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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

CONVERSATIONS WITH SWAMI SHIVANANDA

The monastery at Belur is steeped in spirituality with many holy associations—Doubts will be solved from within—Auspicious and inauspicious days according to astrology—The day one takes the name of the Lord is a good day.

(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: Friday, 2 August 1929)

In the morning the Sadhus and Brahmacharis of the monastery started coming one by one to Mahapurushji's room to salute him. A Brahmachari belonging to the Ashrama at Jhandi, who had been at the Math for some time, saluted Mahapurushji, whereupon he remarked: 'At Jhandi you have many activities. Now that you are at the monastery at Belur I hope you are practicing Japa and meditation. Early in the morning, at dusk and at night you should meditate intensively. This place has a tangible spiritual atmosphere. Swamiji brought the relics of the Master on his head and installed them here. Here there is a special manifestation of Sri Ramakrishna. Besides, Swamiji, Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), Baburam Maharaj (Swami Premananda) and others performed so much spiritual practice here. Swamiji even laid down his body right

here. How holy this place is! Nowhere will you find another place more favourable for spiritual practice. This place is steeped in spirituality. How much meditation, study, and singing of the names of the Lord has been done here and is still being done! How many devotees visit this place! How many times Homa (fire ritual) has been performed here, and how many other ceremonials have also been performed! The few days you live here be sure to enjoy the bliss of meditation and Japa. The more you meditate, the more you will appreciate the holiness of this place. You are devotees of the Master. Call upon him; you will certainly get a response and your heart will be filled with joy.'

Brahmachari: 'Often questions arise in mind which I intend to refer to you, and sometimes I even have doubts; but the

moment I come into your presence I forget them. I feel as if I have no doubts at all, and everything is settled. In your presence I feel wholly satisfied.'

Mahapurushji (affectionately): 'Why don't you tell me the doubts that arise in your mind? You are welcome to speak to me about any question that arises in your mind. But you know all your doubts will be solved from within. The Lord is within us. He is the inner Self of us all. He solves all doubts from within. Of course, you will have to let Him know your problems.'

Saying this, he began singing this song:

Stay by yourself, O mind! Why wander here and there? Look within—in the inner chamber of your heart—And you will find, right there, whatever you desire. . . .

'You have everything within you, only you have to seek, my child.'

After a while another Brahmachari came to salute Mahapurushji. Noticing the short tuft of hair on the top of his head, Mahapurushji scolded him, saying: 'How is it that your tuft of hair is so short? You are a Brahmachari—you have almost got rid of your tuft of hair. What does this mean? Most probably you think that by shaving your head you would become a Sanyasi. My child, Sanyasa (monasticism) is a matter of inner growth—you cannot attain that by cutting off the tuft of your hair.'

Later Swami Yatiswarananda¹ came and saluted Mahapurushji, who greeted him saying, 'Hello, Yatiswar. When are you going

to Madras?

Swami Yatiswarananda: 'I am thinking of going on the ninth. Before that time there is no auspicious date. There are only inauspicious days like Ashlesha, Magha, Tryahasparsha,² Thursday afternoon, and so on. That is why I made up my mind to go on the ninth.'

Mahapurushji: 'That is fine. But you are men of action. It won't do for you to look for auspicious days. Those who have nothing to do can afford to consult the almanac at every step. The Master also used to say, "Only those who believe in such things are affected by them; others are not." Besides, you are devotees of the Mother. She is protecting you under all conditions and will always do so. If one takes the name of the Lord and starts on a journey, one will not come to grief. By the strength of His name even disaster is transformed into a blessing.'

Saying this he sang:

Whoever starts upon a journey taking the
name of Mother Durga,
Shiva, with His almighty trident, surely
will protect him.

'In a couplet[†] composed by Tulsidas there is the same idea:

Every phase of the moon is auspicious; every
day an auspicious day.
An inauspicious day affects
him only who has forgotten the Lord.

The day one takes the name of the Lord wholeheartedly is a good day!

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'If it serves His purpose He can manage His work even with This broken vessel'—Extraordinary revelations regarding the greatness of the Master.

(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: Wednesday, 7 August 1929)

It was about seven-thirty in the morning. Mahapurushji wanted to have his body massaged and so he was getting ready to lie down, when Swami Sharvananda came, saluted him and asked, 'Did you sleep well last night, Maharaj?'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, I slept fairly well.'

Swami Sharvananda: 'How is your body?'

² According to Hindu astrology, these days, with certain planets and stars being ascendent, are inauspicious.

¹ A monk of the order.

Mahapurushji (smiling) : 'It is all right as long as it takes the name of the Lord.'

Later, in a serious mood, he remarked : 'On the whole, the body is not well. Day by day it is decaying. It will live as long as the Lord wishes it to live. If it serves His purpose He can manage His work even with this broken vessel. Everything is possible if He so wishes it, and He is managing things too. He is having His work done even with this broken body. Don't you see, although I can hardly move around, His work is being accomplished by means of this body?'

Swami Sharvananda : 'Certainly, Maharaj. As long as your body lasts it will be for our good and for the good of the world. Real service is possible only through men like you. One word from you will be more effective than great efforts put forth by us.'

Mahapurushji : 'Everything depends upon the will of the Master. One can do only as much as the Master graciously permits one to do. Blessed is the person whom the Master selects as an instrument for his work. The Master is God Himself born as a world teacher for the establishment of religion in this age. Is it an ordinary privilege to be an instrument for his work? What can an ordinary man understand about the Master's sublime ideas? Unless the Master graciously reveals himself, who is capable of understanding what stuff was in that little frame of his—what great power functioned

in him !

Who indeed can know Thee unless Thou revealest Thyself? Veda and Vedanta grope in the dark,—failing to fathom Thee.

'Everything becomes clear if he graciously reveals himself, otherwise who will understand him? Apparently he was like an ordinary man—eating, sleeping, walking around and doing things of that sort, but within that frame of his there was so much power. How can people understand it? With the passing of days people will see the play of the Master's tremendous power. There will be a great revolution in the realm of the Spirit. Whom shall I tell how much the Master is showing us? Whom shall I tell, and who will understand? I cannot explain to any one how many things are going on inside here (placing his hands on his chest), about him. Nobody would understand them. I cannot even tell you. Even you would not understand. So long as Swami Brahmananda was alive I could unburden my heart and have a feeling of relief. We would both enjoy discussing those things. Those were the most intimate experiences, and we would discuss them privately. He too would often tell some of his experiences. Now we cannot do that any more. Now we have to treasure those experiences within—not finding any one with whom we can discuss them. Everything is his will. I earnestly pray : May good betide the world ! May you all be blessed and may you all live in peace !'

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Practise remembrance of the Lord—Japa and meditation.

(Place : Belur Monastery. Time : Thursday, 15 August 1929)

Mahapurushji was very fond of a devotee who was a lawyer by profession. This devotee came to see the Swami and after saluting him inquired about his health. He took a seat near him and then started talking about his own spiritual practices.

Devotee : 'Maharaj, I seldom have peace in my heart, and feel a constant unrest within.'

Mahapurushji : 'Continue repeating His name, my child. Gradually you will find peace. If you can't do much spiritual practice, try to meditate every morning and evening regularly.'

Devotee : 'I do that, of course, but that cannot satisfy my heart's desire. I wish I could do more, but I cannot make time. Every morning and evening when I try to

meditate I have a feeling of great joy, so much joy that I do not feel like leaving my seat. The pressure of work forces me to do so.'

Mahapurushji: 'That is something which is beyond your control; but mentally practise remembrance of the Lord. He dwells within and knows the earnestness of your heart. He is gracious to you and will be more so. He will certainly satisfy your unfulfilled desire. He is the divine Wish-fulfilling Tree. He gives a devotee whatever the devotee asks of Him. Sincerely repeat His name, meditate upon Him and whenever you find time, practise remembrance of Him. Remembrance of the Lord can be practised at all times and places. Pray to Him very sincerely: "O Lord, have mercy upon me, be gracious unto me. You have been gracious to so many people here and elsewhere. Will You not be gracious unto me also? One of Your sons (meaning himself) has taught me how to call upon You, and so I am calling upon You for Your grace. It is Your son who taught me this way." Pray in this way and He will certainly bless you. We are his servants and have dedicated our bodies, minds, and souls at His feet. I assure you. He will certainly bless you.'

Devotee (with tears in his eyes): 'Please bless me and speak to the Master about me—then all will be well.'

Mahapurushji: 'Of course you have my blessings, my child! Otherwise I would not say so much. The Master came to redeem souls. We are his servants; we do not have any other desire than this. Whatever spiritual practice we perform we do for the good of the world. We ourselves do not need anything. He has made us full in every way—he has not withheld anything from us and yet for the good of people he is making us perform spiritual practice.'

Devotee: 'How shall I meditate? I find it hard to visualize the full figure of the Master in my meditation.'

Mahapurushji: 'If you cannot do that,

meditate upon parts of his form separately. At first you meditate upon his feet, and then on other limbs. Finally try to meditate upon his full figure. It is better if you can meditate upon his full figure at one time.'

Devotee: 'I can't meditate upon the form of the Mother. It frightens me. I can meditate upon the Master a little.'

Mahapurushji: 'That's fine. You can meditate upon the Master, can't you? That is sufficient. It doesn't matter if you can't meditate upon the Mother separately, because everything is within the Master, including the Mother Herself. The Master is the crystallized embodiment of all gods and goddesses. All the divine manifestations that have been in the past and will be in the future are within the Master. Therefore if you meditate upon Sri Ramakrishna it is as good as meditating on all divine forms. Of course, one should have that consciousness.'

Devotee: 'Maharaj, how shall I practise Japa?'

Mahapurushji: 'The best form of Japa is to repeat the Lord's name mentally. "To repeat the name of the Lord over the rosary is good, repetition of the name on the fingers is better but mental repetition of the name is the very best." The mental repetition of the name is indeed, the very best. When one repeats the name over the rosary or on the fingers one keeps track of the number of times to a certain extent and cannot give undivided attention to the Japa. It stands in the way of concentration. Repeat the Lord's name with great devotion. What does it matter if you cannot keep track of the number of times? Is spiritual practice a kind of commodity to be bought at the market—you pay so many rupees and get what you want? The Lord looks at your mental attitude—your heart's longing. If one has devotion for Him, nothing else is necessary. If one could repeat His name with sincere devotion, that would fill one's heart with joy. That would be of more

value than repeating His name a hundred thousand times mechanically. Have you been to the shrine today?

Devotee: 'No, Maharaj. I shall go now.'

Mahapurushji: 'Be sure to go. You have come to his place, you should see him

first. Do go to the shrine and practise Japa a little. You will find joy. Our Master is a living presence. Here there is a special manifestation of him. Of course, he is present everywhere; yet here and amongst his devotees he is more manifest. Do not forget to take a little of the offered food.'

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Hindu-Muslim riots—Back of these is the hand of the Mother—Mother Kali is a perfect manifestation of God.

(Place: Belur Monastery. Time: Tuesday, 5 August 1930)

Arrangements had been made by the Ramakrishna Mission for the relief of the needy affected by the Hindu-Muslim riots at Dacca. Appeal for funds had been made in the newspapers. Many had assembled in Mahapurushji's room to pay their respects to him. When one of the monks saluted him, the Swami inquired, 'Are you getting contributions for relief?'

Monk: 'No, Maharaj, not much.'

Mahapurushji: 'Gradually funds will come. Don't worry about funds. It is his work and he will procure the necessary money.'

Monk: 'There is difficulty. It is hard to keep oneself calm in these activities. What inhuman persecution these scoundrels have practised!'

Mahapurushji: 'Yes, indeed. Well, my child, our work is to serve others and purify our minds by service. As Swamiji said, "By doing good to others we do good to ourselves." The object of our service is to promote our own well-being by helping others. While carrying on work like this one can examine oneself. Whatever external trials and difficulties may come, you should carry on his work undisturbed. "For one's own salvation and for the good of the world"—that is your life's ideal. Your vision should be directed high. Just as your ideal is noble, so your heart should be big.

'Back of these communal riots and dissensions I see the hand of the all-beneficent Mother. It is according to Her beneficent

will that all this is taking place, and ultimately it will result in good. It will pave the way for unity among the Hindus and they will learn to organize themselves. They will then try to feel for one another. Unity, organization, and fellow-feeling—these are very much needed these days. Above everything else, the Hindus should organize and have unity among themselves. Will lethargy and narrowness of such a long duration come to an end unless there is pressure from outside? Have faith that all this is happening because of the will of the Mother, and it will promote the well-being of the Hindus as a race. It will bring about a new awakening in the entire nation. The Hindus will prosper in every way because Sri Ramakrishna and Swamiji were born amongst them.'

At about five o'clock in the afternoon Swami Vijayananda³ came from Calcutta. Entering Mahapurushji's room, he said:

Maharaj, a gentleman has donated five hundred rupees for relief and promised to give more if necessary.' Hearing this news Mahapurushji was very much pleased. With folded hands he said, closing his eyes: 'Victory be unto the Mother! Who can understand Her play? It is She who, in one form, is giving pain, and again it is She who, in another form, is arousing sympathy in people's hearts. "The Goddess who is present as compassion in every being

³ A monk of the order.

—salutation to Her!” With one hand She is killing, with the other She is giving boons and bidding men “Be fearless!” Swamiji used to say, “Mother Kali is a perfect manifestation of God.” Creation, preservation, and dissolution—She is the doer of all these. On one side She is destroying with the sword; on the other side She is granting boons and bidding men “Be fearless!” This is all the sport of God. In one form He is bringing pain to so many people, persecuting them with famine, sickness, and grief; in another form, again, it is He who is inspiring people to remove the distress of humanity. “Glory be unto Thee! Glory be unto Thee, Mother! Who will understand Thy ways?” So far, no one has been able to understand

the Mother, nor will any one ever be able to. Since the dawn of creation no Yogi or Rishi has been able to comprehend Her. Infinite is the sport of the Mother.

Who, indeed, can know Thee unless Thou revealest Thyself? Veda and Vedanta grope in the dark, failing to fathom Thee.

That is why the Master used to say: “Mother, I don’t want to know Thee. Who will know Thee? No one has ever known Thee, nor will any one ever know Thee. Grant that I may not be deluded by Thy world-bewitching Maya and graciously give me pure devotion and faith at Thy lotus feet.” (With folded hands) Mother, give us faith and devotion; endue us with faith and devotion.’

THOUGHTS ON EDUCATION

BY THE EDITOR

Education is not the amount of information that is put into your brain and runs riot there, undigested all your life. We must have life-building, man-making, character-building, assimilation of ideas. If you have assimilated five ideas and made them your life and character, you have more education than any man who has got by heart a whole library.—Swami Vivekananda

I

In these days when post-war reconstruction in all spheres is in the air, the question of educational reconstruction calls for deep thinking; for on the kind of education that we give to the youths of the country will depend to a large extent the future destiny of this nation. Now it is a very patent fact that the ends of the education determine very largely the nature and scope of the education given and the character, views, and attitudes of those educated under any such scheme. There were times in the past when education was confined mostly to the richer classes in the West and to the higher classes in the East. But the growth of

nationalism in Europe made it necessary that all sections of the population should be educated if the nation were to prosper and hold its own in the world. So the barriers that kept back education from the poorer classes, especially the working classes, were removed and special inducements were given for the spread of education in all its ramifications. As a result of this in the last one hundred and fifty years most of the nations of Europe and also America progressed very rapidly economically, industrially, and culturally. The English connection with India also gave an impetus to education in India which had one distinguishing feature and that is that education was no longer confined

to any particular caste or class but was thrown open to merit wherever it was found. Even education in Sanskrit which had been confined to the higher castes was now open to anybody attending the schools established by the government or recognized by it. But the main intention of the English in establishing schools and colleges was to get clerks and native administrative officers with whose help they could easily and economically manage the great empire which they had been fortunate enough to acquire in this sub-continent. One indirect result, however, of the education in English in Indian schools and colleges was the opening of the doors of Western knowledge to the intelligentsia in India. As a result of this the old exclusiveness with which India had covered herself was partially removed. Her leaders now saw themselves and their country in the wider context of world affairs and the geographical and cultural unity of the country, reinforced by the political unity created by the administrative genius of Britishers, made Indians nationalistic to a degree never before attained in her history. It is true that British diplomacy in India has kept alive the disruptive tendencies inherent in the internal composition of her population, and that the unity of the country has been systematically undermined since the beginning of this century by reviving and bolstering Hindu-Muslim religious and political antipathies, and by the sedulous fostering of racial fifth columnists in the form of Indian converts to Christianity from the lower and oppressed strata of Hinduism and of Anglo-Indians. Nevertheless, the world-wide tendency towards greater political aggregations manifest in the present decade of this century has so reinforced the centripetal tendencies towards greater unification of India that we may hope that the centrifugal forces in Indian political and social life will be soon completely conquered by their opposites. Naturally, therefore, the aims of education in India will be influenced by historical and

political factors besides the purely educational considerations.

II

It is true that the aims of education, in strict theory, should be the greatest development of the individual's natural gifts of mind and body with a view to benefit himself and the society he is born into. But the circle into which a man was born might have been the main limiting factor in his education in past times. Today, however, the world has, as it were, become one, and education should enable the individual to become an efficient and useful unit in the wider-circle of a world society instead of in the limited and cramped circle of his community or nation. In actual practice the aims of education are often very limited and it speaks poorly of our powers of social improvement. Education in its short-term ends tries to fit the individual for earning his bread in life, for maintaining his family, and for improving his community. The goal of all humanity, as such, is seldom kept in view. The Britishers were and are educated to become empire-minded; the Nazis had been educated to glorify Germany and the German race; Fascists had been educated to a sense of the glory of the past Italian and Spanish Empires, and a possibility of their revival in modern times; the communists are educated to a wholesale contempt and hatred of *bourgeois* civilization and culture, and are taught to take pride and glory in the achievements of the proletarian revolution and the possibility of its spread throughout the world. The United States of America wants to educate her citizens for democracy and freedom, and though her type of democracy is better in many respects than Fascism, totalitarianism, or authoritarianism, it is not entirely free from the racial intolerance of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy as is witnessed by the American treatment of Negroes, their anti-Semitism and to the opposition to the immigration of aliens, especially Asiatics;

nor is American democracy free from the reliance on the cult of might that characterized both Fascism and Nazism. Here is what John Dewey says in this respect: 'And when it comes to this matter of force as a method in settling social issues, we have unfortunately to look at our own scene, both domestic and international. In the present state of the world apparently a great and increasing number of people feel that the only way we can make ourselves secure is by increasing our army and navy and making our factories ready to manufacture munitions. In other words, somehow we too have a belief that force, physical and brute force, after all is the final reliance.' From all this it is obvious that it is not yet clearly recognized that the aim of education is the preparation of the individual to act freely in a free human society for his own good and that of humanity. They are still guided in the education of our children by the narrow aims and ideals of the groups and nations they are born in.

In India also we witness the same sorry spectacle of cramping ends and aims in education. We hear in our country of education being 'English', or 'Muslim', or 'Hindu', or 'Christian', or 'Sikh', or 'Arya Samajist', and what not. We have 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' Universities and 'Christian' Colleges. While these sectarian ideas in education might be useful to some extent as mementos of the glory of the historical past, they are positively harmful in so far as they prevent the students from seeing themselves in the setting and perspective of the present-day world, but attune their mind towards the revival or the recapturing of the values and modes of an outworn age, as if somewhere in the past we should find a model of what we should do today. We are not here minimizing the value of tradition. Tradition gives a psychological background of successful racial achievement and this creates a sense of confidence and self-reliance in our ability to face the future also in a successful

manner. But the conditions of today are not those of the medieval past. We are living in a world where the old economic, social, and religious structures are no longer sea-worthy, and in the voyage of life we have to repair, and even rebuild the arks that will carry us safe to our destination across the sea of new problems and difficulties. The world is one unit, as it were, in all matters, and no group or nation can live unto itself in splendid isolation as did the ancient peoples of India and China in the smug but dangerous belief that the world they lived in was all the world. So we have to broaden our educational structure in the light of modern needs and conditions if we are to successfully overcome the problems of life that confront us.

III

Educational ideals, if they are to educate all men to live freely and peacefully, must be universal and based upon the fundamental constitutional necessities and possibilities of the individual. The highest ideal which we should aim at is the brotherhood of man, or rather the identity of our own self in others, as Vedanta would say. 'The politician is honoured in his own country, but the learned man is honoured everywhere,' goes the Sanskrit proverb. The really educated man, therefore, ought to be a citizen of the world and not identify himself with the interests of merely any section of the world; or, as the ancient Sanskrit poet expressed it picturesquely, his native country includes all the three worlds—earth, heaven, and even hell. Education, at bottom, is an understanding of the world around us and the adoption of right attitudes of mind towards men and things so that we derive the greatest benefit from our contact with others and to likewise benefit them in return. Thus the educative process firmly and properly started in schools is one which should be lifelong. As Sri Ramakrishna said, 'As long as I live, so long do I learn.' For the

human mind is very flexible and educable to a high degree.

In these days when all natural activities are global in their consequences it would be a great advance forward in the march of humanity towards the implementation of the higher ideals of education if a committee of the best educators of the world is constituted to advise the nations on a concerted and common educational policy for all mankind. The idea of such an all-world committee may seem Utopian or impossible at present in view of the conflicting interests of the nations and the consequent differing aims and methods in education. But we think that the time is coming, (and the sooner it comes the better it is for all mankind) when nations will shed their prejudices and forgo those national interests which stand in the way of the formation of a true society of human beings in all lands. In the meanwhile it is up to the enlightened educators in all lands to educate their pupils in such a manner that they should not feel that their sectional or national interests are not compatible with world welfare as a whole.

IV

The educator, the educated, and the society or environment which forms the ground of the other two—these three are the primary materials of the educational structure.

Let us first take up the question of the educated. In what we have said above we have taken it for granted that all human beings are educable. But there are people who hold that the good man in all countries is always a good man and the bad man is always and everywhere a bad man. The Ethiopian cannot change his skin, nor the leopard his spots. So racial characteristics are inherited, and there are superior and inferior races, or as modern Americanism would put it, first-class and second-class peoples. Certain races are considered inherently superior to others because of the superiority of

their inherited genes, and the tentative conclusions of modern eugenics are trotted out to show that inheritance of characteristics are more important than nurture or education which only touches the surface of the individual. Now this is the time-honoured dispute as to which is more important, nature or nurture. But the fact is that there is no antagonism between these two. Nurture and environment also as surely change nature as nature inevitably changes the conditions of nurture and environment. Modern biology has shown that mutations take place as a result of change in environmental factors and it has also shown that the biological organism can adopt itself to its environment to a degree undreamt of before. Human beings are definitely more plastic than plants and animals. While we need not deny the obvious facts of differences in natural endowments, it is undoubtedly true that education and favourable environments do minimize or augment these differences. As Prof. Dewey says, 'If human nature is unchangeable then there is no such thing as education and all our efforts to educate are doomed to failure. For the very meaning of education is modification of native human nature, in formation of those new ways of thinking, of feeling, of desiring, of believing that are foreign to raw human nature. If the latter were unalterable, we might have training but not education. . . . The theory that human nature is unchangeable is thus the most depressing and pessimistic of all possible doctrines. If it were carried out logically, it would mean a doctrine of predestination from birth that would outdo the most rigid of theological doctrines.' And he concludes: 'The question will not be whether it (human nature) is capable of change, but how it is to be changed under given conditions. The problem is ultimately that of education in its widest sense.'

V

In reality, therefore, human nature is indefinitely plastic. But in the past as well as

in the present there have been and there are exclusive social, economic, or political groups which would like to keep the results of education confined to their narrow circles. Almost throughout the world the well-to-do classes cared only for the education of their own children leaving the masses ignorant. Nowhere is this more true than in India where the vast majority, by reason of the exclusiveness of the caste system, was prevented from rising to its full height by taking advantage of education and of contributing thereby to a fuller national life. The fact is you cannot keep a part of the body-politic depressed, corrupted, and ignorant without sooner or later feeling the evil effects of such a suicidal and selfish policy affecting the whole body-politic. Swami Vivekananda who had visited America, England, and Europe found that the progress of these countries in the nineteenth century was largely due to the progress and spread of education. Unless all citizens, men and women, are educated to a full sense of their duties and responsibilities in the world in which they live, it is impossible to expect all-round healthy progress. Education of man alone is not enough; women must receive as thorough an education as the other sex. Education is the road to freedom of all kinds, and you cannot keep a nation or even the world half slave and half free for long without the forces of slavery or freedom taking the upper hand and spreading all through. The downfall of India, and China too, has been due to the neglect of the women and the masses. So any educational scheme must make special provisions for a speedier and more intensive amelioration and education of these important sections of the population before we can hope to have that strength which will give India a place of respect in the comity of nations.

VI

Now coming to another factor, the educators, we must emphasize that without improving the quality of the teachers all edu-

cation will be very defective. The teachers must be saturated with the right philosophy of education. They must be men and women of character, learning, and sacrifice. As Swami Vivekananda said, the teacher must be like a blazing fire from whose contact the dross of ignorance and selfishness in the students will be burnt away, and they in their turn will become centres of light and learning. To secure this high level in our educators we should spare no means at our disposal. The teachers and professors must be freed from economic insecurity. At present the condition of teachers in India is pitiable. This long-suffering and patient tribe has continued its task of enlightening the pupils under its charge under the most disheartening circumstances. But the quality of our teachers is very poor. There should be well-equipped training centres in large numbers throughout the country where the educators will be educated first on their business of education. The experiences of all nations must be gathered and brought to bear on this task. These training colleges ought to be free and their alumni ought to be subsidized during their period of study. Besides, select groups of the more intelligent and advanced teachers and professors must be sent at national expense to visit other countries and study their methods of education. There must be periodical meetings of educators from all parts of the country to confer on their tasks and benefit by the pooling of experiences. The appointment and dismissal of teachers should be not in the hands of local committees packed with monied interests but in the hands of competent progressive Boards of Educators drawn from all classes who will periodically report on the quality of the teaching staff and advise on its continued improvement. Important social and political changes can never be brought about until an intelligent and efficient body of educators imbued with the highest ideals carry on their task in every nook and corner of the country.

VII

Coming to the third factor that affects education viz. the environment, we must distinguish the physical and social elements that enter into it. The physical part of the environment includes proper buildings and equipment. But this is perhaps the least part of the environment and is one which educators, given enough financial assistance, can easily develop in direct proportion to their necessities. The more important part of the environmental factor is the social element. Under this head we include (1) what society demands of the educators for its children; (2) the relation of pupils to pupils; (3) the methods of discipline and the nature of the subjects taught. Now what society will demand of its educators will depend upon its level of intelligence and culture, and economic and political status. Most parents send their children to school with the aim of enabling them to earn their livelihood and have a decent place in the society or group they are born into. But educational systems have so far mostly worked for the benefit of a few classes having a highly privileged position in society because of historical circumstances, and the interests of the masses have been sacrificed. Whether we picture a society based on private property and capitalism or one based on increasing socialization, one fact seems clear: it is that the masses can no longer be ignored or exploited without peril by the privileged classes. Also national security lies in the broad basis of education in the interest of the freedom, security, and cultural developments of all sections of the population equally. To this end, therefore, the school doors should be thrown open to all the children of the land irrespective of caste or creed. Education should be free at all stages including the college and post-graduate sections, and the cost should be borne by the State. Then only can the State be said to offer equal opportunities to all its citizens for their improvement—and we consider this as one of the

fundamental duties of any civilized State whether capitalist or proletarian. Another point to be noted in this connection is that education should be compulsory up to the age of sixteen for both boys and girls.

While parents may primarily desire an education and training to fit their children to earn a living, the State with its enlightened philosophy of education should see that the pupils are at the same time educated in attitudes and views that prepare them to live as free beings in a free society, working for their own uplift and that of their fellow-creatures. The school should be no place for the teaching of any sectarian or narrow views that militate against a peaceful, ordered, and free life of the citizens of the future. The students should be taught to think and act for themselves and should not be made mere vehicles for the propagation of outworn traditions of a past age. As Swami Vivekananda said, their brain should not be merely a storehouse of unassimilated facts, but there must be a complete co-ordination between knowledge and action.

Mahatma Gandhi's scheme of basic training has several good features. With its emphasis on teaching through crafts it combines knowledge with action and so develops a firm grip on reality in the minds of the taught. The present economic conditions in India may also warrant Mahatma Gandhi's insistence on Charka and spinning as one of the channels for the imparting of education. But we are afraid our great leader is stretching the point too far when he says that a course of spinning will be a complete education in itself. He is reported to have said: 'If all Congress offices and other institutions of this type impart technical education regarding Khadi from the beginning to end, then the condition of villages will be overhauled and Swaraj will be achieved with the help of the public. Truly speaking, complete education of man is spinning' (*Khadi Jagat*, September). Mahatma Gandhi

visualizes, if we understand him aright, a vast nation of farmers cultivating their food and weaving their own clothes and leading a life based fundamentally on non-violence and reliance on God, if they are capable of it. To us this seems an oversimplification of the problem of modern life. We believe that human energy cannot be confined to the narrow channels of a contented rural economy. Whatever the defects of the industrialized civilization of the Western world may be, the achievements of science due to the organized pooling of intelligence in scientific research have come to stay. In the years to come, all nations, including India, will have to adopt the methods of science or be relegated to an obscure position in world economy if they have not actually to perish. While, therefore, we adopt wholeheartedly the saving principle of non-violence in all human relations it will be suicidal for us if we limit our educational aims to the minimum of eking out a bare maintenance on the basis of a rural economy which is out of date in view of the technological achievements of the modern age. Our children will have to be taught to use science for the advancement of their economic aims. The fear that economic advancement will lead to struggle for power is not entirely baseless as mankind is at present constituted. We can, however, only live in the hope that education will so change the attitudes of men that, for insane and futile conflicts for the possession of the economic means of existence, they will substitute the saving policy of mutual co-operation and pooling of resources in building a world of plenty and happiness for all. If education is properly given, the combative instinct in man which now finds its vent in periodical wars forced by economic

causes will be turned into the healthier channels of destroying the enemies of mankind in the form of want, disease, and ignorance. Provided we instil the true religious spirit into the achievement of science and humanize them, the future is still bright for mankind. The task of educating the world for non-violence and brotherhood is indeed a Herculean one. Yet there is no cause for despair. The scientific method offers us great hopes. The organization of the collective intelligence of mankind to solve problems of national and international behaviour on a non-violent basis can, and should be, effected. It will be the height of suicidal folly if the great achievements of science were only to help man to blow up the world in which he lives. In this humanizing or rather divinizing task all men who believe in God and a higher destiny for man should put their utmost efforts and persuade the statesmen of the world through the force of enlightened public opinion to refrain from using the weapons of scientific research for the destruction of mankind. The vast sums now spent in defensive or offensive preparations are more than sufficient, if properly utilized, to educate the whole world into non-violence. But the men of non-violence are few and ineffective in their methods. In China and India a non-violent atmosphere prevailed for centuries with only a few fighting classes indulging in the sport of killing each other. We shall have to capture once more this spirit of non-violence and spread it in the world. That is a work for heroes and men of God. The rise of an economically and politically strong India based on a sound educational system will also always be on the side of non-violence, civilization, and the saving of nations.

The virtuous man that is calm and quiet, and friendly to all living beings, feels the benign influence of highest truths appearing of themselves in his mind.

—*Yoga Vasishtha*

THE QUEST FOR POWER

BY SWAMI ASHOKANANDA

We seek fulfilment through the experience of divine reality. But rarely does any one realize it fully and in all its aspects—most of us seek only one or at most a few of its aspects, according to our individual temperament.

Self-fulfilment generally comes through knowledge or love of God. Those who are philosophically inclined naturally seek truth or knowledge, and when they have found the ultimate knowledge nothing else remains to be sought—they attain complete fulfilment. Those who are emotional in temperament seek love, joy, happiness. When they have found supreme happiness, their souls realize eternal peace and satisfaction. There are some, however, who prefer to seek power, and of these the worldly-minded seek it for their material benefit, while the spiritually-minded, having no selfish motive and looking upon power as one with the ultimate Being, seek it for its own sake.

India has a system of philosophy in which reality is explained in terms of Shakti (power) and search is directed to attainment of power in its ultimate spiritual form. Shakti is spirituality itself, divinity itself. According to this philosophy, distinction between Brahman and Shakti, between God and His power, is seen only in the lower stages of knowledge; in the higher stages power and the Being endowed with power—Shakti and Brahman—are realized as identical. There are definite spiritual practices by which God as Shakti or Power may be realized. My present purpose is not to describe these practices but to consider power from the viewpoint of universal human experience.

I

If we study power as it concerns us, we recognize that it has three different expres-

sions or aspects, of which the first is the power to accomplish. The nature of this aspect is obvious; continually we feel the lack of things and believe that by adopting right means and directing our energy rightly we shall gain what we lack; continually, therefore, we apply our mental and physical energy to accomplish our purposes. Thus, daily we try to fulfil our wants, and daily new wants crop up.

As I am writing now, I am trying to accomplish, that is, to present certain truths as clearly and comprehensibly as possible. When I shall have done so, I shall say I have accomplished my purpose. But I would not have undertaken this task had I not, to begin with, felt a need. Always, accomplishment presupposes a need. Therefore our search for power in its first aspect is based on imperfection on our sense of want.

The means we employ for accomplishment are more or less external. These are our body, senses, and mind; with their help we try to experience and possess reality. Moreover, we make use of mechanical instruments to extend the powers of our body, senses, and mind, and with such amplified means we seek to attain objectives we could not otherwise attain.

So it has been going on from our very birth. Our whole life, in fact, is a continuous movement toward the attainment of more and more power, a movement motivated by a vague hope that some day we shall have accomplished everything and shall thus be completely fulfilled.

Such a hope, alas, is not legitimate in view of our present process and method of accomplishment. If we expect to achieve complete fulfilment by means of mind, senses, body, and external instruments, we deceive ourselves, because fulfilment never comes from external attainment; it is the

result of internal accomplishment. To be exact it should not be spoken of in terms of accomplishment at all, for it is really a process of discovery, self-finding.

The idea of accomplishment as self-unfoldment is basic not only to monistic Vedanta but to most other schools of philosophy. Unless a thing is within us already, we cannot attain it. We can find only what is within us. All attainment is self-discovery. Why is it impossible to attain self-fulfilment through external means? Because self-fulfilment is a state of consciousness, not an external object.

If it is asked, 'How, then, does it happen that we feel satisfied when we possess certain external things?' the answer is: To think that a satisfaction which is dependent upon outer things or has reference to them is the ultimate fulfilment is a mistake because if the outer things change or are lost, the state of consciousness dependent on them or related to them will also change.

If my happiness depends on you, it will change when you change. Though I were to master the whole universe, I could not expect permanent satisfaction, because the universe changes and will dissolve some day, when my satisfaction also would dissolve. Because everything on the outside is continually changing, nothing I acquire there can be permanent. To say that a thing is unchanging and at the same time external is a contradiction, for if it is external it must be finite, and the finite can never be permanent. How, then, can a state of consciousness which to any degree is dependent on outer things endure for ever?

Permanent satisfaction can be had only by discovering one's true self, one's permanent state of consciousness. Some may ask, 'Where is the guarantee that self-discovery will prove to be the fulfilment we are seeking?' The answer is: Because the self is eternal and infinite, and because the infinite must contain all, we shall find all we seek in the self.

In our present state, erroneously thinking ourselves finite, we believe there are things existing outside us, and we try to acquire them by the means already mentioned, that is, by the use of mind, body, and senses and the extension of their powers through tools and instruments. Thus we go on, life after life, trying to gain things, often with tragic consequences. Even when we succeed in gaining them, either they prove inadequate and we are forced to search for other things, or they have to be relinquished at death. Often we achieve our ends only to find that we misconceived what we wanted.

One of the chief characteristics of our limited, ignorant state is the idea of progress which in modern times dominates every phase of our outlook. Far from remaining contented with what we have, we want more and more, and our unremitting effort to satisfy desires is called progress.

This idea of progress appears plausible, for we sometimes seem to gain experiences of a higher order. But closer examination reveals that they are mostly nothing but modified repetitions of old experiences. How can we make any progress here? Like a squirrel revolving in a cage, we can merely go in a circle. Our present existence is enclosed by the limitations of the senses and knows only change. To use the familiar Indian term, it has a predominance of Rajas (continuous change from one condition to another). Wave-like, it rises and falls, actually achieving nothing. Wave after wave dashes against the shore; there is no progress, but only constant motion.

Of course those who make no effort to change their low state of existence are in a more lamentable condition than we, since they are dominated by Tamas (inertia), the antithesis of the knowledge of truth or any degree of progress toward it. Genuine progress consists in gaining more and more Sattva (illumination, light, purity, knowledge). In knowledge alone can there be

progress, because only knowledge discloses a higher reality.

But how few truly experience the higher reality! How few! The majority remain in their present state; their every new experience is but a modification of the old. This has been the case throughout history, which records conditions changing within a limited range—their forms change, but their quality remains the same.

So you see, if by progress we signify advance in our present state the word has no meaning. As long as we stay within the limits of the same quality of being, any true progress is impossible. When will it become possible?—When our approach to reality changes altogether; when we recognize that we cannot acquire what we seek in our 'normal' state or by the means we now use to attain it.

II

I have said that power is recognized and realized by us in three aspects, of which the first is the power to accomplish. The second is the power to resist. Although both these aspects are operative in our 'normal' state—for to gain what we want we have to resist what we do not want—the desire to accomplish is, in this state, more dominant than the desire to resist. Not until a higher condition of self-development is reached does the power to resist grow prepotent in our lives. Why is this so? Because in the higher state we become aware that the object of our search is already within us, and that, to possess it, we have only to resist the incursion of the outer reality.

Suppose a shining object is lying under water. If the water is agitated we cannot see it, but if the water becomes still, it is revealed at once. Similarly, in the lower stage of development, our consciousness is so restless that we cannot perceive reality as it is in itself; we see nothing clearly outside, nor can we perceive what lies within us. But since in the higher stage of development we are aware that the reality we seek is already

ours and that only a little calmness is required to perceive it in ourselves, we resist forces and tendencies that create continuous restlessness and change within us.

Since now it is the power to resist, not the power to accomplish, that we want to gain, we learn a new use for our senses, mind—everything at our disposal. Previously we disciplined and trained ourselves to comprehend external reality, to use our physical and mental forces as means of accomplishment. Now we do not train the senses for observation or use but to remain inactive and to claim no power over us.

A person in this stage, walking down the street, should not look in all directions but straight ahead, and only a few feet ahead. Does some one ask why he should not look around and observe things? My reply is that it is no use answering such a question, since it clearly indicates the inability of the questioner to appreciate the other—higher—training of the senses and the state of existence in which they cannot compel us to perceive a succession of objects but are rather compelled by us to remain still. You see, in this second and higher state, self-discipline is of a different nature: we try to control every aspect of our being with our own will. Whereas in the lower state we say to our senses, 'Learn to observe,' in the higher state we say, 'Go only so far, no farther.'

Can you hold your eye in a certain direction and see only what you will see? I have often repeated a celebrated story from the Mahabharata in which the teacher of the Kuru princes, after training them in archery, gave them a final test. He had a wooden bird placed on the top of a tree, half hidden in the foliage. As each prince stepped forward, the teacher said, 'Look at the top of the tree and tell me what you see.' One after another described the branches and the leaves of the tree as well as the bird. The teacher rejected them all until it was the turn of Arjuna. When he was asked what he saw, he replied, 'I see only the eye of the

bird.' 'Shoot,' cried the teacher, and Arjuna's shaft pierced the bird's eye. His whole mind had been focussed upon the target; he could, at will, restrain and direct his senses.

Of course, the training for such perfect control is based entirely on the power of resistance. You resist the tendency of the senses and the mind to wander, and you stop external things from invading your consciousness.

Although the power to resist is negative in form, it is not negative in effort, for by its exercise we eventually perceive that which alone is positive; our inner nature. When resistance has been so strengthened that our senses no longer assert their independence and function against our will, we have no further need to resist, because the outside world has lost the co-operation formerly afforded it by the rebellious senses. Consciousness has now become quiet and truth reveals itself. Thus neither accomplishment nor resistance, both of which are concerned with the superficial, spurious self, can concern us any more. Having realized our eternal, unchanging self, we thereafter are content just to be.

Others, not established in their basic self, may continue to be dominated by external things and seek them in order to remove their sense of want; or they may tread the next higher way, the way of resistance and discipline. But our condition is one of complete, all-comprehensive fulfilment, because we have attained to the third and highest aspect of power, the power to be.

Study yourself and you will find that the description of power as I have given it is true.

III

Even one's natural preference is not the acquisition of power, no aspirant to truth can afford to ignore power. Whether one seeks it consciously or not, its attainment accompanies every phase of spiritual life. I have often pointed out that one cannot be

said to have attained spiritual truth unless he at the same time experiences an accession of power. Indeed, the following are inseparable: knowledge of reality or truth; the joy resulting from the attainment of reality; and the power resulting from such attainment. If any of these three is missing, we should doubt the value of our attainment.

Let me explain this statement more fully, showing how none of the constituents of true attainment is complete without the others, and how, in the search for happiness or knowledge, power in its higher aspect also must be acquired.

Suppose you are seeking happiness as the ultimate objective. Though you may not begin your quest in the name of spirituality, you will sooner or later feel that true happiness is intrinsically spiritual; it is not concerned with the senses—is not external—but is found only in the spirit.

Yet large numbers of people express a great amount of hilarious gladness, as if sorrow were unknown to them, as if they had found endless joy. Of course we know there is no solid foundation or depth to such happiness. Much of it is superficial; it is often artificial, and whatever part of it is genuine usually proves to be transient.

True, even this happiness is more desirable than misery, and if any one practises it deliberately in order to dispel dark moods of the mind, he is to be commended. But, as we well know, it is easy to deceive oneself in this respect: the choice of spurious happiness may represent mere self-indulgence, preferred to the search for a deeper and more lasting joy.

There is another kind of joy that is sometimes practised even in the name of religion but has no basis in abiding truth or reality. It consists in a subtle excitation of the senses. This joy, depending upon conscious or unconscious self-deception, eventually disappears or results in misery. How, then, is one to judge whether or not one's happiness is genuine? Spiritual happiness is always

accompanied by a sense of power. While it is true that happiness arising from excitation of the senses is also sometimes accompanied by sense of power, that power creates restlessness and stimulates one's interest in the sense world. With spiritual happiness comes an instinctive resistance to the senses and the encroachment of mundane reality. Thus happiness can rightly be judged by the kind of power it generates. Sense happiness, however subtle its form, is characterized by the power to accomplish; and spiritual happiness by the power to resist the impact of the world.

Unlike sense happiness, which is not lasting and cannot take us beyond the limits of 'Normal' experience and the accustomed order of existence, spiritual happiness lifts us to the consciousness of a higher reality, of an abiding truth. Whether one follows the path of knowledge or that of love, this attendant feeling of reality and truth is the second criterion by which the nature of one's happiness may be correctly determined.

A Jnani, a follower of the path of knowledge or truth, judges the genuineness of his knowledge mainly by asking himself two questions: Is my knowledge accompanied by happiness? Does it bring a sense of higher power? In India certain Jnanis are sometimes called 'dry,' because instead of grasping higher reality they merely lay hold of higher ideas or conceptions and so miss the realization of Divinity to which they aspire. To avoid this mistake a Jnani should check his attainment by asking the question just stated. If, having gained a new knowledge, he has also gained a higher happiness—one that is deep, lasting, and all-sufficient, and if he experiences, moreover, an accession of true power, he is on the right path.

Further, if he feels a desire to check the senses, to keep his higher consciousness uninvaded by any of the lower phases of experience; if an instinctive alertness has grown within him so that day and night the

sentinels he has stationed on the frontiers of his being are awake and can fight at even the distant approach of the enemy—then the knowledge he has acquired is of the right kind and he will make real and rapid progress toward illumination.

This is true because the second aspect of power, the power to resist, is, for those seeking spiritual knowledge, the most reliable means of judging success. How much self-discipline has been acquired? Where is the mind going and why? Does it covet something in the world or perhaps heaven? Is it seeking name and fame, approbation, psychic achievement, or worldly power? Since all these things indicate the desire to accomplish—to manifest power at its lowest—one may judge where one stands by his pursuit or rejection of them.

It is, however, in the third state of power alone that the Jnani attains his goal, that he perceives the transcendental Being, who is non-different from himself. For him the vast universe with all its varieties then vanishes, individuals are no more, and what remains is indescribable.

But how can the Jnani attain this state if he considers the world real? If he thinks, 'I am tired, I must rest,' can he at the same time think of Brahman? If he is meditating and suddenly the thought comes, 'I have to see so and so at ten o'clock; I must end my meditation,' he has given reality to this world and has therefore obstructed attainment of the highest state. Even the idea of resisting the encroachment of worldly thoughts will interrupt his deep consciousness of truth. If Brahman alone is real, what is he trying to resist? So long as he resists anything at all, he has not achieved the highest. But when there is nothing to accomplish, nothing to resist, then he just is—he has won his objective.

Even as a Jnani can make the mistake of involving himself in dry conceptions and fail to realize a higher state, so a Bhakta, a follower of the path of devotion, can become

satisfied with mere emotion and sentiment and thereby fail to attain a higher state.

The ideal of the Bhakta is to know God, to love Him. There is a popular song in India which says, 'The sign of love is that the lover wants to be near the beloved. If I love you, O Lord, how is it that I do not seek to be near You always?' If a devotee truly loves God, his aim, whether he knows it or not, is to be close to Him uninterruptedly, to remain in eternal communion with Him. But so long as he has worldly desires and attachments, these come between him and God.

In the first-state of power, the Bhakta is unable to live in communion with God, because, like all others in this low state he is busy pursuing objects of desire. Even in the second state of power there are so many things to resist, fight, and conquer that his mind cannot remain long in God. He thinks of Him for a moment, but the next instant his mind wanders and falls from its high condition. Thus, until the Bhakta reaches the third state of power, the power to be, there can be no uninterrupted divine communion for him.

It has surely become evident that, in all cases and at every stage of the spiritual quest, the sense of power is a most important standard of judgement. At present, situated as we are and greedy for power as we are, power could not fail to be the surest test, the most certain criterion of our spiritual progress. Every spiritual aspirant should therefore consider the extent and genuineness of his attainment in relation to the three aspects of power I have described : the power to accomplish, the power to resist, and the power to be.

IV

As I mentioned at the beginning, there is a system of philosophy concerned specifically with Shakti or power. Its ideas, beautiful and convincing, are included in the Vedantic

philosophy, and although they have been embodied in a system of thought complete in itself, most of them appeared originally in the Vedas.

One of the less prominent Upanishads, called the *Mahanarayana* declares that Reality of Brahman is indescribable and that nothing exists except Brahman. The text says that when we know this all-existent Brahman we find truth ; we enter into Him and become one with Him. But Brahman, transcendental and static, has another self, as it were. That is His dynamic aspect, which personified, is called Shakti, the consort of Brahman. Brahman thus remains static and at the same time becomes dynamic.

Four different expressions of Shakti, Brahman's dynamic aspect, are listed in the *Mahanarayana Upanishad*. They are, from lowest to highest—Avidya (ignorance), Suvidya (auspicious wisdom), Ananda (bliss), and Turiya (the transcendental).

What is Avidya? It is Maya, illusion, ignorance. Many Vedanta texts state that Brahman appears as the universe through Maya, which functions in two ways : it veils the true and transcendental nature of Brahman, and having done so projects the phenomenal reality. Thus Maya, as the veiling power and projecting power, creates the universe. Before I can dream, sleep must overtake me, causing me to forget what and where I am, making me unconscious of my waking self and the waking world. So first comes the veiling power of Maya, then the projection of the universe.

When Brahman assumes His dynamic aspect and functions in Avidya or nescience, forgetting as it were, His true nature, what occurs? The transcendental, perfect Brahman seemingly becomes hidden, and the world of infinite forms becomes manifest. Also, Brahman apparently becomes divided into many parts : He becomes the infinite fragments called souls.

We, the so-called individual souls, come into existence endowed with minds and bodies

and with a boundless world extending around us.

In this state we are in the grip of that phase of Shakti which is called Avidya, and we suffer from three Malas (impurities) : we are conscious of Anu—limitation; Bheda—sense of difference; and Karma—change, movement. We perceive everything as limited and atomic, instead of all-pervading and infinite; as divided into innumerable differing parts; and as involved in change.

It may be said that in this state Brahman Himself, having become, as it were, fragmentary and entangled in the infinite forms of His dynamic aspect, seemingly perceives everything as fragmentary and limited, as different and individual, as acting, moving, changing, and accomplishing. Do not forget, however, that behind this vast and confusing dynamic aspect the transcendental aspect of Brahman is ever present. But, involved in Avidya, the nescience or ignorance which veils the truth of unity and projects the untruth of division, we go on indulging in feelings of separateness and incompleteness, and so are impelled to be constantly active, to pursue endless objectives.

Do you not see, then, how power of accomplishment is the lowest expression of power. Our accomplishment, being based on consciousness of ourselves as fragmentary and limited and of other beings and things as limited and different, lies essentially in the realm of ignorance and untruth—we are caught in the trap of Maya.

There are two ways to escape from this trap. One consists in denying once for all the reality of all phenomena; the other, an easier way, is to follow our 'natural' bent at first and then, as wisdom reveals itself, to follow its lead.

The monists, who take the first way of escaping the trap of Avidya, say, 'Do not bother about creation or cosmos or any such thing, however vast and imposing it may seem, for it is based on your own consciousness. It has reality only in your own con-

sciousness. Deny it.'

Is the universe really based on our own consciousness? Yes, it is indeed true that unless we are conscious (to use the word in its most comprehensive sense) of a thing, it cannot be considered real. The universe subsists on our implicit or explicit recognition of it. Since it is so illusive and unsatisfactory, why not deny it and thus escape the snares of Avidya? Moreover, no illusion can influence us without our conscious or unconscious co-operation. There is a saying, 'The dumb have no enemies.' If we do not respond to the overtures of nature, nature is not able to affect us. Having created this world, God tells each individual, 'I give you the authority to accept it or not, as you please.'

There are some monists who actually declare, 'The universe is projected by me.' They say, 'The whole universe is unreal; Brahman alone is real. I am Brahman. I am the only reality.' One can indeed take this supreme stand and discard all speculation about Brahman's dynamism, its veiling and projecting powers. Can you take this stand? Yes, if you are strong.

Is reality or truth comprehensible to the intellect? There are those who speculate, saying, 'This world is unreal.' But the next moment they ask, 'Where is my dinner?' and are annoyed if it is not ready. When they cannot sleep, they are perturbed. Such discrepancy between belief and practice will not do. If you say the world is unreal, you must be true and consistent, you must live upto your affirmation in every way—in feeling, in thought, and in action. If you are willing to do this and are strong enough to follow through, this minute you can cease to accept the dynamic aspect of Brahman and forget the whole creation. You can say to it, 'Neti, neti' (not this, not this) and see it vanish.

But if taking this tremendous stand is impossible for you, if you cannot at once transcend the aspect of power which I have called

the power to accomplish, there is the second way of escaping the trap of Maya. Start with the lowest aspect of power, if you must. Start with accomplishment, if you want to accomplish, for thereby you can gradually realize the higher power which I have described as the power to resist.

How can you be sure of rising from the lower into the higher aspect? The explanation is as follows: the desire to accomplish is related to the Avidya or ignorance aspect of Shakti or dynamic Brahman. It will be remembered that this Avidya aspect of power has three impurities, that to one who is dominated by it everything seems limited or atomic; everything seems different from every other thing; and everything acts and changes. But the second aspect of Shakti, Suvidya (auspicious wisdom), is the opposite of ignorance. In this higher manifestation of power there is a tendency to the breaking down of relationships and differences; a tendency to wise inactivity or passivity, and a tendency to unity and infinitude. When we try to attain Suvidya, we begin to manifest these tendencies, which have been dormant within us.

To progress from Avidya to Suvidya we must pursue accomplishment in a higher sense. How? By acting in such a way that our accomplishments tend to break down barriers instead of creating differences; to eliminate the restlessness and continuous change to which we are now subject; and to insure expansion of being.

'What thou thinkest, that thou becomest.' If we seek material things our consciousness takes on the gross and disrupting character of matter. Therefore we should devote ourselves to the perception of what is true, good, pure, and beautiful; we should direct our attention to ethical achievements, to the service of others, to actions that bring a sense of unity. All moral, charitable, and unselfish actions help us to grow out of the lower expressions of Shakti—Avidya or absence of knowledge—

into its higher aspect, Suvidya.

When we have become established in the state of Suvidya, we find the power to resist already active in us, compelling us to strive against the lower life. Then, gradually, we grow conscious of a still higher aspect of Shakti, which, as said before, is called Ananda or bliss.

In the state of Ananda the tendencies of Suvidya become well established. The sense of duality, difference, and division begins to vanish. Restlessness departs and peace comes to the soul, and because of this peace, the untrammelled reality of a higher state, from time to time, flashes within us. With differences and divisions fast disappearing, we no longer seem atomic and fragmentary, but appear more and more comprehensive. The Ananda-Shakti, which lies beyond the power to accomplish, therefore, belongs not merely to the power to resist, but also to the power to be. It is blissful power, because it brings it divine communion, from which springs all joy. In division and difference there is nothing but misery, only with union and sameness comes bliss.

In the state of Ananda, when the sense of divine union begins to emerge, we continue at first to be mainly aware of the dynamic aspect of Brahman. But with attainment of the highest state of Shakti, called Turiya, the dynamic and static coalesce and our awareness centres completely in the Transcendental. In Turiya the sense of distinction and difference is utterly gone—there remains only the pure power to be.

In order to escape the lower manifestations of Brahman's dynamic aspect and attain His transcendental being, which would you choose—the subjective method or the subjective-objective method? If you follow the purely subjective method, you will deny manifestations outright. Though very drastic, this is preferred by the very few who are superbly strong.

Most of us will choose the subjective-objective method, in which we trace external

objects to their source and try subjectively, through worship and meditation, to realize the higher state of Shakti in all objects; in which we keep constantly in mind that even the binding aspect of Shakti is divine—that ignorance, darkness, war, death and destruction are also She.

There is a popular song in India which starts with these words: 'Come, Mother, I challenge Thee to battle: Let us see who wins, the son or the Mother.' Is it not beautiful? Such a song is a challenge to death and destruction. Recognizing the Mother even in death, we should say, 'Mother, I see through Thy disguise; this also is a manifestation of Thee. Come, I challenge Thee to battle: Let us see who wins, the son or the Mother.'

Take this approach. Smile and fight. Remember that what you are opposing is not an enemy, but Shakti, the Creatrix, your own Mother. As a cat plays roughly with her kittens and thereby teaches them to fight, the divine Mother is playing with us, teaching us the rules of combat that we may

one day transcend action and eventually realize the highest power, Her divine Self.

Remember that everything which exists, being a manifestation of the dynamic Brahman, is therefore Chinmaya, pure consciousness, not matter at all. Every contact we make is a contact with Brahman. Remind yourself of this often and you will very soon go beyond the lower aspect of Shakti.

Then the Mother will say, 'Come, you have played long. Let us go home.'

This is the path: first, there must be ethical and moral practice; then, attainment of the aspect of Shakti as knowledge; further on, acquisition of Ananda, bliss; and, at last, realization of the Mother as the very highest, as identical with transcendental Brahman.

Such seems to me to be a true presentation of the nature and secret of power. Understood in a less comprehensive way, power becomes misleading and dangerous, but rightly and fully understood, it is the source of liberation.

HAS THE WORLD GROWN IRRELIGIOUS ?

BY SWAMI PAVITRANANDA

'Has the world grown irreligious?' If we put this question to persons who are interested in religion, the immediate answer will be in the affirmative. They will say, 'The world is growing increasingly irreligious from day to day, and the worst spectacle of the lack of religious spirit can be seen at the present time.' Yes, if one looks at the situations of the modern world, one is in despair as regards where the world is drifting to. After the inhuman and inconceivable savagery done by the recent war, with the atomic bomb hanging like the sword of Damocles over the destiny of man, who will

dare say that the world is not drifting away from the path of righteousness? And every war brings about great revolutions in societies as regards morals and ethical conduct. Time-honoured customs are challenged and flouted with bravado, and reckless spirit of defiance of everything holy and sacred becomes the order of the day. Many soldiers demobilized and relieved from the active service can hardly fit in with the old society and they shockingly disturb the equilibrium of the community in which they were once co-ordinating members. It is so very true that the problems of peace are far

more difficult to tackle than the problems of the war. A war is waged at a tremendous cost in men and money, it involves the greatest amount of sacrifice on the part of all concerned, but with what result? Men find that there is no peace even when the war is over, that the happiness which they longed for has turned into an illusion.

Then, if you look to the inside working of the orthodox religions, you find that the condition is hopeless. Attendance in churches is very, very poor, and it is daily deteriorating. The Church Fathers have to devise means by way of music and other attractions to draw people. They cry hoarse to impress on the people that Christ died on the Cross to save humanity. But humanity is not anxious about saving itself, so they cry in the wilderness. Similar is the case with regard to other religions. In India no man who has got some modern education is very anxious to follow the direction of orthodox religions. He does not care to worship in temples. He is critical about the utility of worship in temples. If he visits a temple, he is more concerned about its history and architecture than its devotional influence. At best his love for temples is the result of a reflex action. Because some arrogant foreigners decry temple-worship, he must defend it from a sense of national self-respect. The same thing is happening in China. Persons who are in touch with the current thoughts of the world do not care for their ancient culture or way of life.

And there is an open crusade against religion all over the world. Some people are talking vigorously against the utility of religion—nay, of the disservice that religion has done to humanity. And it seems that their following is rapidly on the increase. Against the surging wave of criticism against religion, orthodox people find their voice ineffective. They find themselves misfits in the modern world. They feel that they have become anachronisms.

When one observes this sad spectacle,

one naturally asks with a heavy sigh, 'Where is the world drifting to? What is in store for humanity, if things go on in this way?' One feels that the world has distinctly become irreligious and the situation is growing worse from day to day.

But if one takes a long-range view of the past, one may question, 'When was the world better? We may have a glamour for the past, but it is only because we cannot see it from a close quarter. The moon looks so beautiful from a distance, but if you go near it, how ugly must that be? The same is the case with what we call the past. It is a characteristic of human nature that it is ever discontented with the present. Whatever cannot be seen looks beautiful to it. So man always sighs for things gone by, and looks eagerly for things that are coming in future. But when the future becomes the present, as sure as anything it loses all its charm. It is said that there is joy in striving for a thing, but as soon as the thing is got, one is no longer enamoured of it. So man is always unhappy, discontented, and dissatisfied. Ask any man in any circumstances; from the answers you will find he is unhappy and miserable, he has got his own cross to bear, which he would not like to do if he could help it.

If you read the ancient scriptures of any religion, you find the same story repeated everywhere: 'The world had fallen away from the path of religion, it had gone almost to dogs, and there was the necessity of a prophet to be born. He was born to save humanity, a number of people followed him, worshipped him, saw in him a God on earth.' But humanity was not saved, it followed its own paths, it went on blundering and committing mistakes till there came another prophet and gave birth to another religion. And there was fight between one religion and another, each claiming unrivalled authority over the conscience of humanity. This is true not only of the pre-historic age but also of the era of which there is accurate

record of events. Look at the happenings of the medieval age in Europe. What inhuman cruelty was done by the Inquisition. Thousands of persons—men, women, and children were burnt to death, and that in the name of religion. Who were more irreligious? Those who were persecuted or those who did the persecution? Things were basically the same even after the days of Inquisition had been over. When the discoveries of science began to pull down ancient beliefs and the theories preached and supported by religion, there was a great hue and cry : religion is in danger. Only the religious authorities were not powerful enough to persecute those who had the temerity to challenge them.

In India if you read the ancient epics and Puranas, you will find that, side by side with ideal characters who are beautiful enough to shed the lustre of glory of humanity itself, there were despicable figures who would outstrip all modern villains, if they were present today. That indicates that even in that enchanting past evil existed side by side with good, that there were saints as well as sinners,—things were not all right or all wrong. If you follow the course of Indian history from the remote past, at every age you will find people complaining that the destiny of humanity is hanging in the balance. Buddha found the religious life of his time burdened with rituals and ceremonies, some of which involved great cruelties to animals. Orthodox Hindus were, of course, always against Buddha and Buddhism. But the message of Buddha carried everything before it by the sheer force of its strength and weight. But what doubt is there that those who were opposed to it, complained of the great harm it was causing or was likely to cause to the country? Then there came the time when Buddhism degenerated and Hinduism got the upper hand. Buddhists at that time perhaps levelled the same charge against the Hindu revivalists. And so on. Look at the condition of India—say, one hundred years back. What was

the situation? The English people came, conquered the land, and brought about a revolution in the social, moral, and cultural outlook of the people. And with them came Christianity, which made great inroads on the citadel of Hinduism. The majority of the people who received English education openly defied Hindu customs and manners, orthodox ideas and sentiments, and became renegades to their inherited ideals. If one studies the inner working of the orthodox society, one finds that things were not all well there. Child marriage of ridiculous types—with its concomitant evils child-widows—polygamy on a revoltingly large scale, loose morals of a stagnant society, could be found side by side with the rigidity of a section of people clinging to higher ideals. So one cannot say, unless one is too much of an idealist, that the social condition was all ideal at that time.

This over-critical attitude towards the past does not indicate that we are blind to the evils of the present times, that we are not conscious of the earnest and vigilant care that is necessary to improve the present situation. All that we want to emphasize is that there is not much value in the saying that things are all wrong at present in comparison with what they were in the past. What happens is this: a generation of people comes to the stage of the world. They act their parts as best as they can, and when their turn comes to leave the stage and when they see the coming generation eager to step into their shoes, they become alarmed at the thought that the tradition and standard they have set up will not be respected. So ensues the conflict between the Old and the New which is eternal. It will be seen that the majority of those who say that the world is going astray, are of the middle age and above. The younger generation will not, as a rule, say that. They are full of dreams and enthusiasm to build up the world entirely on a new foundation and basis. In doing that, if they are to sweep away all ancient

customs and thoughts, however holy and sacred, they do not mind. They will say: 'To build a new house on a dilapidated construction, one has necessarily to destroy a lot. Why grieve over that? That is rather a sign of great weakness.' So whom to trust?—the dreaming youths looking to the future, or the fossilized old people casting their last, lingering glance behind?

As time marches on the situation changes, circumstances become different, and man also acts differently. We cannot judge the actions of a man in the mid-twentieth century by the ideas and ideals which were in vogue in society in the pre-historic age. We cannot think of life at present times in terms of forest retreats of the Upanishadic period, for the simple reason that forests are so rare nowadays. It is idle to think that we can regulate our present society by the old rigid standard of four castes and stages of life, because under the stress of modern life they have given up their watertight demarcations. Daily are they tending to become fused together. But we do not deny that the old principles are there—which are so healthy, useful and beneficial. The old principles will have to be applied to new conditions. In the process of doing that they may lose their colour but not their intrinsic value. But those whose thoughts run only in a fixed rut, will get alarmed and say that the world is heading towards destruction. We like it or not, the world is moving, it is not stationary, it has not fallen into stagnation. Life is movement, stagnation indicates death. So there are bound to be changes in the living, moving world. Only the faint-hearted will be scared at that.

The very fact that there is much criticism of every new form of thought and idea indicates that we are alive, that we are on the way towards progress. Self-examination is a stepping-stone to progress in individual lives. The greater the introspection, the greater is the chance of improvement. We can say that the world is on the right track, because

every new movement which arises is subjected to merciless analysis, criticism and scrutiny. It has to grow against tremendous oppositions. If it survives, it does because of sheer merit, utility and necessity. This may be called a process of growth of the world through self-analysis and self-criticism.

Do we not find innumerable societies and associations rising in every country, in order to set right the moral and spiritual disturbances of people? If churches and temples suffer from lack of attendance, the spiritual hankering of people is pressing for fulfilment through many other substitutes. In the last fifty years alone, we see that so many movements have been started, which are allied to spiritual activities. That shows that in spite of the vaunted opposition by modern man to religion, he is constitutionally a religious being.

And there are so many false prophets. Every one of them can claim a large following. The wonder of wonders is that some of them find easy victims in persons who are most sceptical, critical and alert. Poor creatures—who too much confident of their intelligence make abject fools of themselves. Persons who, because of suspicious nature, see spectres in broad daylight find to their dismay that the daylight has faded for them. But we should not pity them too much. Their sad plights only illustrate the point that we cannot so easily stifle our spiritual hankering. It is constantly pressing for fulfilment. If we do not give it proper scope, it will run into a wrong channel. But that does not mean that the old orthodoxy will have their day again. Old beliefs and faiths must have a new orientation, otherwise they will not be able to satisfy the demands of new hopes and aspirations and keep pace with the new outlook. One of the most influential preachers in America said in his younger days, 'I am throwing over my old idea of the universe. I am building another—and leaving God out.' Yet in mature years when he began to preach, his Sunday sermons

would be eagerly heard by two to three thousand devout souls. His idea was that the Virgin Birth, the literal inspiration of the scriptures, the belief that Christ will return 'upon a heap of blazing clouds,' will no longer stand. 'If people must accept these interpretations or get out,' then out of the Christian church would go some of the best Christian life and consecration of this generation. The very fact that churches and similar institutions are in disfavour proves that they do not fulfil the modern needs. Good wine needs no bush. If religion has got its utility, it need not be advertised. People, of their own necessity, will seek it out from any corner of the earth. It may be that those persons who talk so much of religion do not know what religion is. They deal with false wares. So they cannot attract people. As such they need not feel sorry or disappointed.

Are not many persons unconsciously religious? Many persons outside the fold of orthodox religions live much better lives than those of their brethren who bear the insignia of being religious-minded. A tree should be judged by its fruits. It is not going to churches with punctilious regularity or following the routine of religious ceremonies with severe rigidity that really constitutes a

religious life, but character, purity of heart, the spirit of service, the readiness to sacrifice one's all, if need be, for a cause. Judged by this standard can we say that the world altogether lacks such people? Do we not find a number of persons in every country who attract a considerable following because of their exalted character? They may not pray regularly—at least in public, but what doubt is there that God's grace is on them?

Those who glibly say that the world is growing irreligious, forget that the power behind the world is not the brick and mortar of churches, or the beauty and grandeur of mosques and temples, but God Himself. His eyes see everything. He knows best how to guide His creation. Behind apparent evils there may be lurking seeds of unseen good.

There are ebbs and flows in the ocean. The moon waxes as much as it wanes. There occur ups and downs in life. The same holds good in regard to the history of humanity. Humanity is on a long march. At times progress may not be clearly visible, at times it may seem that it is on a wrong path, but through mistakes and blunders, it is on the onward march, it is going towards its ultimate goal. To deny this is to deny the existence of God Himself. That is rather the surest indication of irreligious sense.

THE KING AND THE HANDMAIDEN

BY PROF. H. C. PAUL, M.A.

This is a story taken from the Masnavi of Moulana Jalaluddin Rumi who was a philosopher-poet of the Persian world in the thirteenth century. His book illustrates the Sufi doctrines with occasional anecdotes. Really the stories are of no importance but for the spiritual meaning underlying them. Following or rather adapting to his own needs, a method long established in mystic

poetry, Jalaluddin sets the matter of his discourse within a framework of tales which introduce and exemplify the various topics and are frequently interwoven with explanations of their own inner meaning. There are several hundreds of stories in his book which are found in the Koran and its commentaries, the traditions of the prophet, and the lives of pre-Mohammedan prophets and

Muslim saints. And the *Kalila and Dimna*, an Arabic translation of Sanskrit *Panchatantra*, also supplies many beast fables, where the animals play the allegorical parts assigned to them. But our poet borrows much and owes little—he makes his own everything that comes to hand.

This present story is taken from Ibn Sina. We know that Rumi was the founder of the Moulaviya order of dervishes who were whirling dervishes. While instructing his followers, he made use of these stories which more probably belonged to the miscellaneous stock of 'wandering' stories carried to and fro by dervishes and other travellers, and here the author might have put them into verse in his *Masnavi* from memory. This simple story may, in short, be summarized thus. One day a king went out hunting with his courtiers. On the way he fell in love with a handmaiden. She was brought to the court but was soon found to be ailing. The king sought advice from his physicians, but the treatment of them was of no avail. Being helpless the king asked divine help, and in dream he was directed to seek the advice of the divine physician who would be coming to him next morning. The physician sent of God examined the patient and found that it was the attachment towards a goldsmith whose separation made her sick. Soon the goldsmith was brought from his distant home and was married to that maiden, and readily the lady became joyful and recovered from her illness. The story ends with the slaying of the goldsmith by the physician who was prompted to do this at divine suggestion.

This simple story, though at first sight seems very ordinary, is full of spiritual meaning underlying it, as the poet has expounded it in his mystical way. The poet himself says of it. 'O my friends, listen to this story, in truth this is the very essence of our inward state.' And let us see how it explains the inward state of our life. He begins his mystical story thus: 'In former days there lived a king to whom belonged

both the temporal and spiritual power. Suddenly one day he rode with his courtiers a-hunting. On the high way the king became enslaved of her. In as much as the bird of his life became impatient in its cage, he gave money and bought the maiden. When he had brought her and won to his desire, by divine decree she was ailing.'

Mystically, the king is the soul of man which has been entangled in the body, his earthly kingdom where he is enthroned from the beginning of the creation of the world. And the soul, rather the rational soul, is possessed with both the animal spirit that commands to evil (*Nafs-i-ammara*) and the divine spirit which is the soul at rest (*Nafs-i-mutmainnah*). The king's going out a-hunting is seeking the knowledge of God in this world where the soul, i.e. a traveller in the path of God (*Salik-i-rah*), has been sent to realize God. As a famous tradition says, 'I (God) desired that I should be known, so I created the universe.' The courtiers of the king are the different qualities of the rational soul. The highway is the sensible world, a stage in the divine path, where the soul has become captive of lust and passion, symbolically referring to the handmaiden. Now, if lust and passion are overpowering any soul, it cannot be at rest unless the passions are satisfied. Here the condition of the soul overpowered by lust and passion has well been compared to a bird in the cage. Readily the king with his money, temporal power, equivalent to physical strength, energy etc., got her and satisfied the passions. The soul, when once it has begun to descend down, cannot stop at the stage but will hanker after other desires. This is the nature of animal desires which gradually go on increasing and if they are not satisfied, they will not go well, which condition has been hinted at in the ailing of the maiden, though it may be that the rational soul will at every stage of its descending downwards try to overpower the defect which is forcing it down. This striving rational soul is called the upbraiding soul

(Nafsul-lawwama) which is struggling with the lustful soul, so that by conquering it, it may rise up and meet with the state of the soul at rest. And this ailing of the maiden which causes the striving of the rational soul is made by divine decree.

This divine decree is always for our good but it is not easily understood by ordinary men. How beautifully the poet illustrates other instances of divine decree! 'A certain person had an ass, but no saddle; (as soon as) he got the saddle, the ass was carried away by the wolf. He had a pitcher but no water was available; when he got it, the pitcher broke away.' We should know that every desire has unsatisfying thirst. Desire has no limit. When one desire is satisfied, there will appear other desires which will go on continually till death, if we do not try to be contented, and for this God brings forward calamity instructing us that in passions and desires there is no satisfaction but in controlling them.

The poet then says: The king gathered together physicians from every corner, and said, 'The life of us both is in your hands. My life is of no account and she is the life of my life. I am in pain and sickness and she is the remedy. Whoever relieves her, will be bestowed with all my treasures and belongings.' The physicians replied, 'We will exert ourselves to the utmost by applying all our intelligences together. We are, no doubt, expert physicians and remedy for the pain will surely be found out.' In their arrogance they did not say, 'If God wills;' consequently, God showed to them the inability of men. The avoidance of 'If God wills' is the sign of pride and arrogance, though the mere saying of these words has no effect. There are many instances where though one does not utter, 'If God wills,' but the soul of him is in harmony with the soul of the will of God. However much they (physicians) applied remedy and medicine, the pain increased and the object was not fulfilled. The sick girl became more feeble and the sorrow of the king knew no bounds. It was by divine

decree that the oxymel produced bile, and the oil of almonds increased constipation; from purgatives constipation resulted, without giving effect to relaxation. There are cases when by divine decree water helps the fire like naphtha.

Mystically, the rational soul being entangled in lust and passions, seeks its complete satisfaction, but in passionate desires there cannot be any completion of the desires,—one desire will produce another desire, and as long as the later desire is not satisfied, he will remain restless. This restless rational soul is now seeking the guidance, while proceeding towards the path of God, to the physicians who possess worldly wisdom, knowledge, and insight with pride and arrogance in them, for helping from his descending downwards. The physicians readily come to help, but their efforts will have no effect, for it is a disease of the heart, not of the body. The worldly wisdom and insight cannot cure the heart disease, for it requires intuition to understand the state of the heart. Here the physicians are the worldly spiritual guides, who are trying to guide the restless rational soul, but they often lead one astray.

The poet continues on: When the king saw the inability of the physicians, he ran barefooted to the mosque. He entered the mosque and proceeded to the Mihrab (prayer niche) and the prayer carpet was bathed in tears of the king. When he became aware of himself from his immersion of Fana (unconsciousness of one's self, being merged in the divine will), he opened his tongue in praise and applause, with a happy mood, 'O God, your least gift is a great domain over the world; what shall I pray to you, as you know every secret? O you, with whom we always seek shelter in our need, again we are led astray. But you have said, "Although I know every secret of you, nevertheless declare it forthwith in your outward form (of prayer)."' As from the depth of his heart, he raised forward his prayer, the sea of His Bounty began to surge. Slumber

overpowered him at the time of his weeping and he saw in dream that an old man has appeared before him, saying 'Good news, O king, your prayers have been granted ; (now) if any one appears before you tomorrow, know that he is sent by Me. And as he is coming from Me, surely he is an expert physician. Respect him as one trusty and faithful, and in him you find the absolute magic and power of God.' At the promised hour and day, while the king was waiting in expectation for the one mysteriously shown to him, he saw a person excellent (with the attributes of God) and full of treasure (with the beauty of God) who was really a sun in the midst of a shadow. He was appearing like a full moon, who was really non-existent, though visible in the form of phantasy. In spirit phantasy has no reality, (yet) behold the world which is based on phantasy ! All peace and war is based on phantasy, (likewise) all pride and shame is arising from phantasy. But those phantasies which ensnare the saints are the reflections of the moon-faced ones of the garden of God. That phantasy which the king saw in dream became visible in the face of the guest. The king himself, without the chamberlains, advanced and welcomed his guest coming from the Invisible. Both of them became as seamen expert in swimming, the souls of them became mixed together without being sewn, (and at that state the king) said, 'You are my Beloved (in reality), not she ; but in this world work brings forward another work, i.e. every cause has its effect. You are as prophet Mohammed to me, while I am like Umar (the second Caliph) ; and I am always ready at your service.'

Here, the restless rational soul finds that the worldly spiritual guides with their limited knowledge of the secrets of God are not able to make him pacified, by curing the ailment of the maiden, which is nothing but the unsatisfying thirst of desires and passions which have been inflicted on the rational soul. These worldly guides cannot give the restless soul any proper lead as they have no real

knowledge of the secrets of God. It is always striving to rise up from its entanglement with the passions, but it requires patience and control of mind, which should be instructed by the real spiritual guide. For this purpose the rational soul turns towards the aid of God for spiritual upliftment, of which he is not aware, though he is seeking it. And this is the nature of every rational soul ; whenever he is in difficulties and finds no rescue from it, he seeks the aid of God who readily helps the soul if he be earnest and sincere. We find that the restless rational soul has been united with the spirit of God, though momentarily. And there are instances where it has been found that, if any soul is sincere and earnest to the core of his heart, he will get the glimpses of the light of God. For the moment the restless soul developed to the state of the soul at rest ; and as only the soul at rest is qualified to realize the reality of God, he tasted it. These are the moments when the invisible voices from God are heard. And if the rational soul desires that God should come down, to guide him in every affair of life with a physical form, he comes down and takes a visible form.

Only God exists and all the other things of the world are non-existent. The false imaginations of us make them existing. We exist as long as we think ourselves to be existing. This world is based on contraries and any contrary things have no essence in reality, though they become visible to us who are also made up of contrary things and ideas. The moment we shall be relieved of our contrary things, i.e. the different elements of which our bodies are made and of our contrary ideas with which our minds are developed, we shall be mixed with God who has no opposite. And that is the only reality which cannot be described in words. That is the state to be realized. We know that Adam was thrown into this world, i.e. creation began, as he took a single step into the region of animal spirit by taking a forbidden fruit which was the symbol of impurity or ignorance. We separated ourselves from God

who is All Pure, by our impurities which compelled us in bodily forms, and the moment we shall be relieved of all impurities, we shall be again mixed with God, the All-pure One. The spiritual guide who is a representative from God in this world is always ready to help us to realize that state, if we really want it. And, at last, we shall find that God, spiritual guide, and the devotee, all the three are one in essence. Every work or cause of this world is of secondary nature and its effect is also secondary. One work begets another and in this way it goes on continually, but if we could stop in the beginning, there would have been no creation at all. But creation is according to the will of God, and this world from our birth to death is a great journey towards the goal, and the goal can be attained only by following the precepts of the spiritual guide to which the rational soul has once been initiated.

The tale advances thus: The king opened his hands and embraced him and like Love seated him into his heart and soul. He began to kiss his hand and foot and inquire about his home and (toils of) journey. With many such questions he led him to the chief seat, and exclaimed: 'At last I have found a treasure by being patient. O Gift from God and defence against trouble, you are the meaning of "Patience is the key of joy." O You, your very appearance is the answer to every question, and every difficulty is solved by you without having any discussion. You are the interpreter of every secret of our hearts and a helping hand to every one whose foot is entangled in the mire. Welcome, O You, Chosen One, if you disappear, destiny will come upon us and will straiten the wide room of our hearts.'

The rational soul has been initiated to the spiritual guide, who may be called the spiritual soul or the universal soul (Aql-i-qul). Once he has been initiated, he gives all his heart and soul to the spiritual guide, i.e. he readily agrees to abide by the rules and conditions of the universal soul, which in the form of the spiritual guide will regulate the

rational soul to its development to the stage of universal soul. Once he has got the scent of the universal soul, he feels that he is approaching the Reality which is the source of joy and bliss, for which every soul is hankering after. Here, the guide, as he knows every nook and corner of his devotee, is capable of leading him to the right path. And also as the devotee feels that without the help of the spiritual guide he will not be able to be relieved of passions and greed, it is of great advantage for the guide to lead the devotee who has firm faith and great respect towards his guide, which qualities are essential for the devotee in this connection.

The poet proceeds on: When that intercourse and bounteous feast was over, the king took his hand and led him to the seraglio. He described to him his tale of a sufferer and its infliction, and then seated him beside the sick (girl). . . . He saw the pain and the secret became open to him, but he concealed it from the king (for the moment). Her pain was not from the black or yellow bile; the smell of every firewood appears from the smoke. From her grief, he perceived that she was heart-stricken, well in body but overpowered by attachment to another heart. Attachment is clear by her grief of the heart. Ailing of the lover is different from all other ailments: 'Love is the astrolabe of the secrets of God.'—Then the poet gives a long description of the mysteries of love.

After the devotee has been fully initiated to his spiritual guide, he is laying bare to him all the secrets of his heart. And here we find, how the spiritual guide is going to regulate him for his upliftment. He knows everything, but he cannot disclose it at that very moment. Though the rational soul, now, feels that he is overpowered by passions, but he cannot readily shake it down. It requires time to be relieved from these lower passions of the heart. Therefore, the spiritual guide is also waiting for that moment. But it is axiomatic that every strong attachment has great force behind it. And it will ultimately lead to God. Only the direction of the

attachments should be changed. The poet then declares, 'Whether love be from this side or from that side, it will ultimately lead us to that side (i.e. we shall be perfect in divine love).

But the spirit of love cannot be described. It is beyond description and can be understood only by one who is in love. The poet says, 'However much I may say in exposition and explanation of love, but when I come to describe love itself, I become ashamed of that description. Although any description through language makes a thing clear, but in the description of love, tongueless one is more clear. In expounding it, intellect lay down helpless in the mud like an ass; it was love alone that could describe of love and its qualities. The proof of the sun became the sun itself, if you require the proof, do not turn your face from it.' In the same way, if we like to have the idea of pure love, we must always be striving after following the principles of purity. But it is not possible, at the first instant, to avoid all the obstructions that come in the way of the goal, as one cannot look at the sun constantly. We know about the sun through its shadow only. And the poet says, 'If the shadow gives an indication of it, the sun will give spiritual light at every moment.' A beautiful simile is drawn here. The sun is the pure light of God, and its rays spread over the world are the spiritual guide or the universal reason, and its shadow may be compared to the intellectual faculties and the phenomenal world by which we are influenced. And the poet says, 'The shadow, like interesting stories in the night hours, influences you to sleep, but when the sun rises the moon is cloven asunder.' People engrossed in the phenomenal world are always unaware of the pure light of God, but when the spiritual light will shine in them, they will be awakened to the presence of God, and the moon (referring to the intellect which derives its shadowy light from the sun) in them will be pulverized. The phrase 'splitting of the moon in twain' (Inshaqqal qamara) referred to in the Koran

(ch. LVI. i) signifies the approach of the Day of Resurrection, where every one will stand before God face to face; it may also be interpreted as the salvation of the soul when it will be united with God.

Though the poet tries to make clear the idea of God by symbols, he admits that it is beyond human conception. He says 'There is nothing so unique in the world like this (physical) sun, but the spiritual sun (God) is everlasting; It has no yesterday, i.e. It is beyond time and space. Although this external sun is the One (therefore it cannot be compared to another); yet it is possible to imagine one resembling it. (But) the spiritual sun (God) which is beyond the ether, has no peer in mind or externally. How His essence can be contained in imagination that we may have an idea about His resemblance?' Then, in poetic fashion, through a dialogue between him and his spiritual guide, the poet explains it more clearly that God cannot be described adequately: I said to him, 'It is better that the secret of the friend should be concealed; please listen to it through stories. It is better that the secret of the lovers should be said in the talk of others.' He said: 'Tell it openly and nakedly and with faithfulness; do not put me off, O You talkative. Put off the veil and speak nakedly, for I do not sleep with my idol, wearing a shirt.' I said, 'If He become naked in the vision, neither you remain, nor your bosom (or sides) and the waist (Kinara and Miyan, have double meaning—bosom and waist, and margin and between, referring to space and time, which will vanish away, when the absolute unity of God will be revealed).' Hence he concludes this discussion of God thus: Ask (of the mysteries) of God but ask with measure; for a blade of straw will not be able to bear the mountain. If the sun, by whom this world is illuminated, approach nearer, it will burn away everything. Don't seek of trouble, turmoil, and bloodshed; ask no more about the sun of Tabriz (Shams-i-Tabriz, the poet's spiritual guide; here he may also be referred to God.

And to a devotee the spiritual guide is only a personification of God). We, ordinary persons, are like a blade of grass and the light of God may be compared to the mountain. So long we have not purified ourselves, it is not possible to grasp the real conception of God. And if we go to understand Him, our raw conceptions will only bring forth trouble, turmoil, and bloodshed, which have become evident in our everyday life that murder and bloodshed are often being committed in the name of religion and God.

Let us again come to our story. The physician made the house secluded for him and the handmaiden. With proper examination, enquiry, and search, he understood that it was a goldsmith of Samarkand to whom the lady was attached. And he said thus to the maiden. 'I knew what is your illness and I will soon in delivering you display the art of magic. Be glad and have firm faith and no anxiety; I will do for you what rain does to a garden. I will bear all your anxieties and you need not be anxious; I am to you kinder than hundred fathers.' He then went to the king and advised him to summon the goldsmith from that far country, after beguiling him with gold and robes of honour. Readily messengers were sent to Samarkand, and when the man saw much wealth and robes of honour, he was beguiled and parted himself from the town and his children. The next few lines proceed thus: Joyously he came to the road, being unaware that the king had a design against his life. He mounted an Arab horse and proceeded joyously; (really) he counted the robes of honour as a fine paid for murder. In his own fancy there were riches, power, and prestige; (as) said Azrail (the angel of death), 'Go, (on your wrong path); yes, a fruit (of enjoyment you will get).'

When the goldsmith arrived at the court, he was cordially welcome. And according to the advice of the (divine) physician, the handmaiden was given (in marriage) to that stranger, so that she might be happy by union with him, and the water of union with

him might put out the fire (of passion). For six months they were satisfying their desire, till the girl was restored to health. After that the physician prepared for him a potion, and when the goldsmith drank it, he began to dwindle away before her. As because of sickness beauty faded away from him, the soul of the lady also had no sympathy in his misfortune. Gradually he became more ugly and his face became disfigured and the heart of the lady also became more indifferent to him.

Here, the physician knew, at the first moment, that the king's better half (i.e. the handmaiden, symbolically the lower passions in which the rational soul has been entangled), was suffering for her attachment towards the goldsmith (i.e. other worldly desires, such as wealth, power, and prestige, that are no less than lust and passions) and the lower passions have always strong attachment towards these things. But he cannot disclose it, for possibly the king may not believe it, that his lower passions are really in attachment with other things. Therefore the physician takes some time and then discloses to him the fact that really he has other desires which should be fulfilled. And he knows very well that these attachments have no lasting effect; they will fade away sooner or later from the corner of the rational soul which is universally hankering after spiritual matters. The potion applied to the goldsmith signifies the slow process of self-mortification whereby the carnal soul is purged of its passion and desires under the direction of the spiritual guide.

The poet then remarks, 'Those attachments which are for the sake of colour (i.e. outward beauty and power) are not (really) love which will come to disgrace at last. Had it (goldsmith, or the passions and desires) been a disgrace altogether the evil judgement might not have come upon him.' If there were no further passions and desires, and if the people thought them as disgrace, at the beginning, then they were not to lose anything. But this does not actually

happen. The people hanker after and when they find at last that in following after desires, there is no peace and that these things have no lasting effect, they try to avoid them, and humbly submit to the spiritual guides who lead them to the goal.

At the pathetic loss of the goldsmith, the poet advises thus: 'As the love of the dead is not enduring and as the dead one is never coming to us again (i.e. the attraction for the things temporary has no lasting effect, and they cannot inspire us for ever), choose the love of that Living One, who is everlasting and who is a cup-bearer to you, offering life-increasing wine. And select the love of that One from whom all the prophets gained (real) power and glory. Do not say, "We have no admission to that king (God); (for) dealings with the generous are not difficult." God is All Merciful. He is always ready to help us if we only be earnest in getting His favour, and thus to realize God.'

In concluding the story the poet says, 'It was by divine order that the physician administered poison to the goldsmith. This action was like that of Khizr who cut the throat of the boy but the secret of this is not understood by the common masses. (Also) if Khizr sank the boat in the sea, yet, in his sinking it down, there were hundreds of righteousness.' With reference to these acts, we find in the Koran (S. XVIII) that Moses was up against the mysteries (of God) which he wanted to explore. He searched out a man endowed with knowledge derived from the divine springs from which flow the paradoxes of life. He was shown three such paradoxes and how human impatience is inconsistent with their true understanding. Khizr, sent from God, and Moses were on a journey until they were in the boat, and he (Khizr) scuttled it. Moses said, 'Have you scuttled it in order to drown those in it?' . . . (Then) they met a young man, whom Khizr killed. Moses asked, 'Have you not slain an innocent person who had slain none?' He answered, 'Did I not tell

you cannot have any patience with me? . . . ?' Afterwards it was found that his every act was done for lasting benefit as Khizr interpreted them: 'As for the boat, it belonged to a certain man in dire want; they plied it on the water; but I wished to render it unserviceable, for there was after them a certain king who seized on every boat by force. As for the youth, his parents were people of faith and we feared that he would grieve them by obstinate rebellion and ingratitude.' Therefore when divine decree wills anything to be done, we should submit to it humbly. And our poet declares thus: Like Ismail lay your head before Him, gladly and laughingly give up your soul before His dagger, in order that your soul may remain laughing unto eternity like the pure soul of Ahmed (the prophet Mohammed) with the one (God).

Mystically, it is the sacrificing of the carnal soul, for the sake of God, so that the eternal bliss may be found out. It is the surrender of the lower self before the higher self which is the true meaning of Islam, and is the secret of every true religion. The king was possessed with both temporal and spiritual powers, that is, the rational soul is mixed up with the lower passions and desires, and has in it the spirit of the light of God. So long it is following after passions and worldly desires which are intermingled together, it cannot develop in the spiritual path. But in desires there is pain which is a blessing in disguise. Pains after pains are coming to us and they declare that we are led astray. Amidst these sufferings the rational soul hankers after spiritual light which is also innate in it. And the response comes. Gradually, by mortifying the carnal share in it, it develops in its spiritual side, and at last becomes one with the spiritual soul which is the goal of every religion. This unity of God has so beautifully been expounded by the poet in this simple story of the king and the hand-maiden.

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND MODERN INDIA*

BY PROF. K. R. PISHAROTI, M.A.

None has done more to rouse up and to raise up the spirit of India—and this is essentially religious—from the lethargy into which it has fallen; none has expounded in clearer terms and in more practical form this sense of spirituality, handed down from the Vedic period in unbroken succession, the spirituality which forms the warp and woof of our very being—than Swami Vivekananda. He has opened our eyes to the causes that have conspired to degenerate our motherland and the teeming millions of her children and he has pointed out how we may redeem, how we may bring back to life what now lies submerged, how we may assert once again and how we may hand on to our neighbours the torch of wisdom for the benefit of ourselves and the world at large. Let us not delude ourselves with the glories that were; let us not ponder over the might-have-been. Let us, on the other hand, arise, let us be awake, let us forge ahead and let us achieve the glory that *was*, the glory that is yet to be. Let us be the glorious sons of our glorious forefathers.

In the midst of the clash of cultures and the clash of ideals, brought on by the lust of gold and the scramble for power, Dharma deteriorates and spiritual values degenerate. Then the Lord incarnates Himself for the protection of the good, for the destruction of evil, and for the establishment of Dharma or the eternal verities of life. In that great apostle who carried ablaze, far and wide, the light of religion and spirituality, lit by his glorious Master, Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, we see a fulfilment of the divine promise—we see an incarnation of God. Let us cherish their hallowed memory and follow in their footsteps and ensure peace and well-being for ourselves and the world at large.

Swami Vivekananda is a stern realist and realizes more trenchantly than any one before

him or after him, how we have fallen away from our high pedestal. We have lost our seriousness and practicality, our organizing capacity and power of management; we have lost our honesty of purpose and cultural integrity; we have lost our sense of self-confidence and self-respect, our faith and love; and naturally enough we have degenerated into a nation of imbeciles—physical, intellectual, and emotional wrecks, worse, indeed, than hewers of wood and drawers of water. Self-sacrifice, self-reverence, and self-knowledge—these which alone lead life to sovereign power, we have bartered away unconsciously, if not deliberately. 'The final plank in the making of future India,' says Swamiji, 'is the unification of religion, for no nation can be rejuvenated, unless it be based on the innate goodness of man, i.e. on the religion of man.' Time is rather past to give up our petty quarrels and petty differences; time is come to gather up our spiritual forces and achieve the national union of India. What we want today is strength, 'muscles of iron and nerves of steel and indomitable will,' and this is possible only through the practice of the religion of *fearlessness* and the realization of the ideal of Advaita. The prophet has given his message: let us hope that we are not too imbecile to benefit by it.

Ours was never isolated life, despite our natural geographical isolation; and, indeed, today no nation can live in isolation. Matter is now forced from one extremity of the world to the other in the twinkling of an eye and no place seems inaccessible. We can see, from where we stand, what is happening at the other end of the earth, and the man talking from thousands and thousands of miles away we hear with our ears and see with our eyes.

* Lecture delivered by Prof. K. R. Pisharoti, M.A. of the Benares Hindu University, on the occasion of the birthday celebrations of Swami Vivekananda.

Modern science has annihilated space and is in the process of annihilating time, for, even as it is, voice and form are being rescued from the hands of time, the destroyer. Isolation now is utterly impossible, and we cannot shut off foreign impacts and cultural contacts. The impact from the West has enslaved us, enfeebled us, and the impact from the East is now being felt powerfully : it only remains to be seen how it will affect us—whether it will re-vitalize us or whether it will de-vitalize us. From the very moment of being until the very moment of non-being, life is a continuous process of becoming, which involves perpetual adjustment to the ever changing environments, physical, mental, and moral. Life has, thus, been a continual process of building, eternal building. It has been different in different places and has produced different results. And naturally the civilizations, ancient or modern, which different nations have built up, have each its own distinctive trait. Thus the Grecian civilization reveals the love of the perfection of form ; the Roman, the love of precision and accuracy ; the Gothic, the love of passion and energy ; the English, the love of tenacity and the German, the love of thoroughness. India, on the other hand, reveals the love of spirituality. In ancient days we assimilated whatever cultured contacts we have had ; and naturally the Dharmi has always remained essentially the same, however much the Dharmas become metamorphosed. But under the force of the impact from the West, we are giving up the traditional process of assimilation and introducing instead the unhappy process of imitation, and this has tended to produce a slave mentality—a feature which has begun to eat into the very vitals of our national life, so much so that even the Dharmi is becoming diseased. Swami Vivekananda has visualized this as the greatest of the disasters that modern India is now exposed to. Let us, by all means, take whatever is good in foreign cultures,—the Grecian love of form perfection, the Roman love of precision, the English love of tenacity,

or the German love of thoroughness. Let us receive in as rich a measure as possible the achievements of modern science and ameliorate the condition of the masses ; let us accept the noble science of healing and alleviate the sufferings of our brethren ; let us welcome that exuberant sense of freedom and personal liberty and do away with our social inequalities ; let us cultivate their professional honesty and integrity and serve our fellow beings more efficiently. But let us not give up our sense of ethical and spiritual values ; let us not practise duplicity to attain material ends ; let us not convert honesty into a matter of policy and justice into a matter of expediency ; let us not be deceived by the fads of social life and let us not convert sacramental marriage into sex companionship. Let us hearken then to the warning of the revered seer ; let us for ever be Indians, let us be proud that we are Indians and let us repeat with the seer 'I am proud of being an Indian.' Sympathetic is his outlook, profound is his diagnosis, sagely is his counsel, and radical is his cure. He is at the same time relentless and unscathing in his criticism regarding the numerous ubiquitousities we have, in the name of religion, reared up in our everyday social and religious life. Orthodoxy, untouchability, unapproachability, the emphasis of form to the utter exclusion of spirit, claiming of privileges in life without shouldering responsibilities—these he has mercilessly exposed and ruthlessly condemned. He viewed life as it is—its innate goodness and circumstantial weakness, the hallucinations it has set up and the snares and pitfalls it has created ; he has estimated what we have lost and what we are losing, through neglect, through ignorance, and now through helplessness. He has told us what is at stake, he has told us how we can prevent it and thus redeem the glory that was India.

The greatest service that Swamiji has done for us is to wrest religion from the hands of mystery-mongering priests and philosophy from the hands of academic pedants and bring them once again within

the reach of the common man, for him to understand them and experience them himself. The blessed Master and his blessed disciple have both alike shown us that there is no incompatibility between a religious life and the realities of modern life, that the two are not irreconcilable, that saints and seers need not shun society and run to caves, but can live and participate actively in the complex life of today. On the other side, despite its jarring notes and tendencies, despite its strikingly insistent materialism and egotism, despite its utter ignoring of spiritual and ethical values, modern life does tolerate, honour, and cherish its spiritual leaders. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa and Swami Vivekananda have both lived amongst us and the modern age has honoured them more than any other.

At every crucial period in world's history a spiritual giant appears for the salvation of the world and the thinking section thereof have always listened to him. Herein lies the only hope for the future world which is now particularly darkened by the overhanging shadow of the latest, but not the last, instrument of destruction that science has forged—the shadow of the 'Atom Bomb.' To the world bound down by modern power-politics, cowed down by fear and distress, hatred and jealousy, and bleeding still from the untold sufferings of an inhuman war, no safer recipe can be prescribed than the utterances of these two revered Acharyas, which serve 'as an intellectual treat to the erudite, a fountain of inspiration to the weak and a tower of strength to the destitute,'—a recipe for the hour, for all hours as well; and if we understand and appreciate it and translate it into action, it leads to a rejuvenation of life, national and international.

Mystery-mongering by those who are engaged in the practice of philosophy and terminological hair-splitting, by those who preach the science of religion—both these have done immense disservice to religion and philosophy, and the man in the street flies away from both, crying 'these are not of us

nor are we of theirs.' Swami Vivekananda, filled with commiseration to see his fellow beings tossed about in the ocean of existence like a rudderless boat, devoted his precious life and brilliant gifts to regain for us our lost spirituality—the paradise we have lost through our neglect, ignorance, and foolishness. Religion is nothing mysterious, nothing secret, nothing to be afraid of. It is not the sacred preserve of the exclusive few, of certain individuals or of a certain class. It is not necessarily conditioned by forms and conventions. Let us, therefore, cast off our fear, our weakness, our lethargy, and cultivate strength and live a religious life, the real life of a rational human being. Let us share with the blessed few our common human heritage, to refuse to believe blindly, exercise reason and judgement, and stick to the absolute unqualified truth. Life devoted to truth is religious life. Let us ever be true and sincere, in great things as in small things. Let us not sell our valued heritage for a mess of pottage that material civilization holds forth for us.

How can we lead a religious life? Life is service and living is serving. Bhutadaya, active vibrating sympathy and love, is the secret of service. Such love alone can adequately solve the problems of life, remove the ills of life, and yield us the sweets of life, here and hereafter. Nowadays the air is thick with planning for future; but, in this whole course of talk of planning for future, nobody talks of love, nobody talks of service, nobody talks of religion, and in the schemes adumbrated, day after day, there is set forth only the pure materialistic point of view, in which egotism stands out first and last and material pleasures, next. But high life, rich life is not essentially good life or happy life, and this cannot be achieved by amassing wealth, nor by raising the *standard of life*, nor by bringing the benefits of modern comforts to the masses. The most essential feature of a happy life is unselfish life, that is life devoted to service or Bhutadaya. The widest recognition of this fundamental truth

and the ordering of everyday life in terms thereof—this alone can save us in our present sad predicament, this alone can save the world from its headlong rush to destruction. Constituted as we are psychologically and living as we do in these modern days, it may not be possible, all at once, to forget the 'I' in us; but something is, indeed, possible. We certainly can avoid talking and feeling in terms of 'I' and 'mine' which always stress exclusiveness and emphasize egoism.

Thus let us talk and feel; thus let us live our short span of life remembering for ever the message of Swami Vivekananda — Arise, Awake, and stop not till the goal is reached. Let us practise Shraddha, Samatva, and Bhutadaya, the cardinal themes of our ancient religion which carry blessings behind it and peace before it. Indians should strive to resuscitate religion and spirituality in this holy land of ours and flood the world, giving it new life and new vigour.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

The reader will find in the *Conversations with Swami Shivananda* the soul-stirring and inspiring words of Mahapurushji, based not on the clever wisdom of men of the world, but on the inner wisdom that comes from the love of God and His creatures. . . . In the *Thoughts on Education*, the present trend of education has been examined and shown that only an education based on the broad principles of mutual love and international understanding can lay a sure foundation for lasting peace. . . . Swami Ashokananda psychologically analyses the motive of power and maintains that power in itself is not bad and can be made an instrument for the uplift of the individual, in *The Quest for Power*. . . . Swami Pavitrananda reviews from a new angle of vision the oft-argued and never-settled points in the *Has the World grown Irreligious?* . . . In *The King and the Handmaiden*, Prof. Paul relates a Persian story with a spiritual undercurrent running all through it. . . . *Swami Vivekananda and Modern India* describes the influence and widening grip that this illustrious son of India is having on the intelligentia in the country.

COMMUNAL RIOTS

There are, as Mr. Churchill said, only two parties in a struggle: the friend and the foe. Religion is no exception to it, especially when anti-religious elements are raising their ugly heads under the mask of religion and trying to disgrace her pristine purity. The recent riots in Calcutta and other places have clearly shown who are her friends and who her enemies. The unscrupulous way in utilizing the religious fervour of the people, the fanaticism causing frightful massacres, are all brought to the light to the shame and sorrow of all. It is a blur on the nature of mankind that such hideous slaughter of innocent men and women should occur in the name of religion the very meaning of which is to 'bind' or 'hold' together. Religion brings nothing but peace and goodwill. 'Let there be peace on earth', 'All these living beings are verily my own self', says the Hindu. What does the name 'Islam' signify? 'Peace to all,' says Mohammed. 'All God's creatures are His family, therefore be kind to man on earth, be he good or bad', preaches he. When Rasul asked Mohammed to curse the infidels, Mohammed said: 'I am not sent for this, nor was I

sent but as a mercy to mankind.' Thus the essence of religion is love and sympathy. But these are the very principles that are defiled by those who profess to act on them.

There was a large exodus of people from Calcutta in those days of panic. It was not a mere evacuation of women and children, sick and old. It was a cowardly running away of robust citizens from their post of duty. For it is the duty of every one to combat evil forces even at the risk of life. It is a shame to the religious instinct to take to one's heels at the sign of danger, especially when the very life-force of the Hindu is centred in the belief that he is the immortal soul, omnipotent and fearless. 'This life is but a tillage for the next, do good that you may reap there,' says Mohammed. It is bad logic and misguided philosophy if they try to cover this cowardice by high ethical principles of non-violence and kindness. 'If thou refusest to engage in the righteous warfare, then, forfeiting thine own Dharma, thou shalt incur sin,' says the Gita; while the Koran exhorts, 'When pestilence shall pervade mankind and you shall be amongst them, remain with them and cherish your children.' Here also we find enemies of religion working under her mask. It is the duty of every one who has the good of religion at heart to organize and cut out this cancer that is slowly eating into her vitals.

It is, however, satisfying to see those brave and selfless Hindus and Muslims, who even at great personal risk stood their ground in all these orgies of passion and tumult, and did their duty to their fellow beings by fearlessly facing the mad irreligious onrush. They are the very pillars of religion, which preaches selfless love to all. It is only through love and sacrifice that true religion can be made to live and grow. The motto should be, 'help and not fight, peace and not dissension, assimilation and not destruction.' We can only pity those who dream of exclusive survival of their religion

and the destruction of others through such spilling of innocent blood.

SCIENCE NOTES

These notes have so far taken the reader through a phantasmagoria of magic theories, which science continues building in order to reach the reality, which for all we know may still be as far away as centuries back when she began the search. But the strangeness of these theories does never deter science and she boldly proceeds to stranger lands where her conclusions take her. What will you think of an electron whose radius has been calculated as five million millionth part of a centimetre, and which is revolving round its nucleus several thousand million million times per second? While dealing with stars we measure distances not by miles, but by light years, a light-year being the distance travelled by light in one year at the rate of 186,000 miles per second. This enables us to indicate these distances in known numerals, which were perhaps invented for more modest calculations. The distances involved in the consideration of atoms are inversely proportional to the distances involved in the study of stars, while the speeds are terrific in both cases. No tiny measure has, however, so far been invented to enable us to indicate these minute distances in known numerals, as in the case of stars, and we must therefore use the clumsy fraction we are acquainted with. Atoms are now miniature solar systems,—microcosms constituting this huge macrocosm. This is borne out by the fact that matter in an atom is now considered as occupying only an infinitesimal portion of its size, all the rest is empty space. How can an atom be then regarded as solid matter or the smallest particle of matter, when it is more like the universe in itself? It is difficult to make anything out of this mathematical Fairland woven by science, and we begin to doubt the wisdom of this wild-goose chase, which leads us nowhere. But these conclusions are

really mathematical concepts, which may not have a shadow of reality in the physical world. Maybe, man will only conjecture, and will never find the reality.

But the scientist should be praised for his wit, for he has a ready solution for every difficulty which faces him. When confronted with the question if the universe is still expanding, and if it is expanding into non-space (for space is limited?), he promptly replies that what we call non-space is nothing more than space of five dimensions, beyond the bounds of a space of four dimensions. Who will tell us whether there is any sense in this, or if any sense can be made out of it? This is just a mystery trick for the present, as other such brave fancies.

Another fantastical conception has been given to the electron, that it is a train of waves from infinity to infinity its speed being known at every point in this train while its position is unknown. When it is acted on by a ray of light this train is reduced to a zero point, when the position becomes known and the speed unknown. Similarly a wave of light emanating from a distant star spreads out to limitless dimensions, and continues spreading till it strikes an atom, when at once it re-assembles to a zero point trying to enter the atom. Such grotesque ideas only bewilder a layman, but he need not be puzzled over them, as they are only mathematical devices to represent reality and not the reality itself. What the reality is the mathematician will perhaps never know, and the scientist most probably not, for he is wedded to the mathematician, who only

weaves yarns, when he says that everything in this universe is only the solution of some mathematical equation. The layman can neither make any mental picture of these equations nor can he have any visual perception of the phenomena they represent. They are just ideas, which are as abstract as any ever propounded by philosophers who regarded this universe just an illusion. But the psychic powers developed by some philosophers enabled them to reach the reality and to see it with their mind's eye, while the scientist has not been able to see it either through his microscope or through his mathematical formulae, because perhaps the reality is of the nature of mind and eludes all investigation on the physical plane. The two approaches are different, the objective approach is wholly material and however high it may fly into the abstract the objectivity ever sticks to it. The other approach being subjective depends on understanding rather than finding, and as understanding leads to knowledge, enlightenment comes to the seeker, which lays everything bare before him. It may be terrible to think, but science with all her cleverness may not find the reality at all and may have to abandon her approach, to take the other method, which has been sanctified by supermen of all ages who have visualised the reality and have enjoyed the beatitude of the vision. This is however taking the most disappointing view of the methods of science, and we may still wish her well in her attempt for they have illumined many a dark corner of the mystery that is this creation.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

FRENCH

A FRENCH BIOGRAPHY OF SISTER NIVEDITA.
By LIZELLE REYMOND. *Victor Attinger Co., Paris.*
1945. Pp. 350.

The principal events in the career of Sister Nivedita (Miss Margaret Noble) are well known to the students

of Ramakrishna-Vivekananda literature from many sources. Besides, her own *Master as I Saw Him* (1910), the somewhat biographical work about Vivekananda, itself throws light on her evolution. The same may be said about her *Notes of Some Wanderings with Swami Vivekananda* (1913), as well as *The Northern Tirtha: A Pilgrim's Diary* (1911). As for her ideo-

logies, they are crystal clear in *The Web of Indian Life* (1904), *Footfalls of Indian History* (1915), and *Aggressive Hinduism* (1905) as much as in *Studies from an Eastern Home* (1913), *Civic and National Ideals* (1911), and *Cradle Tales of Hinduism* (1904). But a systematic and well organized life-story remained yet to be written. This is at last available in the French work entitled *Nivedita, Fille de l'Inde* by Lizelle Reymond. The authoress and her husband Jean Herbert have been working for a number of years for the propagation of *Pensée Hindoue et Sagesse Orientale* (Hindu thought and Oriental wisdom) in French. Ramakrishna, Vivekananda, Brahmananda, Gandhi, Ramana, Aurobindo, Shankara, Tagore, and Ramdas have been rendered accessible to French readers either by their own translations or with their commentaries and prefaces. Some thirty publications, large and small, are already to their credit. They have, further, produced some original and interpretative essays on the thinkers of modern India, Hindu spirituality, the notion of future life according to Hindus, Vedantism and practical life, and so forth.

Part I of the book on Nivedita (1867-1911) deals with the following topics: Infancy, Student, Towards Independence, Teacher, Encounter, Disciple, Towards India. The contents of Part II are as follows: Discoveries, Nivedita, The Beginnings, The Ascent to Sacrifice, Out of her Element, Adoration, At the Feet of Sarada Devi, Zenana, Noviciate, First Work, Brahmo Samaj Friendships, *Jaya Ma Kali*, Towards the West, The Halt at London, Sanyasa, Working in the USA, In France, At London, Preparedness, The Death of the Master. In Part III we find the following items: Sadhana, The National Hero, The Yoga of Politics, Aggressive Hinduism, Buddha Gaya, Swadeshi, The Nivedita School, The Problem of Women, Internal Life, The Congress at Benares, The Armed Hand, Exile, The Last Fight, Kedarnath, The End of the Voyage.

A Frenchwoman has written the biography of an Irishwoman who lived a life of intense creativity, thought, and propaganda for forty-four years in Europe, America, and India. Nivedita was indeed known more as Indian than anything else. Mme. Lizelle Reymond's work about this *fille de l'Inde* (daughter of India) is a marvellous creation. The problems or rather difficulties of authorship can be easily comprehended. In the first place, we have here a foreigner writing about another foreigner. Secondly, the heroine of the authoress adopted and became part and parcel of a country which in language, arts, traditions, mores, religion, economy, and politics happens to be the farthest removed from the fatherlands of both. Finally, the biography has not been conceived in a schoolboyish manner. It has been executed as an encyclopaedic treatise. Minute details—meaty materials—enrich what might have been but the bony scaffolding of dates, places, persons,

and institutions. The data are as varied as the full-blooded life of the heroine. Nivedita was a humanist and a public worker in every field—patriotism, education, politics, nationalism, industry, history, moral reform, social service, feminism, and what not. To be able to deal chronologically with all these aspects of activity and speculation, propaganda as well as idealism, in a substantial manner and call out of them the picture of a living and a dynamic personality is an extraordinary job for any author.

We should not be surprised, however, if in the large-sized volume like the present one, senior Swamis of the Ramakrishna Order should find some inaccuracies in facts or overstatements in interpretations. General readers are, at any rate, in a position to point out that certain persons who were 14 or 15 years old have been mentioned as having brought Tagore into contact with some foreigners or lectured before Satis Mukherjee's Dawn Society as Nivedita's colleagues. In regard to many observations the authoress must have depended upon hearsay evidences, vague recollections of well-meaning old-timers, or the opinions of over-enthusiastic propagandists interested in certain social, cultural, or political movements. In case an Indian edition were attempted, the editors would have to introduce quite a number of drastic corrections. But, altogether, the writing exhibits Reymond's sincere devotion to truth and objective appreciation of Nivedita and the causes that lay nearest to her heart.

Reymond has done proper justice to the drives and strivings of Nivedita and lifted her to the plane of international culture. She has at the same time served India in the same spirit in which Nivedita loved to serve India and her people both at home and abroad. The result is a great book. It deserves the homage of every Indian intellectual and publicist.

In the preface, Vishvabandhu (perhaps a Frenchman) writes that '*de tous les grands hommes de l'Inde bien peu seraient devenus ce qu'ils ont été ou auraient accompli tout ce qu'ils ont fait*' (of all the great men of India, 1895-1914, very few would have become what they have been or accomplished what they did) if Nivedita had not helped them or prepared their way. This statement is much too hyperbolic. The correct position may be stated somewhat as follows. During the glorious Bengali revolution (1905-10), Nivedita was a name to conjure with in young Bengali. She was a colleague of almost everybody who was anybody in the movement of those days at Calcutta. In a list of prominent names associated creatively with the Bengali revolution it would be necessary to mention Nivedita. If Vivekananda had not done anything but import Nivedita into the Indian sphere of activity his life-work would have still remained exceedingly epoch-making and fruitful. She was his miraculous discovery for India and grew into one of

the profoundest treasures of the Indian people. But my appreciation of Vishvabandhu or Lizelle Reymond is likely to be challenged by many readers who would care to examine the statements in this book word by word. For, to admit that Nivedita was one of the inspirers of a certain number of creative persons at

Calcutta can by no means be equivalent to saying that 'of all the great men of India' very few would have become what they were without Nivedita's guidance. And, of course, Calcutta is not all India.

BENOY KUMAR SARKAR

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE COSSIPORE GARDEN HOUSE

The nucleus of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission was formed in the Cossipore garden house, where in the year 1886 Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna spent the last days of his glorious life with his disciples, and entered into Mahasamadhi. Foremost among these disciples was Swami Vivekananda, whose contributions to the spiritual advancement of the world are well known. The house and its compound of about 3½ acres, where they used to live in the service of the Master and practise spiritual exercises under his divine inspiration, have been intimately associated with his hallowed memory. The disciples and devotees of Sri Ramakrishna and the general religious-minded public of diverse faiths look upon this site as a place of pilgrimage, and visit it from different parts of India and abroad. Swami Vivekananda also was keen on securing the place.

For the above reasons it has been decided to open a branch of the Organization on the site and preserve the house as an international memorial to Sri Ramakrishna.

We have been able to purchase the northern half of the garden on behalf of the Belur Math at a cost of about two lakhs of rupees, through the kind help of devotees as also the benevolent public. The other half is in process of acquisition through the local Government, which will cost about one and a half lakh of rupees, and a sum of rupees fifty thousand is required to work out the scheme. A friend has kindly promised to pay one lakh of rupees; another lakh is urgently required for the purpose.

We earnestly appeal to the generous public as well as to our friends and sympathisers to lend us a helping hand in materializing this noble object. Contributions will be thankfully accepted by: The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, Dt. Howrah.

SWAMI MADHAVANANDA

General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

REPORT FOR 1944

The activities of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar (S. P., Bihar), a residential high school, for the year 1944, have been detailed in the twenty-third annual report of the institution.

There were 160 students on the roll. Of these 7 were day-scholars and the rest were residents. All the 18 boys sent up for the Matriculation Examination came out successful. The annual prize distribution ceremony was held, as usual, and the Vidyapith boys drew the admiration of the public by their drill, demonstration, and recitation. Emphasis was laid on the physical training of the boys through games, drills, etc., and sufficient attention was paid to the health of the inmates.

Boys were encouraged to take interest in debates, dramatic performances, music, and excursions. Common Hindu festivals and birthday anniversaries of saints and seers were observed by the boys. They were afforded opportunities for religious education and spiritual growth through classes, discourses, and devotional observances. Boys themselves managed their domestic affairs from day to day, and about fifty students received practical training in fine arts, tailoring, and type-writing. The boys conducted two manuscript magazines, and made profitable use of the Vidyapith library containing over 4,800 volumes.

In the Vidyapith charitable outdoor dispensary, medical relief was given to about 5,000 patients during the year. Fifteen students were offered part or full free studentships. The total receipts during the year were Rs. 78,801-10-5 and the total disbursements were Rs. 74,512-9-0.

The following are some of the pressing needs of the institution: (1) A prayer hall where about 300 persons can be accommodated requires Rs. 40,000. (2) A dormitory for 25 boys costing Rs. 40,000. (3) Endowments for the maintenance of some poor but meritorious students.