heart for his daughter. He considers it his sacred duty to dispose of his daughter in marriage to her best possible advantage, and will strain his resources to the utmost to do it. Often and often he has been known to impoverish himself and cripple the future of his family in his attempt to provide a dowry for his daughter far beyond his means. The maternal uncle's house ('Mamar Bari') is proverbially known as the second home for the sister's children, and very often proves so in fact. The Durga Puja, the high tide of the spirit of Hindu Bengal, is replete with the beautiful symbolism of the tender relationship that continues to subsist between the married daughter and her parents, and the mingled pathos and joy of the all too brief re-unions between them at long intervals under the old roof, the full emotional content of all which would be scarcely intelligible to a foreigner. If in these circumstances, the (as we believe) great majority of Hindus, men and women, prefer to stand by present law, the reason must lie deeper. The reason is that certain fundamental concepts or principles have been at work in the evolution of the Hindu social polity from the earliest times; and these concepts and the discipline thereby enjoined are more or less faithfully reflected in the Hindu law of inheritance. The householder state, that is the married state, has been prescribed as the highest norm of self-fulfilment for the great majority of men and women, the standard of right living, the fount of all social virtues, and, with the woman, at least, the central theme and the one absorbing interest of her life. To the woman, as the guardian spirit of the home, heavy responsibilities have been assigned, but with rich compensations in return, and she is sought to be sedulously trained by precept, example, and practice for

<sup>1</sup> See *Prabuddha Bharata*, August 1945, P. 235.



her special role from her earliest childhood. Marriage is the sacrament of sacraments, and with her marriage she renounces the *gotra* of her father, and espouses that of her husband, not as a mere social convention, but as the commencement of an assimilative process almost unique in its depth and vitality, and thenceforward her life is a progressive discipline, strenuous and sweet, for achieving complete self-identification with her husband and her husband's family. Her affections and interests undergo a decisive polarization, so to say, between her father's home as the sphere of the most disinterested affections and goodwill, and her husband's home as the sphere of her life's highest good and both poles gain in characteristic richness and flavour by the necessary difference of potential. The connubial union thus achieved is, in favourable cases, perhaps the most perfect of its kind, and even judged by the average result, must be pronounced to be at least as much a success as any other system of matrimony. The joint family on the patriarchal model, more or less, follows as a necessary complement of this concept of marriage, and functions, or is meant to function, as a living cell of co-operative discipline and industry, the hive of collective service and good-will. To be sure, these concepts of marriage and family life are no longer in their maximum state of efficacy, and have inevitably suffered from the battering effects of time, but they are still living principles of social conduct and well-being, and between them account for many of the traditional virtues and graces of the Hindu character, notably of Hindu womanhood, and some of the fundamental charities of Hindu social life, and there is no reason, therefore, why we should be in a hurry to scrap them. It must be frankly conceded that other views of marriage and family life are now pressing for recognition, but their demands are or may be fully met by the Civil Laws of Marriage and Succession as are already in the field, or as they may be suitably amended for the purpose. These two systems of law, I mean the traditional personal law of the community, and the civil

laws enacted to accommodate its non-conformist elements, may be allowed to flow in parallel channels, if possible with such friendly and fertilizing contacts as their juxtaposition would naturally tend to induce, but in any case undisturbedly and peacefully, and certainly without helping the one to disrupt and overflow the other. In the present social context, therefore, and with the traditional background, it would be the height of un-wisdom to pit the brother and sister as rival claimants in the paternal inheritance, for that would precipitate a violent and quite un-called-for conflict in our family life and in our social economy and ideology, the total effect of which will be, it is justly feared, of a highly destructive or disintegrating character. It is curious to note how self-forgetful we have grown within quite recent days. Not so long ago, it used to be the joke in legal circles that the death of a Mohammedan lets in even the household poultry for a share in the inheritance. But now over-fragmentation of property appears to have lost all terror for us, and we are eager to emulate the Mahomedan rule of law, while our Mahomedan brethren in their turn have sought to stop the rot through the provisions of their hard-won Wakf Act of 1913. The truth is, in dealing with the estate of inheritance, the Hindu Law makes a reasoned adjustment between the two governing principles of conservation and distribution, and the result appears to be practically as satisfactory as anything else in the same field.

It is very doubtful if the proposed extension of the daughter's rights would mean any appreciable improvement in the general economic position of the woman, for what she will gain at one end as daughter she will lose at the other end as wife. On the other hand, there may be another side of the picture. For middle-class people the education of children is a heavy item of expense in the family budget, and at the present day these expenses have to be almost equally divided between the son and the daughter. The next important item to consider, perhaps



the heaviest item of capital expenditure the family is called on to face, is the daughter's marriage bill. If, in addition, the daughter comes in for a share in the inheritance, the scales are in danger of being unduly tipped against the son. It is easy to say that these and similar other inequalities may be left to be adjusted by will. But it is not so easy in practice. It is one thing to make a special provision for a daughter by will, but it is quite another thing to deprive her by will of her vested right under the ordinary law. Besides, the testamentary habit, together with the necessary legal service of requisite quality to assist and support that habit, takes time to grow, and is offset by certain disadvantages also. For one thing it entails a death-duty which would not be otherwise payable; in the next place, it almost inevitably gives a fillip to litigation.

In speaking of a girl's marriage expenses, it has to be confessed with very great regret that a considerable part of the expenses is extravagant and wasteful, and of no benefit whatsoever to the girl concerned. This state of things has got to be radically reformed, and an entirely fresh and liberal orientation should be put on the whole scheme of marriage expense, the primary end and objective of which should be to give the girl concerned as fair a start as the circumstances permit. To that end, except for the bridegroom's personal outfit, and one or two customary items, the bulk of the available

cash, now exacted under various plausibilities but really as a species of social ransom by the bridegroom's father, ought to be strictly appropriated as part of the bride's dower, to count as much her *stridhan* as her outfit of bridal ornaments and clothes, and should be applied to form the nucleus of what may be called her life-fund, in the shape, say, of a single-payment endowment policy, or any other suitable form of investment, to mature for payment in appropriate eventualities. Our life-offices may do a bit of real public service by devising suitable schemes of insurance for these funds to the maximum benefit of the girls concerned. As regards the expenses of entertainment, etc., at the bridegroom's house, it should be a point of honour with the bridegroom and his people to meet them out of their own pocket. Such a reform need not be considered to be altogether visionary or unpractical, for once a few leading families set the example, the vogue may catch on, and all parties concerned may willingly co-operate to make the appropriation for the bride's benefit as generous as the circumstances would permit.

Finally, it is almost waste of breath to repeat, as the learned judges have also done, that the present time is singularly inopportune for controversial legislation of this degree of complexity and of this magnitude, and that all further proceedings should, at least, be postponed till the return of more seasonable conditions of political weather.

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## NOTES AND COMMENTS

### TO OUR READERS

In the *Conversations* the greatness of holy places and the nature and duties of a monk's life are clearly and inspiringly brought out.... St. Nihal Singh's *Backward Glance at Prabuddha Bharata's Fifty Volumes* gives an illuminating account of what Swami Vivekananda did for the *Prabuddha Bharata*. Incidentally he brings

out vividly the ideals and ideas the Swami had upheld for the uplift of Indian women, and their importance for the reconstruction of national life in India. Also Sister Nivedita's work of love for India through the *Prabuddha Bharata* comes in for its merited meed of praise. The great writer's love of India and its culture also gleams through the pages of this brilliantly written serial....



Swami Lokeswarananda draws our attention to the supreme and urgent necessity of the resuscitation of spiritual values in national life more than any other thing.... *The Dance-Drama of Kerala* will give our readers an introduction to the nature of some of the treasures of Malayalam literature illustrating Hindu culture in Malabar.... In a brilliant essay Prof. Sharma discourses upon intellect, imagination, and intuition in *Limitations of Intellect*.... *The Power of Meditation* will be read by all for its clarity and simplicity of exposition of an abstruse subject. Mr. Rashbehari Mookerjee's article, *On the Draft Hindu Code*, gives excellent suggestions, born of long experience in the judicial line, about reform of Hindu laws, and he rightly pleads for a postponement, for the present at least, of such controversial legislation. But Hindu men and women must wake up, however, and seriously consider ways and means to re-organize their society to meet successfully the challenges of modern times. Mr. Mukerjee's article is an excellent contribution in this direction.

#### WORLD'S MOST TERRIFIC MISSILE

The entire world learnt with painful surprise the use of the new weapon of colossal destructive power—the atomic bomb—'which loosens the pent up forces of the universe equal to over 20,000 tons of TNT' and again 'which represents one of the greatest scientific advances of history'. The Japanese have had a taste of the 'rain of ruin', the like of which has never been seen on the earth. It was no cheap discovery. 'The product of 2,000,000,000 dollars spent in research and production—the greatest scientific gamble in history—one of the most closely guarded secrets of the war.' Engines of destruction such as the magnetic mine, the pilotless plane, and the rocket bomb appear small compared to this latest discovery. The scientists who discovered it themselves may have been taken aback by the extent of damage caused. One cannot but shudder at the indiscriminate devastation caused to life and property. It

is said that even when one bomb only is dropped accurately, it would be sufficient to wipe the target area off the face of the earth. The reports said the awful effect of the bomb was such as if some giant bulldozer had swept across the area. Again it was said that the effect was equivalent to a severe earthquake, and the cloud of smoke that rose up into the air was as high as the Everest.

Man has overreached even Nature in his ability to release the evil forces of death and destruction. The use of the bomb has had its desired effect, and the war has been brought to a speedy end. But it spells disaster to humanity and civilization. The war to end war has turned out to be a myth. The promoters of peace are not at all sure of success in their efforts, but fear another war is inevitable. The next war, if and when it does come, will, no doubt, be several times more ruthless and revolutionary than the one that has just ended. *The Times* observes that history, especially the history of recent times in which instruments of destruction and torment are so rapidly multiplied, holds out no expectation that men will ever be deterred from war by fear alone, and, on the whole, that is to the credit of human nature. But if a secular course is to be laid, it must be by a positive love of peace. Reason will tell mankind that war is becoming, with certainty, suicidal. But reason will no more avail than an appeal to fear. Humanity must be able to call upon the deeper convictions.

It is only natural that there is anything but jubilation for the atomic bomb throughout the civilized world. Those who thought it necessary to use the bomb cannot fail to foresee its future consequences which appear menacingly ominous. Hanson Baldwin, one of America's best known military commentators, writing in the *New York Times*, warned America that she might have to 'reap the whirlwind' sown by the atomic bomb. He did not mince his words when he added:

Because our bombing has been more effective, and, therefore, more devastating, the name of America has become synonymous with destruction. Now we have been the first to introduce this new weapon of unpredictable effects which may bring us quick victory, but will sow the seeds of hate more widely than ever. Atomic energy may well lead to a bright new world in which man shares common brotherhood, or we may, beneath rockets and bombs, descend to a world of troglodytes.

But will all this appeal to man's reason



and higher nature, in the name of civilization, be a cry in the wilderness? We do hope better counsels will prevail and the nations who were in the vanguard of civilization will not succumb to the temptation of out-heroding Herod. It is encouraging to find that most people in the West are agreed that control (and, if possible, prohibition) of the use of this 'most terrific missile' must be rigidly exercised in the interests of the whole world. It should not be left in the hands of any one or more nations. The snake has to swallow its own poison, as they say. Humanity must bear the burden of its own follies. There is no alternative but to abolish recourse to armament and hold in check the harnessing of science for the enslavement of mankind. Democracy, uninspired by moral standards, may be as dangerous to future happiness of the world as autocracy or oligarchy. In this connection we may remember Swami Vivekananda's prophetic utterance :

The whole of Western civilization will crumble to pieces in the next fifty years if there is no spiritual foundation. It is hopeless and perfectly useless to attempt to govern mankind with the sword. Europe, the centre of the manifestation of material energy, will crumble into dust within fifty years, if she is not mindful to change her position, to shift her ground, and make spirituality the basis of her life.

#### A CALL TO YOUTH

Addressing the new graduates of the Madras University, the Hon. Mr. Justice K. P. Lakshmana Rao stressed the need of cherishing 'the normal and accustomed values of life' even in the midst of their careers and vocations. At the same time he warned them not to be led astray by tempting political or social doctrines that are pernicious to individual and national well-being. He said :

The world you are going to enter is one which has been transformed beyond all recognition by World War II . . . In this new world you will find great concern for the common man—his rights and duties, pains and pleasures. There will be idealists planning for Utopias under various labels of political thought. But one thing you will not find, even as the young men after the last Great War did not find, and that is 'the normal and accustomed values of life'. *In their place you will find tradition laughed at, cynicism practised as a fine art, and altruism greatly discounted.*

Yet, in spite of all these, or rather, in the face of all these, yours is *not to despair*; for, *full-blooded enthusiasm, great idealism, and determined courage* are all the peculiar possessions of youth. (Italics ours.)  
(Hindu)

Not only the graduates of the Madras University but the youth of the whole country cannot but feel deeply indebted to the Justice for his inspiring and instructive address. Our young men and women of colleges and schools will do well to specially bear in mind his stimulating and incomparable words of advice, exhorting them to cultivate good manners.

A high education without good tastes and good manners is a contradiction in terms. The ability to see the other man's point of view, the absence of intellectual arrogance, the thirst for knowledge for its own sake, the attitude towards others that could never be construed as offensive in words, gestures, or deeds: all these are qualities of a truly cultured mind.

The purpose of education is 'man making' and 'character building'—as Swami Vivekananda put it. The test of true character lies not in great performances but in the most common actions in day-to-day life. The learned Judge told his young hearers that character

means nothing more than a faith in the higher moral values; a faith that needs courage to support it at times of temptation and trial.

What is needed is faith in oneself, an active faith in the spiritual destiny of man, in the potential divinity of the soul. It is through such a living conviction of heart that selfless service and sacrifice are possible. Mr. Lakshmana Rao did well in drawing the attention of the educated youth to this aspect of social service.

Ours is a country in which have lived saints and sages who have all taught the gospel of selflessness and social service. I would, therefore, ask you to follow the ideal of service and sacrifice in whatever walks of life you find yourselves placed . . . I cannot do better than invoke the sacred sayings of the Lord in the Bhagavad Gita to serve as your ideal: 'Treating alike pleasure and pain, gain and loss, success and defeat—prepare for the battle; thus will thou not incur sin'. 'Thy concern is with action alone, never with its fruits. So let not the fruits of action be thy motive, nor be thou attached to inaction.' (II. 38, 47)

It was very appropriate that the distin-



guished speaker specially drew the attention of the lady graduates that they were best fitted to bring wisdom and happiness to the country by their innate qualities of gentleness, patience, and persuasiveness. He complimented them on their being the safe custodians of the future destiny of the coming generations of men and women. We hope our young men and women who leave the universities year after year will not fail to live up to the ethical and spiritual ideals of the motherland.

#### 'WORLD PEACE' CONVENTION

A 'World Peace' Convention, organized by the Vedanta Society (Ramakrishna Mission), was held in London in the middle of August last.

Mr. Sorensen, M.P., who presided, said: 'India always stood against Fascism and Imperialism which brought about this war. Leaders of Indian movement were the greatest living pacifists of our time'.

Swami Avyaktananda, founder and president of the Vedanta Society, said: 'Problems of post-war world were more complex than those faced during the war'.

Mr. Roy Walker of Peace Pledge Union urged that the use of atom bombs should be outlawed. He described Mr. Gandhi as the 'greatest living pacifist of our time'.

Mr. Arthur Jackman of the World Congress of Faiths said: 'Not only atom bomb but war should be outlawed for all time. A genuine pacifist was a greater hero than a general . . .' —*A.P.I.*

Peace is generally the last casualty in a war. There can be no real peace unless nations honestly desire it and sincerely try for it. Otherwise the so-called peace will turn out to be an interval between two wars during which both the victor and vanquished prepare themselves for a greater trial of strength. The end of hostilities does not necessarily bring in peace, as many of us think. At best, it indicates victory for one and defeat for another. Yet it is the common practice, at the end of war, for politicians and military leaders to be profuse in their assurances to the people that peace has been won and that the utmost will be done to usher in a new world order. Political leaders generally act as the mouthpiece of the nation to which they belong. Their

policies abroad are often directed to serve the interests of their own people at home. It is seldom the case that a whole nation is plunged into suffering on account of the selfish motives of a few individuals whom the nation has chosen as its representatives. Thus fascistic people have fascists as leaders, an imperialistic nation has imperialists as leaders, and democratic people have democratic leaders. Unless the powerfully armed nations renounce their lust for conquest and exploitation of other nations, wars are inevitable. The people as a whole or at least a great majority of them can exercise a restraining influence on their leaders and make them change their ways for the better.

The speakers at the peace convention were unanimous in their opinion that humanity has to abjure war and violence in order to live in peace. But as things are, the plea for disarmament seems to fall on deaf ears. 'We must never be caught out again;' declared a high military officer, 'the development of these defence weapons is a key to our future . . . I am trying to make this thing (atom bomb) so terrible in all its aspects that there will not be any more war.' Real disarmament cannot come so long as even a single nation chooses to remain armed. The British playwright, A.A. Milne, said,

War will cease when statesmen are intelligent enough to realize what the man in the street has known for a long time—that it is a wicked game and a fool's game.

Every statesman professes to be a champion of peace and liberty. But, in the field of action, most of them mean to 'hold their own' and are unwilling to 'liquidate' imperialism in the colonies and dependencies. The key to world peace lies in allowing each nation, big or small, coloured or white, unfettered liberty and national self-government. India and China have shown the way to permanent peace based on a spiritual civilization. There is no doubt that the war-worn nations will turn to India, once again, for the spiritual unction that heals the lacerated soul of man.



## GREATNESS OF INDIAN MUSIC

Dr. Leopold Stokowski, one of America's most famous conductors, has paid tribute of great praise to Indian music in recording his impressions of the characteristics of the music of India. He travelled widely in India with a view to studying Indian music at first hand. He says this first-hand experience convinced him 'Indian music is far more complex and important to world culture' than was suggested by some of the books written on the subject. He is a great admirer of Indian music and has visited India twice. He observed :

In India I had the impression of several musical cultures blended into one. The rhythmic basis of Indian music is of great importance, the grouping of rhythmic design lying back of the more prominent melodic features of the music.

One of the great characteristics of the music of India to my mind is its flexibility and freedom. While giving due consideration to traditions stemming from the past Indian music is free and improvised so that all powers of imagination in the musician are brought into play. In this way, the music of India is always creative, never a mere reproduction of what is written or played, as sometimes happens with the music of Western countries. I was struck with the sensitive manner in which various kinds of music are made, the expression of the mood at certain times of day or night, or certain seasons of the year.

Even more striking is the way that every aspect of the music of India is intimately related to every aspect of the life and religious beliefs and cosmic conception of the people of India. I felt that Indian music was never separate from Indian life, but closely interwoven with all the thoughts and feelings of the people of India. In some Western countries music is regarded as an art, separate and abstract from life. This is never so in India where music and all the arts and every phase of life are unified and illumine each other, forming part

of one great conception of universality of life and existence. (*Bombay Chronicle Weekly*)

Music has tremendous influence over human mind and brings it into concentration. That is how music plays an important part in the religious life of India. Devotional songs, in addition to their excellence in form and technique, serve as the means of divine communion. Western music is superb, no doubt, in its perfection of harmony. But, as Dr. Stokowski says, their musical art is artificial, and unrelated to life and Nature. Ancient Indian music has undergone much change owing to Islamic influences. And modern theatrical music in India, though popular, is very different from classical music. The latter is becoming less and less common as it is more complicated and needs a greater amount of concentration. There have been musician-saints like Ramaprasad, Thyagaraja, Mira Bai, and Andal who attained to the highest spiritual illumination through one-pointed devotion to the Lord expressed in their songs. In India the spiritual significance of music has always been emphasized, though its entertainment value has not been minimized. It is no wonder that this master of Western music has felt it necessary to suggest that 'each part of India and each national group will keep its own music pure and unmixed'. Perhaps he did not fail to notice, in India, the usual tendency to imitate alien methods. We hope Indian musicians will stand on their own bottom and vindicate the greatness of Indian music.

## REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE MIND OF MAHATMA GANDHI. COMPILED BY R. K. PRABHU AND U. R. RAO. *Published by the Oxford University Press, Calcutta. Pp. xii+191. Price Rs. 3.*

The English-reading public in India and abroad are more or less conversant with the well-known writings of Mahatma Gandhi. But his writings and speeches are found scattered over a number of years and in several different books and periodicals. The compilers of the volume under review deserve warm congratulations from one and all for their successful efforts in

gleaning the best and most valuable out of Gandhiji's works. When one thinks of the immensity of what he has spoken and written in the course of the past half a century, one cannot but admire the care and labour devoted to this compilation. In the preface we are told how 'a plan of a dozen volumes was drawn up, embodying Gandhiji's thoughts on such subjects as truth, non-violence, satyagraha, . . .' etc. But owing to certain circumstances it was possible for the compilers to bring out only the present volume—undoubtedly the most outstanding one—'containing the



gist of his thoughts' on these varied subjects. The subject-matter is dealt with under as many as thirty-five separate topical headings. Every one of these sections is replete with relevant extracts of profound significance. Gandhiji's impassioned utterances and inimitable expression of views on 'The gospel of truth', 'The gospel of non-violence', 'The gospel of love', 'The gospel of fearlessness', and 'India's Mission' are worth repeated perusal. His insistence on adherence to truth is something rarely to be met with among political leaders and patriots anywhere in the world: 'Let hundreds like me perish, but let truth prevail. Let us not reduce the standard of truth even by a hair's breadth for judging erring mortals like myself.' It is common knowledge that Gandhiji has accepted non-violence as the last article of his creed. But unfortunately some of his utterances in this connection have been misunderstood, and he is often misrepresented as a visionary who advocates the practice of such a futile and impossible ideal as non-violence. Gandhiji makes it quite clear that non-violence is not meant for all and sundry. 'I would risk violence a thousand times rather than emasculation of a whole race.' 'I do not say "eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India".' 'My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected.' 'Let me repeat for the thousandth time that non-violence is of the strongest, not of the weak.' 'If one has not the courage, I want him to cultivate the art of killing and being killed, rather than in a cowardly manner flee from danger.'

Though Gandhiji's name is intimately connected with the political life of the Indian people, he is very different from and far greater than a mere 'professional' politician. He loves India, nay, the whole world, from a spiritual standpoint. As Sir S. Radhakrishnan has said in his brilliant foreword (to this book), Gandhiji's life and sayings bear eloquent testimony 'to the values for which this country (India) has stood for ages, . . . values which are neither national nor international but universal'. Gandhiji has not failed to draw the attention of Indians and non-Indians to the spiritual significance of India's mission. His resistance to Western civilization is only to 'its indiscriminate and thoughtless imitation' and not to any 'profitable assimilation'. Some of the other subjects presented in this volume are: value of prayer, temples, idolatry, significance of fasting, Hinduism, *brahmacharya*, and women. The last section, viz. *obiter dicta*, contains short extracts on diverse minor topics such as diet, education, self-purification, and untouchability. It is a superb collection and offers *multum in parvo*. A close perusal of these choice writings of Gandhiji will help to remove the many misconceptions about the soundness and practicality of most of his views. Yet, many a reader may find, in these writings, much that he cannot accept or subscribe to. This is but natural, as Gandhiji's views and ways of thinking and acting have been the target of intelligent criticism from responsible quarters. However, even those who honestly differ from Gandhiji in many respects cannot minimize the worth of this delightful publication. The general conception of the book is splendid and the arrangement of matter excellent. Mahatma Gandhi is essentially a friend of the poor and illiterate masses for whose amelioration his life and work are dedicated. The 'mind' of Gandhiji, portrayed in these pages, reveals a great intellect and a greater heart.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION, RECREATION, AND HEALTH EDUCATION FOR INDIA. By C. C. ABRAHAM AND OTHERS. Published by the Y. M. C. A. College of Physical Education, Saidapet, Madras. Pp. 34.

The importance of physical and health education can hardly be over-emphasized in our country. In England and America, boys and girls take considerable interest in physical exercises and games. But, in India, till recently one noticed a general apathy, both among the young and the old, to active outdoor exercises. It was deplorable to find our young men weak and languid, occupied more with their studies, while those of other countries were, as a rule, strong and well built. The Y. M. C. A. College of Physical Education, Madras—one of the few leading institutions offering a well planned course of training in athletics—has published this authentic and comprehensive guide to the right type of physical training and health education with a view to popularizing these in this country.

It is divided into two parts: (1) Physical Education and Recreation, (2) Health Education. In the first part, after a brief introduction and historical survey, the present position of physical education in the different educational institutions as well as in the urban and rural areas is clearly described. A well thought-out scheme for the introduction of physical education and recreation consonant with the social and national trends of India. Health education is another desideratum in our country. In the second part, a brief account is given of the course of health education, as organized by the Y. M. C. A. College. Though this course directly concerns a small number of men and women who become students of the College, the procedure is worth emulation by other institutions. The carefully drawn up 'Participative syllabus in health education for schools' will prove of immense help to those who are interested in organizing health education activities for schoolboys and schoolgirls in a systematic way. The question of training leaders in physical education and teachers in health education, and the problems of administration in either field of activity are briefly discussed.

According to the authors of this publication, though India has a rich heritage of physical education and recreation, she has not made proper use of the same for nation building purposes, as it is done in England, America, and Russia. This is only too true. They attribute this to a number of causes such as 'the ascetic philosophy of life', 'national inertia', 'nature and type of present-day education', and 'slowness on the part of the State' and educationists to recognize the value of physique and health. But one fails to understand how the ascetic philosophy of life can come in the way of physical education and health improvement. Moreover, we do not know how far it is correct to generalize that India follows an 'ascetic' philosophy of life. Elsewhere, the authors observe: 'A careful study of Indian culture reveals that, for many centuries, the people of India from the Vedic era lived a life in which adequate physical growth and development were the normal outcomes of a natural life.' In ancient India, 'wrestling was a great national sport' and rhythmic dances were very common. Indian kings and nobles encouraged physical culture and amply rewarded feats of physical prowess. It is wrong to say that 'the traditional Indian attitude to life is one of negation'. In the days of Rama and Krishna, when guns and bombs were un-



known, physical strength and skill were the best means of fighting an aggressor.

In the *upanishads*, we find passages exhorting the spiritual aspirant to be 'strong, brave, and of firm determination', for, 'the *atman* cannot be attained by one who is weak in body'. Though the ideals of life were renunciation and God-realization, the greatest emphasis was laid on the necessity and importance of possessing a strong, healthy constitution without which self-control and concentration of mind were not possible. If, today, we find most Indians weak and unhealthy, the chief reasons are lack of sufficient nutrition and ignorance of the laws of public health. As the authors of this brochure rightly say, the problems of physical education and health education are closely related to and largely dependent on the economic status and the standard of living of the masses. The solution of these problems, in a dependent country like India, is not as easy as it may appear.

**JOHN WOOLMAN, QUAKER.** BY JANET WHITNEY.  
*Published by George G. Harrap & Co., Ltd., 182, High Holborn, London. W.C. 1. Pp. 432. Price 21s.*

In the Sahara of the barbaric and savage violence of Christian races, the Quakers and a few other sects like them have tried to stand for God truth, and non-violence like refreshing oases. The life of John Woolman, Quaker, is a very illuminating volume showing the part that such lives have played in the actual christianization of the naturally violent and savage white races. This process of humanization has been a very slow one, and the terrible wars in the West are an indication that in spite of the veneer of civilization, the races of the Western world are at bottom really savage and barbaric. The glimpses of the treatment of the Negroes and Red Indians of America which the whites have meted out to them show how great is the need for the spread of true religion among the so-called Christian nations. How we wish the Christian Missionary Societies would follow the motto, 'Physician, heal thyself' and spend their money and energy in truly reclaiming the warlike whites to the noble path of truth and non-violence, instead of acting as pioneers for the re-introduction of the savageries of Western civilization into the Eastern world. Not that we would not welcome true missionaries of God to come to the East and serve their fellow men, but the need in the West seems to us to be much greater.

How true even to this day are the words of this great Quaker.

'Man is born to labour, and experience abundantly showeth that it is for our good: but where the powerful lay the burden on the inferior without affording a Christian education and suitable opportunity of improving the mind, and a treatment which we, in their case, should approve, that they themselves may live at ease and fare sumptuously and lay up riches for their prosperity, this... I doubt not, is sometimes the effect of a perverted mind; for while the life of one is made griev-

ous by the rigour of another it entails misery on, both.' (p. 129.)

John Woolman believed firmly in divine providence. He says: 'How deeply soever men are involved in the most exquisite difficulties, sincerity of heart and upright walking before God, freely submitting to His providence, is the most sure remedy. He only is able to relieve not only persons but nations in their greatest calamities.' Again, 'I find that to be a fool as to worldly wisdom and to commit my cause to God, not fearing to offend men who take offence at the simplicity of the truth, is the only way to remain unmoved at the sentiments of others'.

He hated oppression and injustice. He says:

'Though through gradual proceedings in unrighteousness, dimness hath come over many minds, yet the nature of things is not altered. Long oppression hath not made Oppression consistent with Brotherly Love, nor length of time through several ages made recompense to the posterity of those injured Strangers.'

One rises from a perusal of this book with an ennobled feeling and a deeper faith in the perfectibility of humanity.

#### BOOKS RECEIVED

**ROERICH PACT.** *Published by New World Library. Pp. 35. Price Re. 1.*

**HIND SWARAJ OR INDIAN HOME RULE.** BY M. K. GANDHI. (REPRINTED 1944). *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Ahmedabad. Pp. xii+68. Price 8 As.*

**PRANAYAMA.** BY SARMA K. LAKSHMAN. (4TH EDITION.) *Published by The Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 16.*

**SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MODERN INDIA.** BY SWAMI JAGADISWARANANDA. *Published by Ramakrishna Vedanta Math, Calcutta. Pp. 65. Price 12 As.*

1. **THE TEN PLAGUES OF MODERN CIVILIZATION.** *Pp. 66. Price Rs. 3.*

2. **POEMS.** *Pp. xxvii+160. Price Rs. 5.*

3. **VILLAGE THEATRES.** *Pp. 19. Price 10 As.*  
ALL BY TANDRA DEVI. *Published by Tandra Devi Publications, Srinagar, Kashmir.*

**NON-VIOLENCE IN PEACE AND WAR.** BY M. K. GANDHI. (2ND EDITION.) *Published by Navajivan Publishing House, Kalupur, Ahmedabad. Pp. xii+589. Price Rs. 7.*

**DRUGLESS HEALING.** BY L. KAMESVARA SARMA. (3RD EDITION.) *Published by The Nature-cure Publishing House, Pudukkottai. Pp. 53. Price Re. 1.*

*Bengali*

**BHAVADHARA.** BY ASHUTOSH GHOSH. *Published by the author, 4B, Tarak Pramanik Road, Calcutta. Pp. 33+iv. Price 8 As.*



# NEWS AND REPORTS

## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SHISHUMANGAL PRATISHTHAN, CALCUTTA

REPORT FOR 1943-44

The Report of the Ramakrishna Mission Shishumangal Pratishthan, Calcutta, for the years 1943 and 1944 gives an account of the aims and objects, activities and financial position of the institution during the years under review. Since its inception in July 1932, this maternity hospital and child welfare centre of the Ramakrishna Mission has grown in extent and efficiency, and become most popular in the city. It is the outcome of a healthy and intelligent application of modern Western ideas and methods of maternity and child care to Indian conditions. The main objects of the institution are to render antenatal, natal, and post-natal care, to educate the public in these, and to train midwives and workers for carrying out these.

The activities of the institution fall under the following heads:

*Antenatal Care:* The most important feature of the institution is the rendering of antenatal care to expectant mothers and thus reduce maternal and infantile mortality to a minimum. Mothers were given instructions in the hygiene of pregnancy, diet, and preparation for confinement, through lectures, pamphlets, and individual advice. In 1943, the total number of new cases at the outdoor was 2,374 and the total of beds daily occupied in the indoor was 1,721. For 1944, the figures were respectively 3,064 and 2,084. The number of antenatal and friendly home-visits made by the health visitor was 1,252 in 1943 and 1,275 in 1944; 172 and 208 antenatal cases were admitted to the indoor department during 1943 and 1944 respectively.

*Hospital Confinement:* There were 75 permanent beds in the hospital during the years under review. Of these 21 were free and 4 partly free beds. The total number of deliveries was 1,662 in 1943 and 2,269 in 1944. 13,141 mothers and 11,030 babies were looked after in the hospital during 1943; 16,497 mothers and 14,042 babies were looked after during 1944. The hospital accommodated 696 free patients during 1943 and 867 free cases during 1944. Maternal death-rate was 0.73% in 1943 and 0.22% in 1944. Infantile death-rate was 6.5% in 1943 and 5.5% in 1944.

*Treatment of Gynaecological Cases:* The total number of new cases at the outdoor was 568 in 1943 and 941 in 1944. The total of beds daily occupied in the indoor was 621 in 1943 and 1,323 in 1944. Of the 62 in-patients admitted in 1943, all were discharged cured except one. In 1944, the number of in-patients was 130 all of whom were discharged cured except two.

*Training of Midwives:* The institution trains midwives (for Senior and Junior Midwifery Certificates under the Bengal Nursing Council) providing them with board and lodging. This Training School which had to remain closed for want of a qualified Matron till October 1944, has been reopened since November 1944. It has been recognized by the Bengal Nursing Council as a Training School for Senior and Junior midwives. During the period the Training School remained closed, the institution, however, trained a number of dais.

*Home Confinement:* Owing to certain difficulties

created by war-time emergency, the activities of the institution in connection with domiciliary maternity service were temporarily suspended. Even then some registered cases were safely confined in their homes.

*Post-natal Care:* Another activity of the institution is to render post-natal care to new-born infants and follow them up for at least a couple of years. This is done on a limited scale by regular examination of infants and toddlers brought to the weekly clinics of the institution, and also through periodic home-visits by the health visitor. The mothers are instructed about proper feeding, rest, habit training and so-forth. The total attendance at the post-natal clinic during the two years under review was 738 and 1,440 respectively. The health visitor made 907 and 2,492 home-visits for the follow-up of children during the two years respectively.

*Distress Relief:* During the years under report, the Shishumangal Pratishthan took part in distress relief work organized by the Ramakrishna Mission. Rice was distributed to hundreds of distressed families, and blankets worth Rs. 1,051/- were distributed among deserving patients of the institution.

## RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BENARES

REPORT FOR 1944

We present below a short summary of the activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Benares, during the year 1944. The Home, started in 1900, has completed the forty-fourth year of its useful career.

*Indoor Work:* The Indoor General Hospital contains 115 beds and takes care of poor and helpless sufferers. The total number of cases admitted during the year was 2,051. Of these 1,433 were cured, 260 were relieved, 110 were discharged otherwise, 116 died, and 132 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The daily average of cases was 95. The total number of surgical cases in the Indoor Hospital was 283, of which 225 were major cases. 165 cases were picked up and brought from the road-side and ghats.

The Refuge for aged and invalid men accommodated 25 men of whom only 5 could be kept permanently for want of funds. The Refuge for women accommodated 19 inmates during the year. 11 paralytic cases were treated under the trust fund created specially for the purpose. Under the Dharmashala Fund 227 men and women were given food and shelter.

*Outdoor Work:* The total number of new cases treated at the outdoor dispensaries was 84,698, and the total number of repeated cases was 2,06,228. The daily average attendance was 797. The total number of surgical cases was 1,168. Outdoor help in cash and kind was given to 178 helpless men and women of respectable families. Special and occasional relief in the shape of books for students and food for stranded travellers was given to 816 persons. Owing to the abnormal situation in Bengal, a large number of destitutes migrated to Benares. To help as many of these evacuees as possible, distress relief work was organized during the year, on a moderate scale, by way of distribution of medicines, diet, cloth, and rice.

*Finance:* The total receipts for the year were



Rs. 58,121-1-11 and total expenditure Rs. 57,153-1-6. The Income and Expenditure Statement for the year shows an excess of expenditure of Rs. 1,915-3-10 over income

*Immediate Needs:* (1) A great many of the 190 beds, both in the Indoor Hospital and the Invalids' Homes, are not endowed. The cost of endowing a bed for the Surgical Ward is Rs. 4,500|-, for the General Ward Rs. 3,500|-, and for Invalids' Homes Rs. 3,000|-. (2) Bedding and clothing. (3) Rs. 25,000|- for a separate block for the Outdoor Dispensary. (4) Rs. 20,000|- for a Septic Surgical Ward. (5) Funds for general expenditure which has risen very high in these days of stress and strain.

Contributions for the Home of Service may be sent to Hony. Asst. Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Luxa, Benares.

### RAMAKRISHNA ASHRAMA, TRICHUR

#### REPORT FOR 1944

The report of the Ramakrishna Ashrama, Vilangans, Trichur (Cochin), for 1944, presents a short account of the activities of the institution during the year. The activities fall under the following heads:

*Vidyamandir:* The strength of the school (including high school, lower secondary, and primary departments) during the academic year was 522 of which the number of boys was 316 and the number of girls 206. There were 181 backward-class and 72 depressed-class pupils. One more division was opened in Form I. Besides usual routine work, the pupils took part in games and literary unions, and conducted a manuscript magazine. The co-operative society of the school, run by the boys and girls irrespective of caste, bought and sold school requisites and thus gave the boys practical training in co-operative business. In addition, handicrafts like spinning and needle work, and such arts as music and dancing are also taught in the school.

*Industrial School:* The Industrial School, which was shifted to its own separate building, had nine looms and produced 1,503 yds. of cloth. It provides training in weaving.

*Gurukul and Matrimandir:* Of the 25 inmates who resided in these homes, 13 were boys and 12 were girls. 19 pupils were maintained free. There were 12 Harijan pupils. The inmates were trained up in self-help and household work. They took part in daily worship and attended scriptural classes.

*Religious:* Regular weekly religious classes were held in the Trichur Central Jail for Hindu prisoners. Religious classes were also held for the workers, and pupils recited the Gita daily. Anniversary celebrations were duly held, and lectures and *bhajan* were organized.

*Library:* A separate building for a library was erected during the year under review, at Punkunnam (Trichur) with the help of a charity endowment.

*Philanthropic:* The following items of relief and

service continued to be done as in the previous year: Distribution of cloth, medicine, and cash; house thatching and roofing; daily noon-feeding of Harijan pupils; free milk distribution to school and village children.

*Present Needs:* The following are some of the urgent needs of the institution, and the amount of money required is noted for each item: (1) Additional block for school, Rs. 4,000|-. (2) Completion of dispensary building, Rs. 4,000|-. (3) New buildings for Matrimandir, Rs. 12,000|-. (4) Dormitory for boys, Rs. 12,000|-. (5) Roofing of and other improvements to Industrial School, Rs. 2,500|-. (6) Extension of kitchen block, Rs. 8,000|-.

### RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, BRINDABAN

#### REPORT FOR 1944

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Sevashrama, Brindaban (Muttra), during the year 1944, were as follows (according to the thirty-ninth annual report of the institution):

*Indoor Work:* There are 55 beds in the indoor hospital. The total number of cases admitted was 1,453, of which 1,301 were cured and discharged, 78 were discharged otherwise, 37 died, and 51 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases (including 'eye') was 2,552, of which 348 were major operations. An indoor eye department, started in 1943, has proved of immense help to those suffering from eye diseases, several of whom come from far off places.

*Outdoor Work:* The outdoor dispensary treated, during the year, 24,327 new cases and 46,226 repeated cases. The average daily attendance (new and old) was 194. There were 753 surgical cases in all. Monthly and occasional relief was given to 63 persons, in cash or kind. Clothes and blankets were supplied free to the needy.

Some of the immediate needs of the Sevashrama are: (1) The estimated cost of rebuilding the female ward of the indoor hospital, together with equipments, is Rs. 25,000; (2) the endowment of at least 15 beds at a cost of Rs. 75,000 (Rs. 5,000 for one bed) is a great necessity; (3) a sum of Rs. 15,000 is required for providing sufficient accommodation for the workers and nurses; (4) the setting up of a laboratory and an X-ray apparatus will cost a sum of Rs. 25,000.

### VEDANTA SOCIETY, SAN FRANCISCO

The program of work of the Vedanta Society of Northern California, San Francisco, for the month of June 1945, shows that the Swami-in-charge delivered eight bi-weekly lectures during the month, in addition to holding the usual class on every Friday. Some of the subjects taken up for discourse were: 'One World, One Religion', 'The Science of Self-mastery', 'What seeing God means', and 'What is Spiritual Practice?'