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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत।”

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

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

PLACE: SRI RAMAKRISHNA MATH, ALLAHABAD

30 January 1932. It was the day of Swami Vivekananda's birth anniversary. Swami Vijnanananda made some offerings in the shrine and spoke at length on Swami Vivekananda, in an inspired mood. He said: 'God-realization is possible only when the aspirant succeeds in crossing the three boisterous streams of lust, wealth, and egoism. Even big boats sink in the whirlpool of these streams. Sri Ramakrishna has set the example of a sincere seeker of God. He could not bear the contact of lust or mammon. The touch of money would contort his hands. At one time he could not accept the salutation of anyone. Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) was completely unattached to these, even in the mind. Plenty of wealth and honour came to him but he had not the least attachment for them. I have myself noticed this. The case of such great souls is quite different from that of ordinary mortals to whom these are objects of tremendous temptation. If these desires for wealth and sense enjoyments are slight, they can be eradicated by discrimination. But if they are strong and overpower the good tendencies of the mind by striking root deep into the heart, then dis-

crimination will not do. Enjoyment alone can quench that strong thirst. It is better under all circumstances to be away from sense objects, as close company with them will take the mind away from the thought of the Divine residing in every man and woman.'

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21 February 1932. Talking of meditation, Swami Vijnanananda said: 'Meditation is like the penetration of the disc called Sudarshana. The mind is like the Sudarshana disc, with a hole in it. Concentrate the mind and, through that fine hole, aim at the Atman. A fully concentrated mind reveals the sun of the Supreme Self. Otherwise, when the mind is scattered, it cannot hit the mark and be focussed on the Self.' The Swami advised the devotees present to study the *Raja Yoga* of Swami Vivekananda. Then he added: 'If the mind has to take a form, let the form be of the Highest. Focus the mind on the chosen divine form day and night. Later, the form has to be discarded and the mind must be merged in the formless light of the Atman.'

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February 1932. Swami Vijnanananda said:

‘Those who are divine incarnations, perfected souls, and knowers of Atman do not require any external help to be perfect. They take delight in Self-knowledge and that is their birthright. But ordinary worldly people, forgetful of their divine nature, attach themselves to the external objects and run after shadows. They lose sight of the invaluable wealth of which they are the eternal owners. There is a parable of Sri Ramakrishna that teaches this moral. Once a dog carried a piece of meat in its mouth. While wandering on the sea-shore it looked at its own reflection in the water and wanted to snatch the piece of meat seen in the mouth of the reflected dog. No sooner this temptation arose in its mind than it stepped into the water in order to snatch the piece of meat but lost its own piece which was swept away by the waves. This was the result of its vain pursuit of the shadow.

‘So we forget the perfection that is inherent in us and go seeking after mere shadows, and are thereby deprived of the infinite bliss which is the very nature of our Self. In order to remain floating on this ocean of bliss, we must keep our mind in constant communion with the higher spiritual verities that lie far above this phenomenal world. Such an elevated mind flows in an incessant current towards this ocean of immortality. It is never swayed by the world but always bathes in the transparent waters of this ocean. The world may temporarily overshadow such a purified mind but can never subdue it. As long as such a spiritual person lives in the world he performs unselfish actions for the well-being of mankind.

‘This is the secret of all action. If one draws a line on water or divides a stream by means of a stick, the line or the dividing mark will disappear immediately, after the stick is removed. Similarly if one’s mind is constantly watered by the stream of spiritual thoughts, then the worldly acts done by one will leave no permanent impressions on it. An action that strengthens our good tendencies and never weakens them is truly said to be disinterested and free from attachment.’

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6 March 1932. Swami Vijnanananda talked of death, and of disease and grief, saying : ‘Before our very eyes we see people entering the jaws of death ; still men, overpowered by ignorance, think that they will not die. Just think of the narrative of the Vanaparva in the *Mahabharata*. Yama, the god of death, appeared, in the guise of a crane, before Yudhishtira and the other Pandavas and put the following four questions :

किमाश्चर्यं का च वार्ता कः पन्था कश्च मोदते ।

“(1) What is the wonder ? (2) What is the news ? (3) What is the way ? (4) Who is happy ?”

None but Yudhishtira could give satisfactory replies to these questions. Yudhishtira replied :

अहन्यहनि भूतानि गच्छन्ति यममन्दिरम् ।

शेषाः स्थिरत्वमिच्छन्ति किमाश्चर्यमतः परम् ॥

“Every day mortal beings enter the abode of Death, but the rest who are alive (foolishly) desire eternal life on earth. What can be a greater wonder than this ?”

अस्मिन् महामोहमये कटाहे...भूतानि कालः पचतीति वार्ता ॥

“Living beings are scorched (day and night) in the red-hot cauldron of this world of great delusion (of sorrows and sufferings). This is the news.”

वेदाः विभिन्नाः स्मृतयो विभिन्नाः

नैको मुनिर्यस्य मतं न भिन्नं ।

धर्मस्य तत्त्वं निहितं गुहायां

महाजनो येन गतः स पन्थाः ॥

“The Vedas are different, so are the Smritis. There is no Muni who has not an independent opinion of his own. But the essential verity of religion is hidden in the cave (of intelligence). (The way) that is followed by the great ones is the way (for all).”

दिनस्य मध्यमे भागे शाकं पचति यो नरः ।

अनृषी चाप्रवासी च स वारिचर मोदते ॥

“He who cooks (and eats) (a simple meal of) rice and vegetables at noonday, who never

incurs a debt, and who does not leave home is (really) happy (like the fish in water).”

* * *

22 March 1932. It was the day of the *Holi* festival or *Dol Purnima*. Swami Vijnananda, addressing a monk, said: ‘Holika Devi, Prahlada’s mother, saved Prahlada from the burning fire on this day, ages ago. Holika Devi had attained perfection in the adoration of the god of fire. So she could sit on fire, with Prahlada in her lap. The fire did not burn Prahlada’s body.’ The Swami continued: ‘Lust, anger, greed, delusion, egoism, and jealousy—these are the fires that heat this cauldron of the world. The Divine Mother saves those who take shelter at Her feet from these scorching fires of the world. Prahlada was safe even in the midst of burning fire through the grace of the Divine Mother. For this reason the people enjoy today as on the *Vijaya Dashami*. One is saved from many evils so long as he lives under the spiritual tutelage of a saint. On a certain *Vijaya Dashami* day, I was in the Math, then situated in the garden-house of Nilambar Mukherjee at Belur. In those days Swamiji used to remain absorbed in deep spiritual moods. As I bowed down to him and touched his feet, I felt a spiritual current, resembling an electric shock. In their presence we feel a spiritual atmosphere. Whoever will come into that environment will receive a spiritual current like an electric charge.

‘Swami Adbhutananda (one of the direct disciples of Sri Ramakrishna) first met Sri Ramakrishna at Dakshineswar, in the company of Ramachandra Datta. Latu (the name of Swami Adbhutananda in his pre-monastic days) took his seat in a corner of the Master’s room. Seeing him the Master asked Ramachandra Datta, “Who is this boy with you?” Ram Babu replied, “This is my bearer”. The Master then asked Latu “Will you stay with

me?” Latu replied, “Yes, I will”. You see, that very moment a current of spirituality passed from the Master to Latu, like an electric charge. The bearer was transformed into a saint, gradually, through the Master’s grace.

‘Guru and Ishta are one. But as long as you are in the realm of name and form, you have to observe the distinction between the two. Then, when the supreme realization dawns, both are seen as one. But this realization is the result of tremendous Sādhana. At the end of his spiritual practices, the Sādhanika finds that the Guru has merged into the Ishta.

‘About caste distinctions the Master said to me: “When a match-stick is burning, if you put on it a heap of dry fuel, will that stick continue to burn? On the other hand, when a forest of dry wood is burning, if you throw into it a raw plantain tree, will it not be burnt?” When only a little spirituality has dawned in the mind, one should observe the distinction between Guru and Ishta, as also distinctions of caste and other current traditions and customs. Non-observance of these religious rituals and conventions will lead to inanition of the little spirituality. But when the blazing fire of Brahman illumines the heart, all the distinctions of Guru and Ishta, of caste, and of social usages disappear.

‘The fire of God was constantly ablaze in the Master. Fire of God means a flood of divine emotions. To him the whole world and all objects in it shone with the inextinguishable light of Brahman; and he saw Brahman alone in every being. He was completely free from desires, and absolutely dependent on the Divine Mother. The Master used to say, “I passed through such a stage when I could eat the discarded leavings of food, together with a dog, in a dirty place. Then everything appeared full of Brahman.”’

‘To the seer, all things have verily become the Self: What delusion, what sorrow, can there be for him who beholds that oneness?’

—*Isha Upanishad*

RELIGION AND NATIONAL WELFARE

BY THE EDITOR

'Bhadram karnebhih shrinuyāma devāh, bhadrām pashyemākshabhiryajatrāh, sthirairangaistushuvāmsastanūbhirvyashema deva hitam yadāyuh.'

'May we, O gods, hear with our ears what is auspicious! May we, O worshipful gods, see with our eyes what is good! May we, strong in limbs and body, sing your praise and enjoy the life allotted to us.' (Upanishadic Invocation)

'Sarve cha sukhinah santu, sarive santu nirāmayāh, sarve bhadrāni pashyantū, mā kashchit .dukkhabhāg bhavet.'

'May all beings be happy, may all attain bliss, may all see happy days, may no one be subject to suffering.' —Vyasa

One of the most notable events of the last decade, barring the World War and the dropping of the atom bomb, is the great resurgence of Asia. The world witnessed a spontaneous awakening, a coming to life as it were, of the peoples of many Asian countries, leading to their attainment of the goal of their unceasing struggle for self-determination. Among these nations India stands peerless, for she is the soul of Asia. In many respects India is first and foremost among the nations of the world, for her strength lies not in wealth or arms but in her own national spiritual culture. The glowing example of the determination of the Indian people to be free from foreign domination and their unarmed yet victorious struggle against the forces of a mighty imperialism, has inspired and encouraged national movements for freedom in other countries. India not only struggled for her own independence but also staunchly espoused the cause of the liberty of all the subject peoples of the world. And her signal success has been followed by manifestation of national triumph in other parts of Asia.

India is once more animated and energetic, freed from the shackles of political enslavement of centuries. This leviathan, hitherto apparently inert and prostrate, is awake from her long slumber. The era of the common man has begun under a national democratic constitution. The feudal tyranny of caste,

class, or wealth is becoming a thing of the past. The efforts of the Government and the people are directed towards a vigorous drive for securing national welfare. The well-being of the people, in whom sovereignty now vests, is the prime concern and responsibility of the republican Government. The people are called upon by the national leaders to gird up their loins and strive unremittingly to produce the maximum amount of national wealth with the minimum delay. The need of the hour, the idea with which the nation is prepossessed at the moment, appears to be the achievement of all-round progress and prosperity. And, naturally, the other thought that occurs to every sensible citizen is 'What of the future?'

Since the attainment of her political freedom, India has been witnessing a conflict of various ideologies regarding the future reconstruction of her national life. Some want all-out industrialization, and some a casteless society. Again some are protagonists of the parliamentary system of government, and some of the rule of the proletariat. There is a demand from one group of people for a centralized democracy, while another group of people insists on a decentralized equalitarian social order. And last but not the least, there are many whose influence over public opinion is not inconsiderable, wanting to make a complete break from the past and usher in a new

India—a modern secular state, exactly on the lines of the dynamic West, based on opulent abundance and militarism. But everyone is agreed that certain things must be done which will conduce to individual happiness and collective progress. Yet, no one is able to picture definitely what is the goal to be achieved and by what methods. With respect to our rich cultural heritage, its cherished ideals and institutions, that have come down to us from time immemorial, no final decision seems to have been arrived at as to what should be eliminated and what retained. The common man, bewildered at the policy of drift and indecision of those that are entrusted with the task of rebuilding a new India, asks in despair 'Where lies the goal of India, and which is the best path that can lead to that goal?'

Progress and welfare are words easy to use but difficult to define. History is the expression of a nation's soul; and the unforgettable lessons that history teaches us cannot but be heeded to whenever we set ourselves to rebuild the national superstructure on the solid foundations of the tried and tested heritage of the past. In spite of political subjection, wherefrom did India get that amazing vitality to preserve her society and culture against the onslaughts of ruthless foreign invaders. And what was her miraculous weapon with which India was able to free herself from the iron grip of a strong and truculent alien military power, through a non-violent struggle? There will be many who will attribute the former to rigid orthodoxy and the latter to internal and international politics. Very few realize that India possesses an unfailing and inexhaustible source of power and vitality in her eternal religion (Dharma) and spirituality, the bed-rock of India's national life. Each nation, like each individual, has one main theme in its life, which forms, as it were, the principal note with which every other note harmoniously blends. In India, religion forms the main theme, the keynote of her national life. In the words of Swami Vivekananda, 'Each nation has its own part to play, and naturally each has its own pecu-

liarity and individuality with which it is born. Each represents, as it were, one peculiar note in the harmony of nations, and this is its very life, its vitality. In it is the backbone, the foundation, and the bed-rock of the national life, and here, in this blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is religion and religion alone.'

A nation becomes whatever she believes herself to be. She is made great not by her relative superiority in things material but by what she feels and thinks about herself. In order to make sure what precisely constitutes her true welfare, we have to understand with perfect plainness what conception of her own nature and power forms her eternal inheritance. In India, from the remotest dawn of history, it is the Dharma or 'religion eternal', in its large and non-sectarian aspect, that has determined and moulded the well-being of every man and woman. The word 'Dharma' has, no doubt, a more complex and comprehensive meaning than what we usually understand by the word 'religion'. Dharma is the embodiment in life of the spiritual principle of the essential values of truth, goodness, and beauty. It is the supporting and sustaining power of the Sanatana Dharma that has saved the body social from disintegration and preserved the national heritage intact. In the eyes of the poorest peasant, even the Head of the State is but a true and loyal servant of the eternal Dharma, the latter's fitness to occupy that exalted office depending on whether he upholds the Dharma or not. The progress and welfare of the community was safeguarded by the laws of Dharma which were binding both on the Government and the people. The principle of Dharma has the power to shape and sustain the life of its followers and to awaken them to an awareness of spiritual verities. Dharma does not prescribe blind world-negation or sterile renunciation of the joys of life. But, at the same time, it helps man to rise progressively from the horizon of sense-enjoyments to the zenith of a higher truth of existence through introspective living.

That the living inspiration and the innate

urge to progress supplied by religion are indispensable for the achievement of national good is amply borne out by facts as well as by experience. The scriptures, too, reiterate that the road to progress and human welfare does not lie through the non-divine attributes (*āsuri sampad*) of savagery and sensuality. The Highest Good (*shreyas*) is one thing, and what is generally sought after as the pleasant (*preyas*) is another thing. The two are naturally opposed to each other, leading to different goals, and, therefore, cannot be pursued simultaneously by anyone. It is within the power of every man to choose either of the two ideals in life. But most people, devoid of the power of discrimination and swayed by lust and greed, prefer to choose the pleasant worldly pleasures, and ultimately fail to attain Self-knowledge which is the supreme end of human effort. Social advancement cannot be achieved by external means. It is ultimately determined and fashioned by man's intuitive supersensuous experiences. What shall it profit a man if he gains the whole world but loses his soul? Power and force are not ultimate values in human society. They are the means, or at best, instrumental values, for the attainment of a higher spiritual value. The expression of physical power, however scientific, though temporarily fruitful, tends, ere long, to become ego-centric and produces selfishness. If a nation chooses the mechanistic ideal of Preyas and accepts selfishness as the basis of progress, consciously or unconsciously, it is bound to undermine its culture through conflicts in individual and collective life.

Not many possess the calmness born of far-sightedness and discrimination to realize that the true spirit of religion makes for peace, love and harmony in life. Religion has always emphasized the true spiritual ideals which should animate any civilized society striving for progress. Sri Ramakrishna has demonstrated in his own life, beyond a shadow of doubt, that every religion, sincerely practised, always leads man to the Highest Good (*parama purushārtha*). It makes men

God-centred, nay, it makes them one with Truth. The search of the mind for the fundamental life-values, for the spiritual basis of Beauty, Goodness, and Truth, is, in fact, the search for God. And that way lies real happiness and true progress. Unless we are centred in spirituality which is the only sound basis of all ethics, we cannot be freed from the unethical propensities of lust, greed, and fear which are the main causes of disintegration of personality and dismantlement of the ideological superstructure of society. If we aspire after life that is true, good, and beautiful, we must follow the highest teachings of religion and lead disciplined lives in accordance with those teachings. Dirt cannot be washed with dirt. Imposition of voluntary and reasonable limits on our natural tendencies is essential for human dignity. Otherwise, where do those, who envisage civilization and progress in a biological and intellectual sense, want to lead the country to? Perhaps according to them, the best interests of the people are served by increasing to a maximum the facilities for the enjoyment of health and desires, and, if possible, encouraging the growth of general knowledge and the fine arts—all these at the expense of things spiritual and divine (*daiivī*) which they dismiss altogether as effete, if not as non-existent. Are these people really earnest about the welfare of the nation, and do they sincerely and seriously think that they will be able to lead the country out of the wood into Elysian heights? It is a pity that the tragic lessons of history and the repeated warnings of the scriptures are woefully lost on them. They seem to forget that even the most enlightened views of self and self-interest are helpless in making men behave as they should.

The history of human civilization is the history of the struggle for freedom. In India, from the earliest times, the goal of the individual's growth and evolution is freedom. In the West emphasis is laid on the 'four great freedoms' of the Atlantic Charter, and the great human rights to 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness', all of which are expected to usher in, for man, a veritable kingdom of

heaven on earth. In actual effect, these high-sounding moral platitudes and great 'freedoms and rights' have not succeeded in giving the human animal freedom from spiritual dreariness of soul and the crassitude of fleshly delights. The worship of pleasure predominates over the worship of truth and morality. Political and economic ideas dominate the minds of men to the exclusion of religious principles. Most people in the West have discarded religion as 'old-fashioned and retrogressive'. Even the organized church religion has failed to cure the modern man of his deep-rooted spiritual malady. In fact, unproductive dogmatism and theology are scaring many moderners away from the church. There is, on the other hand, a sincere yearning for a universal and dynamic faith, leading to spiritual contentment and peace of mind. This they are finding in Vedanta, which is exercising a tremendous influence on thoughtful Western minds. India, standing on the threshold of her republican mansion, can take a warning and a lesson from the present conditions of people in the West. In spite of their vaunted civilization and freedom, their science and politics, men and women in the West find that their social morality, religious principles, and human relations have broken loose from their vital moorings. Mental and spiritual homelessness has driven many of them to a sorry plight and they are trying to find consolation in fatuous nostrums or totalitarian isms with catchy slogans.

To come back to our original point: Whither shall India direct her footsteps and march on towards the consummation of her hard-won freedom? The criteria of progress for which we are in search and which we have failed to discover in the conquest of the external environment, either human or physical, manifest themselves as challenges from within ourselves, in an inward self-determination. India is witnessing a tremendous spiritual awakening. She can and should derive her inspiration and strength for shaping her future from the vitality inherent in her spiritual and cultural heritage. They must

be developed from within herself, in full congruity with the national religion. By once more assuming the moral and spiritual leadership of the world, she will demonstrate her real greatness. In no other country in the world has there been such freedom of religious belief and worship as in India; and it has been so in our motherland throughout the ages. If India is to be true to her soul and national genius, she cannot fail to regain her pristine moral and spiritual strength needed for her own salvation and for the good of the world (*ātmano mokshārtham jagaddhitāya cha*). Love, unselfishness, and purity form the very backbone of our culture. God and Dharma are in our very blood, though some of us may choose to put on an air of indifference and unbelief. None can change the innate life-current of the nation, nor can any secular idea be imposed on the nation from without.

Whatever forms our political and social institutions may assume under the stress and strain of prevailing conditions, we can, under no circumstances, afford to ignore or give up our spirituality which alone can supply vitality and nourishment to every minute cell of this colossal body of our nation. We have to make sure of this before we can think of any further progress or national welfare. Territorial unity has been broken by partition. And a soulless political or national unity, like the unity of a pack of gregarious animals, will prove of no avail when narrow provincial or party feuds become accentuated. The invisible but invincible bond of spiritual unity and religious solidarity is the only enduring link that knits together diverse races, creeds, and parties. Every festival or religious ceremony brings back its auspicious and inspiring memory, creating mutual sentiments and common associations. The great epics, the Purānas, the Vedas and other scriptures, and the several illustrious saints and seers, philosophers and mystics—these have been the main forces that have contributed to national consolidation. Nanak and Ramanuja, Chaitanya and Jnaneshwar, though hailing from

places far apart have preached the same ultimate spiritual truths, thus sending a thrill of common nationality through the veins of the people, more than any of the greatest emperors that ruled over the land. The spring of such an upheaval is to be found nowhere else but in the ideals that religion presents before man. Unseen but all-pervasive are these national ideals that have come down to us from the remotest past. Religion alone can exercise such a gentle but compelling power on a large scale. Religion can give ideals as motives, with a supreme power of individuation. While imitation of a historical luminary would appear as ridiculous affectation, emulation of a religious person would be regarded as respectable duty.

Persons are not wanting to whom the very word 'religion' is anathema, and who tell us that religion is useless, nay harmful, to the individual and to society. For, they hold that India is backward, ignorant, and poor, and was subjugated by reason of her religion. Also religion is useless because it cannot give us physical comforts or aeroplanes or, for that matter, atom bombs to destroy our enemies. In these matters, it is easier to convince a person who cannot understand than one who will not understand. The name of religion has been polluted by fanatics and designing persons everywhere. Many irreligious and unholy acts are perpetrated by evil-doers in the name of religion. Such men, far from being religious, are condemned as enemies of humanity. And religion was never intended to supply the material wants of ladies and gentlemen. A baby may, as well, stand up and exclaim, 'Does religion bring me gingerbread? If not, religion is good for nothing'. The main point to be considered is what these thoughtless critics are pleased to mean by religion. If a set of fanatical dogmas, doctrines, and rituals, unrelated to spirituality, is miscalled religion, then we can only pity those who still continue to believe in this type of religion. But real religion is a way of higher life, leading man to transcendent spiritual realization. All religions are

working for the good of mankind. There is abundant proof that religion has given peace, harmony, courage, joy, and, above all spiritual unfoldment to millions of its votaries all the world over. In short, religion is realization, a sublime process of soul-affirmation, as opposed to glorification of the brute in man expressing itself through communalism, sectarianism, and hedonism.

There are again others who say that religion retards progress and tends to make people lead indolent lives because of its emphasis on illusoriness of the world and renunciation. Nothing is farther from truth. Recognizing the needs of practical and secular life, the ancient Hindu seers expounded the Dharma, synthesizing ideals that seemed opposite. The Karma-kānda of the Vedas deals with man's natural desire for enjoyment of material happiness and prescribes elaborate methods for achieving worldly desires, while the Jñāna-kānda leads man to the *summum bonum* of human life. Further, everyone who follows the Dharma is not asked to remain indifferent to the world thinking it unreal, but is called upon to scrupulously pursue the four basic ideals of life (*purushārtha*), viz. moral conduct or righteousness (*dharma*), wealth or economic pursuit (*artha*), fulfilment of sensuous and aesthetic desire (*kāma*), and finally liberation or freedom (*moksha*) from the cycle of relative phenomena (*samsāra*). The first three ideals, which serve the ends of the pursuit of happiness in this world, are naturally of an ephemeral character and should not be divorced from God who is the goal of the last ideal in life. It is a travesty of religion and the spiritual life to say that these are a hindrance to national welfare and human progress. Wealth and enjoyment of desires, sanctioned by Dharma, are not opposed to righteousness and perfection. Physical well-being is considered an essential requisite of the individual's spiritual life. Pleasure is not divorced from good life, and a man of spiritual realization is far from being a kill-joy. In ancient India when religion was best understood and practised, the

development of the country in art and culture, in commerce and industry, was great.

Our Sanatana Dharma enjoins on us the path of intense activity coupled with calm resignation to the will of the Lord. It does not ask everyone to renounce the world, wear sack-cloth, and retire into seclusion. India possesses the most militant and stirring of all the world's evangels—the message of Sri Krishna in the *Gita*—uttered from a war-chariot on the actual battle-field. A truly religious man is constantly active, striving for his own Moksha and, at the same time, rendering unselfish service (*nishkāma karma*) to his fellowmen, in a spirit of worship. Even the illumined sage who has realized the supreme goal of existence and has nothing to lose or gain in the world, works with joy for the welfare of others (*loka kalyāna*) and protects the social order. Our scriptures warn man against inactivity, for that means stagnation and death. The Upanishads exhort us to work enthusiastically for augmenting national welfare and bringing happiness to one and all, so that every particle of dust may be converted, as it were, into honey (*madhumat pārvatham rajah*). Religion eternal, embracing all the religions of the

world known to man, is the greatest and surest factor that has ever contributed to the collective welfare and progress of mankind. Such a universal religion places before man the ideal of sovereign self-restraint and the building up of a corporate personality. National well-being can result only from the removal of ignorance by knowledge, replacement of selfishness by altruism, and elimination of aggressive evil by aggressive good. Every nation, like every man, has to make a choice as to the ideal it will pursue, the path it will tread. About India's future we have made the choice long ago. To those who think it has been a bad choice, we can only say, If our religious ideals and practices are really bad, how then have we been able to preserve our national integrity untarnished through the ages? Our Sanatana Dharma has always been characterized by an assimilative spirit and has, in the past, absorbed many non-Hindu cultures. Our Dharma will once again become quick with the all-embracing fervour of the mother of religions and draw unto her spiritual bosom all the inhabitants of the motherland, irrespective of their caste, creed, or community.

ROLE OF RELIGION IN POLITICS

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

Primarily, religion is a value which is trans-social and inward. It takes hold of an individual when he or she has finished with values which are sensual and relative, and craves for a value which is transcendental and absolute. In this sense it transcends even the sphere of Dharma, the sphere of social ethics. Spirituality, Godliness, is an end-value in itself. Indian thought refers to it as the highest excellence (*nishshreyasa*), the consummation of freedom through the realization of Truth, and declares it to be the

Parama-purushārtha, the supreme end to be sought after by man. All other ends and values—Dharma, Artha, and Kama—are collectively known as Abhyudaya; they are values which man achieves in the social context in response to his deeply felt craving for gross or refined joys and satisfactions. Abhyudaya and Nishshreyasa together constitute the sum-total of human cravings, values, and ends. We cannot achieve Abhyudaya except in the context of a society or group; and we cannot achieve Nishshreyasa except

outside the context of all social relations. At the Abhyudaya stage we walk arm in arm to progress and welfare ; but at the Nihshreyasa level we march alone to the Alone. As expressed by a great thinker, we move in single file at the last stages of life's journey to the heights of Truth.

Though religion, in its essential nature, is thus trans-social and individual in its appeal and function, it has a secondary yet significant role in the important sphere of social relations. Much of this latter role has not been without grave defects in its actual functioning. History contains plenty of instances of religion acting as a bar sinister to human progress and welfare. To deal with the subject of the role of religion in politics is therefore a delicate task, especially in the context of present-day India where there has been an abuse and misuse of religion in recent years to the detriment of a correct assessment of the role of religion, on the one hand, and of the happiness and welfare of millions, on the other. Yet, it is worthwhile to face the task, for the stakes involved are high ; there is urgent need to state the precise scope of religion both in relation to the individual and as a social force, and the contribution it can make to the health and stability of the social order. Both politics and religion stand to gain immeasurably from an approach to each other under the guidance of a philosophy such as the Vedanta, which dares to view life in its totality and wholeness, and which has for its declared objective the happiness and welfare of humanity as a whole (*sarvasatva sukho hitah*).

In the modern world, various kinds of forces, of loyalties and of allegiances are trying to shape human destiny. In the midst of these conflicting forces and divergent loyalties, religion has to play a vital, progressive, and dynamic role. The aim of religion is to raise humanity to a higher ethical plane. Religion played its part in the past. But it has a much bigger part to play in the present. In the past our problems were few and comparatively simple. We had to deal with men orga-

nized into small clans and tribes. But the problems of today have become colossal because we are to deal not with small sectional groups but with large national societies and with the whole of humanity itself. Whether we shall sink in or swim across the storming sea of the modern world will depend on our ability to organize the world into a single family on the basis of the equality and spiritual oneness of humanity.

Every religion worth the name contains certain universal elements along with others that are particular and parochial. The message of these universal elements in all religions to humanity is exactly identical. Nevertheless, religions, as practised by their followers, have been more regional, local and parochial in outlook and action, to the detriment of the universal. Religious organizations have developed and stressed sectarian trends and loyalties. But in the present-day world, anything that is parochial will not satisfy the situation. Today we are to deal with innumerable forces, ideas, and aspirations of man which transcend the barriers of sect and creed. Hence the problem of negotiation and adjustment is colossal and tremendous. No narrow and selfish view will answer the demands of the modern age. We are to look at things in the larger context, from the wider view-point. Only if the universal elements in all religions can be released from their parochial and regional setting, can religion be made a progressive force in the world today. The present world has witnessed mighty advances in science and technology. But in spite of all these revolutions in the domain of scientific thought and technique, modern man has not been able to discard religion altogether. Religion has not been allowed by the rational man of today to enter his life by the front-door. Yet it enters his life surreptitiously, by the back-door. That shows that religion is still a vital force. But the religion that enters thus is, in the absence of the purifying aid of rational thought, mostly passionate, communal, and reactionary. Religion which regards all

humanity as one and indivisible is a product of dispassionate thinking and hence progressive in outlook and action. The true purpose and function of religion is writ large in the history of human civilization. Its purpose is to make man truly civilized, cultured, and refined. Real civilization will come only when men and women become truly cultured, —when they have learnt to refine their thoughts and chasten their feelings and sentiments. The function of religion is to *actualize* the spiritual oneness of humanity in ever-widening spheres, and develop human fellowship by reducing and obliterating the distance between man and man.

It is sometimes said that religion has become a spent-up force, that it cannot answer the demand of the modern scientific world and hence is not required now; that in these days of scientific and technological development, religion has outlived its utility. This is the essence of the Marxist and much of the rationalist criticism of religion. According to Marx and other critics of religion, it is today nothing but a bar sinister to social, political, economic, and intellectual progress. Religion, therefore, is the misfortune of man today; it is not a help that sustains but a hindrance that impedes. What we now need is social improvement and to do this we should discard religion.

To what extent is this criticism of religion a valid one? It is indeed true that we have made rapid advances in scientific discoveries, mechanical inventions, and material progress. But in spite of all our boasted achievements and progress in these lines, have we not moved backward as men? How backward we are is evident from our dealings with our neighbours and fellows. Have we moved forward in social feeling and sympathy? The answer is an emphatic 'No'. There still lies the savage in every one of us. Civilization is largely nothing but the external trappings on the old savage. The discovery by modern psychology of the savage in man has set a serious problem for the civilized man of today to face and to solve. Our rationality and

enlightenment is but skin-deep. The savage lies just below reason; it is mostly anti-reason. And it occasionally erupts to the surface sweeping aside all rationality and humanity. The problem before us is to tame this savage within us and to evolve an integrated personality and a dynamic character which will retain the precious vigour of the savage but chastened under the guidance of an enlightened Buddhi or reason. Untamed passions create the temper in the individual and society tending to disrupt the even course of life. The world will have to come to religion to get the answer as to how to bring about harmony and adjustment in a world which is so ill-adjusted. Religion is called upon to play its part on a vaster plane today, in the collective life of millions as expressed in societies and states. Religion is not thus outmoded. If after years of civilization and democracy and progress, men could wage two savage wars in the course of thirty years to destroy each other, can we call man civilized? Or that he has outgrown the sustenance of religion? No, our passions are not tamed. The animal within us reigns supreme. Men are to live in harmony among themselves and also with their environment. Integrity within and integrity without are the real measure of a civilization; that is the vital function of religion; and civilization has to invite religion to its aid today.

There are two types of men who do not seek the help of religion. First, those men and women who are content to live in the world of their native impulses. Second, those rare ones who have controlled their passions and emotions and have raised themselves above the ordinary human level. Between these two levels at the extremes, all men need the sustenance and ministrations of religion. This role of religion has been emphasized in all the great world religions. Every one of them has tried to evolve harmony out of chaos in man and society. If they have not attained the measure of success they ought to have, the fault lies not in religion nor in its teachings or teachers, but in us. We

have failed the teachers and their teachings. We have invested their teachings with a dogmatic rigidity which the founders had not intended; for they believed in growth and development. It is our want of knowledge of the true meaning and purpose of religion that is at fault, not religion itself. Politicians and statesmen, democrats and dictators, presidents and kings, all come and go, but the great prophets of religion remain and endure. Religion has played its noble part in guiding humanity upward in the misty past of history; and it is still functioning similarly in spite of handicaps from within and without. The function of religion is to make possible for men and women a heightened and enlarged life and a life in harmony among themselves and with their environment.

Today religion is called upon to perform this function to humanity taken as a unit and not merely to exclusive sections thereof. This makes the task of religion responsible and heavy. The function is to be performed on a vastly wider scale; religion is to compose the distractions of the world in which we are. Before doing this, and in order to enable it to do this, it has to compose its own distractions proceeding out of sectarian narrowness and undue emphasis on non-essentials.

Materialism has its due place in the evolution and progress of human society. But when it dominates over the minds and hearts of men, it betokens danger. Divorced from ethical and spiritual foundations, it has become a source of danger everywhere today. It is the animal in man that prevails over the God in him. Violence and hatred are the dominant forces of the present-day world. The purpose and task of religion is to tame and subdue these forces of hatred and violence in man and thus make for a higher expression of his psychic energies and impulses. Impulses by themselves are neither good nor bad. They become one or the other in the way we use them. We can take hold of all our raw impulses and energies and convert them into creative forces by means of an inner technology. By means of this inner techno-

logy taught by the science of religion we are to control and tame the 'libido' and raise it to the highest level of inspiration. Only a man who has controlled his passions and impulses is truly religious; he becomes pure and holy. He has attained real education at its highest and best. Such a man not only raises himself to a higher ethical and spiritual plane, but raises others as well.

If this is religion in purpose and intent, what role does it play in the narrow field of politics? In countries of totalitarian ideology, politics is everything. There no aspect of human life is left out of politics. All types of totalitarianism tend to dwarf the human personality. There are vast spaces of our being which transcend the sphere of politics. Nevertheless, politics is a legitimate field of collective human activity as it helps man to strive for and realize certain essential values of life. In our own country, particularly, politics today is fundamental, for the nation cries out for the realization of these very values—values comprehensively described by our ancient sages as *Abhyudaya*. We cannot, therefore, neglect it, but must give due weight to politics as well as to other aspects and activities of human life. Man is not an isolated individual living remote from society; he is a social unit. As members and component parts of society, we are to regulate our conduct, behaviour, and activity keeping in view the welfare of society as a whole.

When we enter into the realm of regulating inter-personal and inter-group human relationships, we enter into the realm of politics. Politics may be defined as a social science which seeks to ensure collective human welfare. To promote and ensure human welfare, we require knowledge and dispassionate thinking. If we study the evolution of society and the state in their historical aspect, we notice a slow but perceptible process of organization of men into wider and wider groups. The modern world has evolved the highest political entity in the form of the national and multi-national state. The world has not as yet advanced beyond this collective

entity. We have not yet reached beyond the boundaries of the sovereign state. The problem before us is how to enlarge the bounds of the political state and ultimately evolve a world state, a political organization of mankind as a whole. The problem is to utilize politics in order initially to ensure the welfare of man collectively organized within the state and ultimately that of man in the context of the world community.

Politics thus is co-eval with collective human welfare. The aim and trend of modern development is the building up of a world state. All the forces of the world today, both positive and negative, are driving humanity towards that consummation. The League of Nations was formed after the cessation of hostilities in 1919. The ideals and aspirations of the people of the world then for peace and international collaboration found embodiment in the ideals and objectives of the League. The League failed; but such failures are only apparent, not real. Success evolves out of failure. We have now formed the UNO after the second World War. Failures attending collective efforts should not be taken too seriously. When we look at history, we notice the continuous march of mankind from small groupings and structures to higher and higher integrations and organizations. Families, clans, and tribes of the pre-historic times gave place to the nation-states and empires of a later day. And vaster aggregations are in the offing today. The history of the world, the history of humanity, is an arresting story of greater and greater integrations. The UNO is undoubtedly more broad-based than the League of Nations. It is the best fruit of world political thought. It is the finest and noblest machinery that humanity has yet produced for its own collective welfare. It has its limitations; but these limitations proceed from the immaturity of contemporary political wisdom. Leaving the affairs of national concern to be decided by the national states, the UN functions as the world's platform to discuss inter-state affairs, to discuss subjects which are neither

local, nor national but international, and which affect the welfare of all the nations of the world. We should not think that the United Nations is a perfect organization. But out of the very failures of the UNO something better will emerge. Our next experiment with a world organization will undoubtedly be a better one. The future organization of mankind which will be erected on the debris of the present one will more approximate towards the ideal of human unity which religion has set before us. And religion has to guide politics to that consummation.

If politics is to be subservient to human welfare, what is needed is the proper handling of power. In fact, the problem of politics is the problem of holding and using power.

Politics and power are convertible terms. Hence the problem reduces itself to the proper utilization and handling of power so that politics may really serve the purpose it aims at. It is a well-known dictum that 'Power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely'. The problem before us is how to utilize power so that it does not corrupt others as well as those who wield it. Power, therefore, has to be purified and put under proper checks and balances. When unchecked power is exercised either by a majority upon a minority or by a minority upon a majority, there is danger to both the majority and the minority. Power is a source of danger to those who cannot digest it. The citizen is made the seat of ultimate power in a democracy. He or she is the locus of sovereignty, of all authority and power. This power is transferred from the multitude of citizens to a chosen few with due checks and limitations. This is the least harmful because the chosen few who are entrusted with the task of handling power are made accountable to the people below. That is why democracy is the finest fruit of political thought. It is the best device yet produced by man for checking and guarding against the abuse of power. Theoretically, in democracy, sovereignty or supreme power is vested in the people as a whole. In actual practice, how-

ever, it is the few that rule and exercise power. It is possible for a state to be democratic in constitution and plutocratic in government. Certain modern democracies belong to this category. Democracy in those countries is, therefore, nominal, not factual.

The great subject of democracy requires to be studied by us in the context of India's background and needs. Indian democracy is to be freed from the evils and shortcomings of European or American democracy. If, by democracy, we merely mean the forms and structure of government, with adult suffrage and cabinet system and all that, democracy will fail in the future as it has failed in the past. Votes can be purchased, and inefficiency, corruption, and nepotism may rule everywhere. This does not mean that we are to bid good-bye to these dressings of democracy. Democracy has come to stay. Adult suffrage and the ballot-box bring a great message of hope to our people, especially the common man. Our task is to purify democracy of its age-old ills and defects. Can we institute something to the purification of democracy? This is the question which is posed before us. India alone can answer this question because the answer is to be provided by spirituality which thrives most in this country. It is only in India that spirituality forms the central theme of national life. It is only here that spirituality commands the highest prestige and honour. It is the politicians and statesmen who attract the loyalty and allegiance of people in other countries. In India, on the contrary, even in this century, a spiritual personality alone has been able to command the deepest and widest loyalty and affection of the people even in the political field. We can purify democracy of its traditional shortcomings if we can infuse spirituality and a moral tone into its workings. Spirituality is the core of religion. It is the universal in religion and its realization that takes one beyond the local and parochial aspects of a religion. It is a struggle to realize life's deeper values,

leading to the deepest value which religions name God or Perfection.

When we apply religion to our collective life, we purify not only politics and democracy but religion as well. There cannot be any divorce between true religion and genuine politics. Religion, understood in its wider implication, is not a set of dogmas or practices, but a continual inspiration to take man to a higher ethical and spiritual level. It has been said by an eminent thinker that the passions of the heart upset the balance of the mind and the even course of the world. Ideals and ideas in the heart of men are more powerful than even the atom bomb. The root of every happening in this world can be traced to the mind of man. Passions and bad tempers ultimately lead to world-wide conflagrations. Wars begin, says another thinker, in the minds of men and it is in the minds of men that defences of peace must be constructed. Unless we handle the problem at its root, it will be impossible for us to solve it satisfactorily. Everything may be lost by bad tempers. It is said that the treaty of Versailles—a treaty of peace—was drafted by men of bad temper who were naturally ill-fitted to bring about peace; and that treaty became the source of greater distempers leading to the second World War.

The problem of peace is ultimately a problem of the education of the citizen in the democratic values of renunciation, tolerance, fellowship, and service. To produce democratic citizens is the problem of education in a democracy. Men and women who have not learnt to restrain their passions of greed, intolerance, hatred and violence form shaky foundations for a structure of democracy. The late Dr. Josiah Oldfield, speaking on the subject of 'Peace and Internationalism' some years ago in London, observed: 'No man should be sent to take part in the deliberations at Geneva who has not learnt to establish peace in his own home. More wars are caused by bad tempered people sitting to discuss peace propositions than by good-tempered people sitting to discuss war measures.' All

religions consistently emphasize the need for self-control, self-restraint and self-denial. All religions teach us to practise love and to abjure hate and to restrain the waywardness of the senses and the whims of the heart. We have to seek for the stability of civilization in this vital lesson of religion. Civilizations and states have tumbled down when they had lost their spiritual and ethical moorings. The past history of the world is a warning to us. Modern civilization, if it is to survive, must derive sustenance from religion, which, in its cocksure enlightenment, it has discarded as a primitive superstition. Today our so-called reason and enlightenment are at the mercy of our passions. We are not allowed to think dispassionately and rationally. It is a great service that modern psychology did to civilization when it discovered the irrational behind the thin veil of rationality. Only one-tenth of a man consists of rationality, the remaining nine-tenths of him consists of irrationality. The discovery of the twentieth century psychology that man is an irrational being is a far greater discovery than the one that proclaimed that he is a rational being. Neglect of this irrational nine-tenth and concentration on the rational one-tenth explains the shallowness of much of the eighteenth and nineteenth century 'enlightenment' and 'rationalism'. We, being irrational, our civilization too is irrational, and hence unstable. There is a tendency to interpret this discovery of modern psychology as a call to submerge our fugitive rationality in the all-powerful irrational. Some schools of literature and art and even politics have taken this road; but it is a perversion and a snare, and betokens poor understanding of the course of human development and progress. Progress and civilization consist in reason conquering unreason by enlarging its bounds so as eventually to become co-extensive with mind and being. This is enlightened reason, the *Buddhi* of the *Vedanta*. The value and worth of democracy is that, of all political forms and methods, it is the one road that helps to lead man to this consummation.

But to be able to do so, democracy needs the flavour of ethics and the sustenance of religion.

Our task thus is to make man and his civilization stand on the foundation of enlightened reason or *Buddhi*. To do so, man will have to be taught to restrain himself. 'Unless man erects himself above himself, how poor a thing is man', so sang a great poet. Humanity has to be raised to a higher pedestal of existence and expression. If politics is really to serve human welfare, man will have to be taught to restrain himself, and more especially the few who handle power. We have to socialize everything. We may socialize our trade, business, commerce, transport, land and industry. But this is not enough. Nationalization of all means of production and distribution is not merely unavoidable in the modern context but also legitimate as steps to the all-round uplift of man, to the raising of the living standard of the people. But above all these nationalizations, there is urgency for another type of nationalization which is the most important of all. This is the socialization of mind, the collectivization of sympathy and interest, the nationalization of the powers, especially, of the gifted individuals of a community. We have to socialize our minds, ourselves first of all. It is only by doing this that we can ensure collective, all-round human welfare. In Soviet Russia, which has successfully established economic socialism, the collective life of the people and wealth of the country are managed by a small group of people. What is the impulse behind this group? Are they inspired by a spirit of service to society? Have they socialized their interests and sympathies? What guarantee is there in their philosophy of life against present or eventual misuse of the trust reposed by society in them? Man must regard himself as a fraction struggling to become an integer through selfless service of society; society is thus a wider school for him through which he attains self-realization, and the experience of a largeness and a fulness. Without this idealistic temper and approach,

power is sure to degenerate, sooner or later, into a snare for the wielder and a curse for the people. The immortal Shakespeare refers to the type of man who, 'dressed in a little brief authority, most ignorant of what he is most assured, his own glassy essence—like an angry ape—plays such fantastic tricks before high heaven, as make the angels weep'. The history of the world teaches us that such power, unrefined by moral and human feelings, is built on shaky foundations. The whole of Europe trembled at the touch of Hitler and Mussolini; but none could resist their downfall. They fell and great was their fall. Pride of wealth, of power, and of pedigree is pride in the non self which is the false self. Such pride is the source of meanness and pettiness. It also demeans others on whom it is exercised. There is another pride which humbles oneself and elevates the others. This pride proceeds from the depth of our being, our 'glassy essence' as Shakespeare calls it, or our 'inalienable spiritual nature' as religions put it. It is the source of that sense of human dignity which is the greatest value in us, greater than our wealth, our bodies and our brief dresses of power. The protection and enhancement of this value is the great mission of democracy. Shama and Dama (self-restraint and sense control) are the two means which Indian thought prescribes for the creative taming of power. The truly great, says the Mahabharata, are only those who achieve this. '*Vidyāmado dhanamado abhijāta madastāthā; mādā ime avaliptānām ta eva mahatām damāh.*' 'All types of inebriation (*mada*), in the case of the unregenerate, become converted into self-control (*dama*) in the case of the truly great.' Political and other greatness, bereft of the touch of ethics and humanism, is greatness which tends to humiliate all else around. It is the greatness of 'exploitation' as opposed to the other, which is the greatness of 'elevation'. Much of the world's greatness is attained by riding stealthily on the backs of others. But the greatness of a Ramakrishna or a Jesus, of a Mohammad or

a Gandhi, of a Buddha or a Shankarā belongs to a different order; it does not lower and humble others. It, on the contrary, elevates all who come in touch with it. By coming in touch with these personalities, everybody, however low and humble he or she may be, feels ennobled and uplifted. Their greatness and elevation also enhances the dignity of men and women around. Slaves become masters, fractions become integers, and the already great become greater still. Power in this instance is only another name for humility. It is this type of power that can purify politics. Every society calls for a band of gifted young men and women who are imbued with the humility of power and the power of selfless love. It is not difficult merely to administer a country. A handful of bureaucrats can do it. But to infuse life into the dead bones of humanity and raise men and women to stature and dignity require the ministrations of enthusiastic young men and women who are inspired with the passion to serve, the capacity to minister and the inner purity to stick to the strait and narrow path of self-denial. It is the purpose of an ordinary politician to raise himself, if necessary even by humiliating others. To exploit others for one's own selfish interests is the task of career politics as it is commonly understood. Politics will have to be raised to a level where it will not exploit humanity for itself but will exploit itself for humanity. We need such politics that elevates and ennobles the subjects and objects of power. Our society needs the ministrations of such power, the services of such politics. A society which is steeped in misery, poverty, illiteracy, and superstition—a society where the rich exploit the poor, and the educated exploit the less educated and the uneducated, offers the most fruitful field for the experiment of democracy on these lines. All other politics will reduce millions to further poverty and degradation. In India and Pakistan, we require such leaders of the people, leaders who function as servants truly and not euphemistically. Mahatma Gandhi was such a man who had built the edifice of his politics

on the mighty bed-rock of character and who regarded the whole world as his own. Small in stature, frail in body, but towering over everybody in everything great and lofty, he has left an ineffaceable legacy for us all which we will do well to cherish and utilize. We are called upon to redeem the sunken humanity in India and Pakistan. If we fail to follow this blazing trail, we shall be restricting the scope of the freedom we have achieved and may even move towards anarchy. We are called upon to chasten ourselves at the altar of humanity. The masses understand this kind of politics, the aim and operations of which tend to raise them up from their present sunken condition. All other politics, —power politics, career politics etc.—compounded of slogans and catch-words, fair faces and false hearts, are not only useless but pernicious. Democracy, if it is to play its role in the drama of human evolution in India and elsewhere, must be infused with the spirit and temper of religion, with renunciation and service as its guiding principles.

In the course of the next, say, twenty or thirty years, we shall have undoubtedly reached a measure of economic stability and prosperity in our country. Our vast industrialization programmes will guarantee that. But can we say with equal certainty whether our stature as men and women will be raised *pari passu*? Will the accumulation of wealth and power lead to the decay of man? Should we not take steps to see that development of the capacity to digest wealth and power goes hand in hand with the development of our natural resources? Along with the generation of power through the harnessing of rivers and waterfalls, we should also generate a far more vital power, the national character, by harnessing, through a sound system of education inspired by religion, the psychic energies of our impulses and passions so that the future Indian citizen may become adequate to Indian prosperity and power. Thus alone shall we build up the greatness of India on the greatness and stature of the

Indian character and not merely on her economic and military strength.

This should become the most vital element in our national reconstruction programme. Politics can help in the evolution of that citizen by striving to establish a social order which will be just and equalitarian. If the modern states can evolve social, political, and economic structures based on the recognition of the dignity of man and leading to the full development of his personality, they will be responding to the demands of the age. This is a stupendous task. And it is good for us to recognize that it is a stupendous task. We shall not then be carried away by cheap political slogans and catch-phrases. It is comparatively easy to frame a democratic constitution for India or Pakistan; but to work the constitution in its true spirit is extremely difficult. It will keep us busy for days and months and years. We are to build up the future edifice of our free state on stable foundations. These stable foundations can be supplied by religion and religion alone. Citizens inspired by spiritual and ethical ideals, who find joy in giving of their best for the strength and sustenance of society and the state, and who enjoy the delights which a free and equalitarian society offers are the roots and flowers of a healthy society.

A democratic state derives its strength and stability from its citizens. The terms society, state, constitution, and Government are sometimes used without due discrimination, leading to much confused thinking and action in our country today. Government is the machinery through which the collective will of society finds executive expression. It is an instrument of the constitution. In its very nature, therefore, it is temporary and shortlived. Compared to Government, the constitution is more stable. It represents the political, economic, and moral aspirations and objectives of the people. When these objectives and aspirations change, the constitution also changes along with them. The American constitution was drawn up in 1776,

but it has undergone many subsequent modifications to meet the demands of changed situations. In India, too, legislators are busy framing the set-up of a stable constitution. But, here too, provisions have been made for future amendments and modifications in response to changing social needs. In spite of this, constitutions are fairly permanent, comparatively speaking. It is only when it ceases to respond to and reflect the ratio of forces in a society, when it becomes a rigid coat of an elastic and dynamic social body, that a constitution cracks and explodes through social upheavals and revolutions. Then a new constitution takes its place, reflecting new aspirations and forces. The test of a healthy constitution lies in a proper blending of rigidity and elasticity, ensuring continuity along with a constant adjustment to social changes through new provisions, amendments, or conventions. Nothing can disturb the continuity and permanence of such a constitution except a foreign invasion. The state represents the collective will of the society, its will to be and to become. In the state the multiple centres of the will to be and to do, as also the will to be free, become focussed into a unity; it also organizes and expresses the sense of distinctness of a community from other communities. The sovereignty of a state derives from this sense of distinctness. This sovereignty which, in a monarchy, was focussed in the person of the king, becomes diffused, in a democracy, in a multitude of citizen centres, making the citizens sovereigns and subjects in one. Sovereignty in a democracy is thus a unity in diversity, reflecting in this the plan of life and nature around. Therein lies the strength of democracy compared to all other political systems.

The state thus is the entity of which the constitution is the expression in thought and intention, and of which the government is the expression in action. The state endures through all changes in Governments and modifications of constitutions. Ordinary social upheavals and revolutions may not affect the integrity of the state while they

affect the nature and form of the constitution and Government. The state gets its mortal blow externally from a foreign invasion and internally from only one type of social upheaval known to modern experience, a communist revolution, whose declared objective is the total destruction of the old state and its structure and forms, whether democratic or even socialistic.

Behind the Government, the constitution, and the state lies society, the matrix of all forces, the womb of constitutions and revolutions, placid like a calm lake at one period, erupting like a volcano at another,—a moving, changing, struggling mass, constituted of a multitude of ego-centres belonging to varying levels of intellectual, moral, and spiritual evolution. Political revolutions and even social revolutions engineered by politico-economic forces such as a socialist or communist revolution, rarely affect but a fringe of this vast ocean. Violent revolutions of these types may upturn states and shake up societies, but only for a time. After a few years, the impulse loses its dynamism and societies resume their even course as before, with only slight modifications and changes. This is the lesson of the French Revolution, as is also the lesson, now becoming slowly evident, of the mighty Russian Revolution. The price we pay is out of all proportion to the commodity we actually get. It is this consideration that leads us to view a violent revolution as the product of social despair and bankruptcy of social wisdom, and not as a product of historical necessity or as a factor of social progress. The only revolution that affects the very depths of society is the peaceful revolution initiated by a great spiritual teacher and the ideology and movement proceeding from him. Gently but steadily, this revolution shapes human desires and emotions and judgments in terms of certain lofty ethical and spiritual values realized and taught by the teacher, alters the ratio of social forces through a profound transformation in individual men and women, and effects an all-round refinement in human morals and manners.

Thus, society is the supreme field for all enduring types of welfare activity. And such activity is mostly silent and calm. To politics belongs all noise, the healthier the politics the lesser the noise and vice versa. A democratic state offers the best opportunity for this mighty work of social transformation. Here is national work of a magnitude and importance compared to which the purely political work is of small scope and consequence. Politics which was paramount before freedom thus takes second place after the achievement of that freedom. The edifice of political freedom needs to be founded on the bed-rock of social health and well-being. That work calls for youth endued not with political passion and personal

ambition but with spiritual enthusiasm and moral fervour, and a grasp of the science of man and society. Only an edifice so built can stand the stress and strain of the modern world. To do so, we shall have to think and act dispassionately. Today when we are called to this task after centuries of national immobilization, let us proceed calmly and patiently to build the structure and edifice of our free society on enduring foundations. This can be done only if we tap the resources of inspiration proceeding from religion and join to it the other 'inspiration' proceeding from science. This has been the way of India; and let us follow that way today.

DOES RELIGION MATTER ?

BY AMIYA KUMAR MAZUMDAR

In one of the school-examinations in the USSR., a little girl was asked, 'What is religion?'. She answered, 'It is the opium of the people.' 'What is God?' was the second question, and prompt came the answer, 'God is a favourite device of the ruling bourgeoisie to perpetuate exploitation over the ruled.' The examiner was highly pleased and said, 'Well done.' The girl went away with a sigh of relief and muttered, 'Thank God, I have answered correctly.'

This story proves, once again, that the dictum, 'Nature abhors a vacuum,' is true not only of the physical world but also of the mental. From time immemorial, man has tried to satisfy the cravings of his soul in various ways. He has felt the triviality of things that are earthly and has tried to rise above the strife and stress of this world and catch a glimpse of life eternal. He has looked upon himself as frail, his attempts as futile before the vast forces of nature. And he has been anxious to know his destiny in the

scheme of things as a whole, to establish his relationship to the unseen world around him.

What is the position of man today? Uncertainty and unrest, agnosticism and contradictions have bewildered him. He is stooping forward to look out over a wide landscape at a large question mark which hangs over the distant horizon like a malignant star.¹ He is trying to have a glimpse of the future, but the future is incalculable. And it is characteristic of man that he cannot rest for long in an unresolved discord. He strives for harmony and adjustment. As one environment changes he longs for newer integrations. When a particular integration fails to bring the desired equilibrium he tries another which may fit in with the nature of things.

'Before all else man is a worshipper. From his earliest appearance in history he has been building his pathetic altars stretching forth

¹ Radhakrishnan: *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, p. 18.

his hand to the unknown God. This is persistent through all the mazes of his social and religious record, through all its perversions and unlovely forms, its ignorance, its cruelty and terror—man's ineradicable quest for God, in whom alone he can find rest and fulfilment. If he cannot find God in heaven, he must fall down before a God on earth and deify some idol of his own making.² Indeed, the various religious faiths recorded in history are so many attempts at harmonizing the inner nature of man with the outer reality. There are some 'moderners' who look askance at religion. The question is very often asked, Does civilization need religion? Does religion stand for progress or for decay? Can religion help us, in any way, in removing the crisis which man faces today all the world over? These are thoughts which demand more than a passing notice.

In a brochure entitled *Has religion made useful contributions to civilization?* Russell says that religion is a disease born of fear and is a source of untold misery to the human race. As he puts it, 'the injustice, the cruelty and the misery that exist in the modern world are an inheritance from the past and their ultimate source is economic, since life-and-death competition for the means of subsistence was, in former days, inevitable. It is not inevitable in our age. With our present industrial technique, we can, if we choose, provide a tolerable subsistence for everybody. We could also secure that the world's population should be stationary if we were not prevented by the political ideals of the churches which prefer war, pestilence, and famine to contraception. The knowledge exists by which universal happiness can be secured; the chief obstacle to its utilization for that purpose is the teachings of religion. Religion prevents our children from having a rational education; religion prevents us from removing the fundamental causes of war; religion prevents us

from teaching the ethic of scientific co-operation in place of the old fierce doctrines of sin and punishment. It is possible that mankind is on the threshold of a golden age, but if so, it will be necessary first to slay the dragon that guards the door and this dragon is religion.'³

Russell puts forward his objections to religion under two heads, intellectual and moral. The intellectual objection is that there is hardly any reason to establish the validity of religion. The moral objection refers to the point that religious precepts tend to foster a spirit of cruelty, as for example, in the emphasis on celibacy. Russell criticizes the traditional arguments for the existence of God, the attitude of Christianity towards sin, suffering, and sex. Religion, we are told, is a bar towards progress; it fosters a spirit of intolerance, staticity, and decay.

Russell is a protagonist of scientific method and outlook and is one of the greatest thinkers of the modern world. As such his observations demand a careful scrutiny. The first thing that strikes us is that he has not made any attempt to explain what he means by 'religion.' From his scathing criticism we may however presume that when he denounces religion he has, mainly, Christianity in view. It is, however, a common-place that religion speaks in many dialects. And it would be sheer absurdity to equate religion with Christianity, as if other religions are not worth the name. A candid critic of religion should, in the first instance, sift the husk from kernel; he has to gather, from the various different types of religion, the elements which have stood the test of time—the vital truths which are common to the various kinds of religion. When Russell says that religion is a bar towards progress, he possibly forgets that elsewhere⁴ he has repudiated the very idea of progress as an obstacle to the victory of scientific method, as an anthropomorphic

² Cannon F. R. Barry, quoted by Joad in *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, pp. 610-11.

³ Russell: *Has Religion Made Useful Contributions to Civilization?* pp. 29-30.

⁴ See Russell: *Scientific Method in Philosophy*.

conception which should be carefully avoided by all lovers of scientific philosophy. Again, in his *A Free Man's Worship*, Russell brings out, in bold relief, the sharp contrast between the *ideals* to which man acknowledges loyalty and the physical universe where man 'lives, moves and has his being'—the omnipotent matter blind to good and evil, reckless of human life and ideals. On his own showing, Russell assigns a place to the ideals of human life in the scheme of reality as a whole. And these ideals are surely other than material and are hardly amenable to scientific analysis. Nevertheless, they are neither meaningless nor false. If Russell had developed the implications of this side of his philosophy, he might have caught a glimpse of the spiritual world. Further, we cannot lightly brush aside the deliverances of religious experience by saying with Russell that 'religion is a disease born of fear.' It is true indeed that in its earliest forms religion had, in some cases, its roots in fear. But it is one thing to trace the origin of religion and another to explain the validity of religious experience itself. Besides, theologians are not in agreement in regard to the origin of religion. According to Schleiermacher, the essence of religion is a sense of dependence; according to others, religion involves a sense of harmony between man and the outer world and so on. It is odd to argue that because for the primitive men religion arose out of a sense of fear, it is still essentially the same thing and that it has not advanced a step further. It is tantamount to saying that the highly developed religious sentiment of modern civilized man is the same thing as the primitive rituals and magic of the savage. It is as fallacious as to argue that there is no more in the fruit than there was in the roots. It is obvious that Russell falls a victim to the allurements of scientific method. The scientific method, which is, in a sense, the method of explaining the more developed by the less developed, may be quite unimpeachable in a science like mechanics or physics, where the facts with

which we are dealing are of the same order; both the cause and the effect are transformations of matter and motion. But in other sciences, e.g. in biology, where growth or evolution is real or fundamental, this retrospective explanation is inapplicable. For, to explain the more developed by the less developed is to reduce the more to the less and thereby to deny the very fact to be explained. And if evolution is true of the biological realm, it is equally true of the social and religious planes. The 'whole' may, of course, be resolved into 'parts'; nevertheless, the 'whole' is, in an important sense, more than the sum of its parts, as is evident in the case of a symphony, or a picture, or a self. There is a *pattern* of the whole which permeates the being of parts. All mechanical explanations tend to reduce the whole to its parts without remainder, and, consequently, miss the *novelty* of the whole.

It may be granted that 'with our present industrial technique we can provide a tolerable subsistence for everybody.' But is 'tolerable subsistence' the only thing man cares for? There is no denying that, to the layman, religion becomes inane when he falls in the grip of poverty, when he suffers for none of his faults, or when pain and evil engulf his entire being. The two world wars have shaken man's faith in God, and it would not be untrue to say that, for the modern man, God is gradually receding to the background. For, what man wants, in the first place, is a balanced diet, a comfortable house, health and last, but not least, *peace of mind*. Improved industrial technique might have brought, in its trail, a more complex way of living, better means of communication and all that. But has it given peace and happiness? If we look at the world today we find that human civilization is facing a great crisis. It is periodic wars between nation and nation. We are told that science is making amazing progress. In reality, however, we find that scientists are selling their talents for a few chips of gold or silver. The discoveries of

these 'truth-seekers' are, in a few cases, being utilized for the the good of humanity ; but in a far larger measure, they are being used as speedy means of the destruction of human race. Parochialism and aggrandizement, bigotry and fetishism, are reigning supreme. Degradation of the human spirit is writ large on the canvas of human civilization. Hardly before the wounds of the last Great War have healed up, humanity is threatened with the possibility of a Third World War to be waged in a far more appalling manner. Consequently there are two alternatives before us. Either perish by deadly warfare or evolve, and work up to an ideal which can ensure lasting peace and progress of mankind.

As Dr. Radhakrishnan puts it, 'Unhappiness and discontent spring not only from poverty. Man is a strange creature, fundamentally different from other animals. He has far horizons, invincible hopes, creative energies, spiritual powers. If they are left undeveloped and unsatisfied he may have all the comforts which wealth can give, but will still feel that life is not worthwhile. ... What is missing in our age is the soul ; there is nothing wrong with the body. We suffer from sickness of spirit.'⁵

The challenge to religion comes, again, from another quarter. It is Marxism. Marx described religion as 'opium of the people.' The reason for this hostility is that, as a historical fact, religion has been used by the exploiting class as a method of ensuring the subservience of the exploited. The intelligent ruler should use morals and religion as instruments of power. This was the recommendation of Machiavelli. This view of religion is rooted in the philosophies of Nietzsche and Thrasymachus, according to whom society is, at bottom, based upon force. This force is employed by the exploiters in order to maintain and perpetuate the inequalities upon which they thrive. Religion is, thus, a device for inducing the poor and the oppressed to

tolerate the particular order of society which impoverishes and oppresses them. The Christian religion goes further and makes a virtue of poverty. We are assured that it is only with the greatest difficulty that the rich man will enter the Kingdom of Heaven which opens its doors to the humble and needy. Poverty is not, therefore, a privation or disability to be removed but, it is, on the contrary, a 'passport' to heavenly bliss.

Marxism is materialism, and as such it is relentlessly opposed to religion as was the materialism of Feuerbach. We may note, in passing, the famous utterances of Feuerbach : 'It is a question today, you say, no longer of the existence or non-existence of God but of the existence and non-existence of man ; not whether God is a creature whose nature is the same as ours but whether we human beings are to be equal among ourselves, not whether and how, we can partake of the Lord by eating bread but whether we have enough bread for our own bodies. ... I deny God. But that means for me that I deny the negation of man.'⁶

Although the aim of Marxism is to combat religion, yet this fight is not to be reduced to abstract ideological preaching. This struggle must be linked up with the concrete practical class-movements ; its aim must be to eradicate the social roots of religion.

It is obvious that the Marxist has taken an extremely narrow view of religion and an equally narrow view of man. He has focused his attention upon the perverted forms of religion rather than religion at its best. It is true, indeed, that removal of poverty is one of the primary aims of social progress, but is it correct to say that man acts from economic motives *alone* ? Are not love and sympathy equally strong emotions like hate, hunger, greed and other elemental urges ? The Marxist's stigma on religion arises out of social motives. But, when the Marxist speaks of the ultimacy of social values, does he

⁵ Radhakrishnan : *Religion and Society*, p. 23.

⁶ Feuerbach : *Essence of Christianity*.

not transcend the needs of his immediate surroundings and rise above the limitations of the economic man? We may ask, what is it that has prompted the Marxist to achieve an ideal state in which there will no longer be any poverty or pain, any suffering or exploitation? What is it that leads an individual to wilful self-sacrifice and strict obedience to the dictates of a few? Why is the *private* individual supporting abolition of private property? The roots of all these activities are to be traced back to the spiritual nature of man, to that aspect of human life which refuses to identify the end of human life with the fulfilment of immediate necessities. Loyalty to social values arises from the spiritual nature of man. Dialecticism, which is the foundation of Marxism, signifies, primarily, a tendency towards the production of higher and higher values, and as such it points to a domain which is more-than-material.

It has been abundantly clear from the above how religion, in one of its phases, stands in the way of social progress. But, what do Russell and Marx really mean by 'religion'? That is the moot question. One thing is clear. When Russell and Marx attack religion they have, chiefly, Christianity in view. And Christianity as an organized religion entails belief in God—God the creator of this world, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent Supreme Being. Further, the observations of Russell and Marx make it clear that they have not thrown the distinction between the spirit of religion and its perverted forms into bold relief.

'Religion' is one of those words which are extremely vague and elastic in meaning. It includes the crude forms like animism, totemism, fetishism as also the highly developed phases of human thought like Vedanta, Buddhism, Humanism, Absolutism and others. Is there a comprehensive definition which covers all these various forms? Possibly there is none. But, one thing deserves careful consideration. Religion does not neces-

sarily imply belief in God in the accepted sense of the term. This may be shocking to common sense but it is, nevertheless, true. For, if belief in God were essential to religion, then Buddhism, Advaitism, and Jainism would have been excluded. What, then, is the imperishable truth in all the various forms of religion? This is a difficult question to answer. For, 'religion' gives rise to a variety of images and interpretations—those of rituals and dogmas, ceremony and penance, asceticism and fasting, and even running at one another's throat. Indeed, history, down to the present day, records the various atrocities perpetrated in the name of religion. And consequently, the layman has unhesitatingly attributed such things as human sacrifice, cannibalism, abject superstition, and bigotry to religion.

The candid critic, however, will not fail to see that the charges laid at the door of religion are really the evils of perverted religion. Dr. Whitehead points out that religion, in so far as it receives external expression in human history, exhibits four factors.⁷ These factors are ritual, emotion, belief, and rationalization. There is a definite organized procedure which is ritual; there are definite types of emotional expression; there are definitely expressed beliefs organized into a system, internally coherent and coherent with other beliefs. When we assess the value of a particular religion we must clearly distinguish between the true religious spirit and the outward forms of religion which often degenerate into empty and meaningless practices. As Rabindranath puts it, 'when religions travel far from their sacred sources, they lose their original dynamic vigour and degenerate into the arrogance of piety, into an utter emptiness crammed with irrational habits and mechanical practices; then is their spiritual inspiration befogged in the turbidity of sectarianism, then do they become the most obstinate obstruction that darken our vision of human

⁷ Whitehead: *Religion in the Making*.

unity, piling up out of their accretions and refuse deadweights of unreason across our path of progress. . . . The reason is, because sectarianism, like some voracious parasite, feeds upon the religion whose colour it assumes, exhausting it so that it knows not when its spirit is sucked dry. It utilizes the dead skin for its habitation, as a stronghold for its unholy instinct of fight, its pious vain-gloriousness, fiercely contemptuous of its neighbour's article of faith.⁸

What, then, is the meaning of religion and what are its roots? Religion involves, in the first place, a spirit of harmony between man and the universe around him. It has its roots in the feeling that our life is more than a succession of bare facts, more than a meaningless series of 'ragged edges.' The meaning and value of life are not to be found in the fulfilment of bare necessities of existence. There is a quality of life which always lies beyond the immediacy of life; and this points to the domain of value. Appraisal of beauty, adoration of virtue, and loyalty to truth are some of the qualities which are rooted in the very texture of human life. 'We live in a common world of mutual adjustment, of intelligible relations, of valuations, of zest after purposes, of joy and grief, of interest concentrated on self, of interest directed beyond self, of life-weariness and of life-zest.'⁹

What we need today is a re-orientation of religion. In fact religion embraces the whole of our life, it vitalizes the entire being of a man. Accordingly, we have to define religion in such a way as to include all the different faiths of mankind. Can we not define religion as realization of values? Truth, beauty and goodness are generally recognized as the ultimate values. And it may not be going too far to say that God is just the unity of all values. That religion is intimately concern-

ed with ultimate values is obvious; for, worship primarily means recognition of worth. It should be carefully noted, however, that although values imply appreciation on the part of the subject, yet they are, in an important sense, objective. Let us take, for example, truth-value. To say that 'X is true' is not equivalent to saying that 'it suits my convenience to believe in X.' In the case of truth, there is an objective control which leaves no room for any subjectivist interpretation of truth or falsity. The same applies to moral and aesthetic judgments. The judgment, 'this is right' does not always mean 'this is useful' or 'this is expedient.' Indeed, moral consciousness refuses to identify moral approval or disapproval with subjective feelings. Further, it clearly discriminates between what is *pleasant* and what is *right* and demands that the right *ought* to be done, no matter if it is pleasant or unpleasant. Likewise, beauty is not arbitrary creation of any individual, but is an interpretation of the soul of reality in terms of sense. If we study the history of art, we shall find that aesthetic judgments also have the significance of objective validity like scientific judgments. Thus values are assessed by objective standards which are ultimate in the sense that we have to accept them, if value judgments are to be rendered meaningful.

An analysis of the concept of 'gradation of values' reveals that the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness cannot be fully realized at the empirical level. There is hardly any thing in this world of which we can justly say, 'This is the most beautiful object.' The ideal of beauty can never be realized completely under the limitations of space, time, and form. But, can we not conceive of a being who is *pure beauty* without the least shade of ugliness? Similarly, the ideal of virtue cannot be fully realized in moral activity; for virtue is virtue in so far as the element of evil or imperfection is overcome. But so far as human actions are concerned, imperfection is never fully overcome,

⁸ Sri Ramakrishna Centenary Parliament of Religions, Rabindranath's Presidential Address, p. 5.

⁹ Whitehead: *Religion in the Making*, p. 68.

it is only sublimated or harmonized in varying degrees. Nevertheless, we may conceive of the ideal goodness where there is no room for the slightest tinge of evil. Thus the ideals of truth, beauty, and goodness must transcend all empirical limitations. If the ideal of truth leaves no room for falsity, that of beauty is devoid of ugliness, and that of goodness is 'beyond good and evil', can we not say that this ideal is something transcendental? And, if it is granted, there cannot be any room for limitations and divisions in it. That is to say, there are not three different ideals so far as truth, beauty, and goodness are concerned. For, truth is affirmed only by contrast with falsity; the affirmation of beauty presupposes some element of ugliness which has been transcended, and goodness shines against the background of evil. But the 'ideal' of which we are speaking is completely devoid of falsity, ugliness, and evil. In the absence of these factors of contrast, it is not unreasonable to speak of the 'ideal' as one. Truth, beauty, and goodness coalesce in this ideal realm, and we can justly say that this spiritual unity of all values is the goal of religion. This ideal is, at once, the most true, the most beautiful, and the most good. You may call it God, or anything else you like.

It may be contended that, since all valuation is, ultimately, self-valuation, religion as value-experience is bound to be individualistic in character. In other words, it may be looked upon as a form of escapism from the hard brute facts of life. Indeed, 'Religion', says Dr. Whitehead, 'is what a man does with his solitariness.'¹⁰ Dr. Whitehead has dwelt upon this aspect at great length and pointed out that it is only because religion is universal that it introduces the note of solitariness. For, the universality of religion presupposes, among other things, a transcendence of immediate surroundings. Religion is not a form of escapism, rather, it is an endeavour to control and rise above the limitations of

human life. Dr. Radhakrishnan is, perhaps, stressing the same point when he says, 'The development of religious life demands a withdrawal from practical activity in order to permit of the concentration of reflection, intellectual or emotional. Religious life is a rhythm of withdrawal and return: withdrawal into individual solitariness which expresses the need for thought and contemplation and return to the life of society.'¹¹

Again, it is sometimes urged that religion takes away from our heart the zeal for social progress. It is said that what we need most, at the present moment, is the betterment of our social structure, and religion, in so far as it deals with transcendental verities, is super-social, if not positively anti-social. Broadly speaking, there are two methods of improving our social structure, one is change of environment and the other, 'change of heart', one is external and the other internal. The former is being tried with doubtful success. For, the stability of environmental change cannot be ensured so long as the baser instincts of human life are what they are. Love of power is one of the deep-rooted emotions of human life. In fact, the West is power-intoxicated today. If the elemental forces of life like greed, power, jealousy, domination, sense of possession etc. are not properly transformed, no amount of external adjustment can make for social progress. From the League of Nations down to the UNO we have had a good many peace-makers but the success has been meagre. The point is that if the urge towards the betterment of society does not come from within, if the heart does not bleed, so to say, for the good of humanity, if the animal instincts of man are not chastened, then all attempts at the uplift of society will end in failure. Far from being inimical to social progress, religion promotes social solidarity and peace. The lives of great spiritual teachers testify to the fact that they renounced their own family in order to enlighten and

¹⁰ Whitehead: *Religion in the making*, p. 6.

¹¹ Radhakrishnan: *Religion and Society*, p. 77

redeem benighted mankind. The lives of Buddha, Jesus, Ramakrishna, and others were not self-centred but lives dedicated for the service of humanity. In fact, the best servants of humanity are those who have cultivated a highly developed inward life. And it would not be untrue to say that it is communion with Divine Life that endows man with that creative energy which is necessary for social reconstruction. If I can *realize* that I and my fellow-beings are not essentially different but our selves, are all identical with the ultimate Reality, the path of social reconstruction becomes easy enough. It is, of course, a lofty ideal, but, if we can attune our life to this ideal, the world may be a better place to live in.

The spirit of detachment so greatly emphasized by different religions does not mean that social duties are to be ignored. The fitness for detachment presupposes, among other things, multifarious social duties performed in accordance with ethical codes. Detachment, therefore, cannot be unsocial nor is it negative in character. Religion, indeed, teaches us to annihilate selfish desire, which is achieved as a result of service selflessly and sincerely rendered to others. Thus detachment stands for self-denial; but there is another side of the shield, which implies devotion to the service of others. In other words, detachment implies self-renunciation.

According to the Indian ideal, there are different duties at different stations of human life. Religious treatises emphasize work along with contemplation. A man should perform the duties allotted to him; only he should be free from attachment to the fruits of his work. As the *Isha Upanishad* says; 'Let my life be a life of dedication, let my vital breath, eyes,

ears, intellect, and spirit be dedicated to service, let my Vedic lore and understanding, prosperity and knowledge, be dedicated to service. Let the sacrifice itself be made in a spirit of utter sacrifice.' Since men are not mere individuals but 'bearers of a common personality,' the true self-development of an individual implies his emancipation from the limitations of individuality, and the path to self-realization is through the service of others. True service of humanity is the method of realizing ourselves and, at the same time, helping others in the task of self-realization.

Whatever may be the means one may adopt to bring about a better world, economic reform, military conquest, armed revolution, 'change of heart', or psycho-analysis—these are all backed by a desire for harmony which has its roots in discontentment with the present status. And here is a religious quality we have been eagerly looking for. As Romain Rolland says: '... many souls who believe they are free from all religious belief but who in reality live immersed in a state of super-rational consciousness, which they term Socialism, Communism, Humanitarianism, Nationalism and even Rationalism. It is the quality of thought and not its object which determines its source and allows us to decide whether or not it emanates from religion. If it turns fearlessly towards the search for truth at all costs, with single-minded sincerity, prepared for any sacrifice, I should call it religious, for it presupposes faith in an end to human effort—higher than the life of existing society and even higher than the life of humanity as a whole.'¹²

¹² Romain Rolland: *Life of Ramakrishna*, p. 6.

'The whole world of religions is only a travelling, a coming up, of different men and women, through various conditions of circumstances, to the same goal. Every religion is only evolving a God out of the material man, and the same God is the inspirer of all of them.'

—Swami Vivekananda

THE WORKS OF TULSIDAS (III)

BY MRS. C. K. HANDOO

(Continued from the February issue)

In the Ayodhya Kānda or second canto Tulsidas deals exclusively with the banishment of Ram and his sojourn in the forest. Here lies the heart of the *Ramcharit Mānas*, so completely human that interest in it is spontaneous, but at the same time differing from an ordinary historical novel which also portrays human character and emotion, inasmuch as the sweetness of Bhakti is here at its highest. This skilful intermingling of the human emotion with the divine brings home to us, however dimly, what to saints is a matter of immediate intuition and realization, that there is no difference between the sacred and the secular and the world is indeed the manifestation of the Divine Shakti or Maya.

The most tragic figure in the banishment of Ram is Dasharatha himself. After promising to fulfil Kaikayi's request, when he hears that she wishes to send Ram into exile for fourteen years, his grief is immeasurable. The poet says :

*Dekhī vyādhi asādha nripu, pareu dharani
dhuni māth ;*

*Kahata parama ārata vāchana, Rāmā
Rama Raghunath.*

'Seeing that the disease was beyond remedy, the king fell on the ground and, beating his forehead with his hand, in a voice full of anguish, he cried out—Ram !
Ram ! Raghunath !'

*Vyākula rāu sithila saba gātā,
Karini kalapatāru manahun nipātā.*

'In deep sorrow the king's strength ebbed away from his body ; it seemed as if a she-elephant had destroyed the wish-fulfilling tree of heaven.'

*Kanthu sūkha mukha āva na bānī,
Janu pāthīna dāna binu pānī.*

'His throat was parched and no words came out of his mouth ; he seemed to be as restless as a fish out of water.'

*Hridaya manāva bhoru jani hoyī,
Rāmahi jāyi kahai jani koyī.*

'In his heart he hoped that morning would not dawn so that no one could ask Ram to go to the forest.'

The next morning Kaikayi sent for Ram. When he came—

*Rāmahi chitai raheru naranāhū,
Chalā vilochana vāri pravāhū.*

'The king gazed at Ram and tears flowed from his eyes.'

*Soka vivasa kachhu kahai na pārā,
Hridaya lagāvata bārahin bārā.*

'Grief-stricken he could not speak but clasped Ram to his heart again and again.'

He prayed to Shiva, saying—

*Tuma preraka sabake hridaya, so mati
Rāmahi dehu ;*

*Vachana mora taji rahahin ghārā, parihari
sīla sanehu.*

'You are the mover of every heart, give Ram this understanding that heedless of my promise, giving up his love for me, and his adherence to the moral law, he may stay at home.'

Ajasa hohu jaga sujasu nasāū,

Naraka paraun baru surapurū jāū.

'My good name may be destroyed, people may defame me, I may go to heaven or hell ;'

Saba dukha dusāka suhāvahu mohī,

Lochana ota Rama jani hohin.

'I am willing to put up with all trials and tribulations, but may I not be deprived of the sight of Ram.'

Asa mana gunayi rāu nahin bolā,

Pīpara pāta sarisa mana dolā.

'Thinking thus in his mind the king did not speak, but his heart trembled like a leaf in the wind.'

When Ram left for the forest, accompanied

by Sita and Lakshman, the king asked his chief minister to accompany them in the royal chariot and bring them back in a few days after showing them the forest on the outskirts of the town. When he came to know that the minister had returned alone, the last hope to which he had been clinging all these days also vanished.

*Dhari dhāraja uthi baitha bhuālū,
Kahu sumantra kahan Ram kripālū.*

'Controlling himself, the king sat up and asked him, "O Sumantra, say where is Ram, the Compassionate?"'

*Kahān Lakhana kahan Rama sānehī,
Kahan priya putravadhū Vaidehī.*

'Where is Lakshman? Where is my loving Ram and where is my beloved daughter-in-law Sita?'

*Vilapata rāu vikala bahu bhāntī,
Bhayi juga sarisa sirāti na rātī.*

'Thus, in great anguish, the king wept. The night became like an age and did not seem to end.'

*So tanu rākhi karaba main kāhā,
Jehi na prema pana mora nibāhā.*

'He said, "What is the use of keeping this body which does not know how to fulfil the obligations of love?"'

*Hā Raghunandana pranapirīte,
Tuma binu jiata bahuta dina bīte.*

'O Raghunandana, giver of joy to the family of Raghu, dearer to me than life, I have lived for many days without you.'

*Rama Rama kahi Rama kahi, Rama
Rama kahi Ram;*

*Tanu parihari Raghuvara viraha, rāu
gayau suradhām.*

'Thus endlessly calling on Ram, in sorrow at the separation from him, the king gave up his body and went to heaven.'

Such was the sad end of the good Dasha-ratha, kind-hearted king, loving father, and indulgent husband. But before we take leave of him, let us also pay our homage to him in the words of Tulsidas—

*Bandaun Avadha bhuāla, satya prema
jehi Rama par;*

*Bichhurata dīnadayāla, priya tanu trina
iva parihareu.*

'Salutations to the king of Ayodhya who had true love for Ram. When separated from Him, the Lord, who is kind to the poor, he gave up this dear body like straw.'

On the appointed day of the coronation of Ram, Kousalya, his mother, unaware of the great tragedy enacted overnight, was awaiting his arrival with joyous expectation. Ram came and told her of the change in his fortune and asked her leave to go to the forest.

*Vachana vināta madhura Raghuvara ke,
Sara sama lāgi mātu ura karake.*

'Hearing the words of Ram, full of sweetness and humility, it was as if an arrow pierced the mother's heart.'

*Kahi na jāya kachhu hridaya vishādū,
Manahu mrigī suni kehari nādū.*

'She could not express the grief of her heart; it was as if a doe was stricken down with the sound of the lion's roar.'

*Nayana sajala tanu tharā tharā kāmpī,
Majahi khāya mīna janu māpī.*

'Tears filled her eyes and her body trembled; she looked like the fish which becomes unconscious on eating the froth of the first rain of the monsoons.'

*Bahuri samujhi tīya dharama sayānī,
Rāmu Bharatu dou suta sama jānī.*

'Then, she, being wise and understanding the duty of a wife, and looking upon Bharat and Ram as being equally her sons,'—

*Sarala subhāu Rama mahatārī,
Bolī vachana dhāra dhari bhārī.*

'The simple-hearted mother of Ram, exercising great control over her mind, said,'—

*Rāja dena kahi dīnha bana, mohi na so
dukha lesu;*

*Tumha binu Bharatahi bhūpatihī, prajahin
prachanda kalesu.*

'I do not grieve because you were promised a kingdom but were given the forest; I grieve because Bharat, and the king,

and our subjects will suffer greatly in your absence.'

These are noble words of a noble heart who sought to forget her own sorrow in the suffering of those around her. In keeping with the same dignity of behaviour, she goes on to say—

Jaun kevala pitu āyasu tātā,

Tau jani jāhu jāni badi mātā.

'O son, if it is only your father's order, then, knowing mother to be greater than father, do not go.'

Jaun pitu mātu kaheu bana jānā,

Tau kānana sata Avadha samānā.

'If father and mother have both asked you to go, then the forest will be like a hundred Ayodhyas to you.'

Though she spoke brave words, but when Bharat returned he found her thus—

Malina vasana vivarana vikāla, krisā sarīra dukha bhār;

Kanaka kalapa bara beli bānā, mānāhun hanī tusār.

'Her clothes were untidy, her face was pale, and her body was emaciated through the burden of sorrow. It seemed as if a golden creeper had been killed by frost.'

As she cheerfully allowed Ram to go to the forest, waited upon the dying king, her husband who had neglected her in happier times, so the broken-hearted Bharat wept on her motherly lap and found consolation in her loving words and presence. Hers is the true self-effacing life and loving mother's heart that has ever been the ideal of womanhood in India.

While Ram was talking to his mother, Sita, hearing the news of Ram's impending departure to the forest, joined them.

Baithi namita mukha sochati Sita,

Rūpa rāsi pati prema punītā.

'With head cast downward, the beautiful Sita, who had pure love for her husband, thought thus,—

Chalana chahata bana jivānā nāthū,

Kehi sukritī sana hoyihi sāthū.

'The lord of my life is about to go to the

forest. Through the power of which merit shall I accompany him?'

Ki tanu prāna ki kevala prānā,

Vidhi karataba kachhu jāyi na jānā.

'Will my body and heart go with him, or will the heart accompany him only? It is difficult to know the ways of the Creator.'

She spoke to Ram thus,—

Mohi maga chalata na hoyihi hārī,

Chhinu chhinu charana saroja nihārī.

'I shall not feel tired walking on the forest-path as every moment I shall be watching your lotus feet.'

Pāya pakhāri baithi taru chhahīn,

Karihaun bāu mudita mana māhīn.

'I shall wash your feet, and when we sit under a tree I shall fan you, with my mind full of joy.'

Shrama kana sahita syāma tanu dekhen

Kahan dukha samau prānapati pekhen.

'When I look at your dark body with drops of perspiration, seeing the lord of my life, how will the opportunity arise for me to be unhappy?'

Prānanātha tumha binu jaga māhīn,

Mo kahun sukhada katahun kachhu nāhīn.

'O lord of my life, without you nothing can give me happiness.'

Bhoga roga sama bhūshana bhārū,

Jama jātanā sarisa sansārū.

'Enjoyment will be like a disease to me, ornaments a burden, and the world like the sufferings of hell.'

Asa kahi Sīya vikala bhayī bhārī,

Vachana viyoga na sakī sambhārī.

'Speaking thus Sita lost control over herself; she could not even bear to utter the words of separation.'

Kaheu kripāla bhānukula nāthā,

Parihari sochu chalahu bana sāthā.

'The compassionate lord of the family of sun said, "Give up your anxiety and accompany me to the forest".'

Nahin vishāda kara avasara ājū,

Vegi karahu bana gavana samājū.

'Today is not an opportune moment for

depression ; get ready quickly for the forest.'

*Samāchāra jaba Lachhimana pāye,
Vyākula vilakha vadana uthi dhāye.*

'When Lakshman came to hear this news, he became extremely agitated, and with a look of anxiety on his face he came running to Ram.'

*Kampa pulaka tana nayanā sārā,
Gahe charana ati prema adhārā.*

'His body was trembling, his hairs were on end, and tears filled his eyes. He touched the feet of Ram and a loving restlessness filled his heart.'

*Kahi na sakata kachhu chitavata thādhe,
Mīnu dīna janu jala ke kādhe.*

'He could not say a word but stood there just gazing at Ram, looking like a poor fish just taken out of water.'

*Rama viloki bandhu kara jore,
Deha geha saba sana trina tore.*

'Ram saw his brother standing with folded hands, having destroyed all relationship with home and body.'

*Bole vachana Rama nayanāgar,
Sīla saneha sarala sukha sāgar.*

'Then Ram, who was an adept in the rules of conduct and was an ocean of goodness, simplicity, love, and happiness, spoke these words.'

*Tāta premabasa jani kadanāhū,
Samujhi hridaya parināma uchhāhū.*

'O brother, let not love make you a coward. Keep in mind the ultimate happiness that will result from this step (that I am taking).'

In sweet and loving words Ram tried to persuade Lakshman to stay at home and look after the old parents, the kingdom, and their subjects. Lakshman replied as follows :

*Dīnhi mohi silcha nīki gusān,
Lāgi agama apanī kadanāyīn.*

'You have given me good advice, O lord, but through my own cowardice I cannot live up to it.'

*Naravara dhāra dharama dhurā dhārī,
Nigama nīti kahun te adhikārī.*

'The best amongst men who are of con-

trolled minds and are the upholders of Dharma are fit recipients of moral and religious instructions.'

*Main sisu prabhu saneha pratipālā,
Mandaru meru ki lehi marālā,*

'I am a child tended by your loving care. Can a swan lift up the Mandar or Sumeru mountain?'

*Guru pitu mātu na jānahan kāhū,
Kahaun subhāu nātha patiāhū.*

'Believe me, O lord, I speak truly when I say I do not know father, mother, or Guru.'

*Moren sabayi eka tuma swāmī,
Dīnabandhu ura antara jāmā.*

'O lord ! O friend of the lowly ! O knower of my heart ! You are all in all to me.'

Dharama nīti upadesia tāhī.

Kīrati bhūti sugati priya jāhī.

'Religion and morals may be taught to those who desire fame, prosperity and heavenly reward.'

*Mana krama vachana charanā ratā hoyī,
Kripā sindhu pariharia ki soyī.*

'But, O ocean of compassion, should you forsake one who, by mind, word, and deed, is devoted to your feet?'

Thus Lakshman gained the consent of Ram to join him in his exile. Ram then sent him to his mother to get her permission.

Jāyi janani paga nayau māthā,

Mana Raghunandana Jānakā sāthā.

'He touched his mother's feet but his mind was with Sita and Ram.'

Sumitra first heard of the story of Ram's banishment from her son.

*Samujhi Sumitrā Rama Siya, rūpa susīla
subhāu ;*

*Nripa saneha lakhi dhuneu sira, pāpini
dīnha kudāu.*

'Thinking of Ram and Sita's beauty, good conduct, and sweet temper, and the king's love for them, Sumitra beat her forehead and said, "The sinful Kaikayi has dealt an unkind blow".'

*Dhīraja dhareu kuavasara jānī,
Sahaja suhrida bolī mridu bānī.*

'Knowing the time to be inopportune, she

controlled herself, and being sympathetic by nature, she said in a soft voice,—

*Tāta tumhāri mātu Vaidehī,
Pitā Rama saba bhānti sanehī.*

‘O son, Sita is your mother and Ram your loving father.’

*Avadha tahān jahan Rama nivāsū,
Tahanyin divasa jahan bhānu prakāsū.*

‘Wherever Ram lives there is Ayodhya, wherever the sun shines there it is day.’

*Jau pai Sīya Rama bana Jāhīn,
Avadha tumhāra kāju kachhu nāhīn.*

‘If Sita and Ram are going to the forest, you have no duties to perform in Ayodhya.’

*Rama prānapriya jīvana jīke,
Swāratha rahita sakhā saba hī ke.*

‘Dearer than life, the self of our self, without a trace of selfishness is Ram who is the friend of all.’

*Asa jīya jāni sanga bana jāhū,
Lehu tāta jaga jīvana lāhū.*

‘Knowing this in your heart, go to the forest, O son, and get the best from what life offers you.’

*Upadesa yahu jehi tāta tumhāre, Rama
Sīya sukha pāvahīn.*

‘My instructions to you are to live in such a way that you may give happiness to Sita and Ram.’

*Pitu mātu priya parivāra pura sukha surati.
bana bisarāvahīn.*

‘And they may forget father, mother, loving family, and comforts of town.’

*Tulasī prabhūhi sikha deyi āyasu dīnha
puni āsisha dayī.*

‘Tulsi says that Sumitra, after instructing my master Lakshman in this manner, gave her permission and blessed him thus,—

*Rati hou avirala amala Sīya Raghuvīra
pada nita nita nayī.*

‘May you daily feel the awakening of an ever new but pure and deep love for the feet of Sita and Ram.’

Throughout the whole of *Ramcharit*

Mānas this is the only place where Sumitra speaks. Like the rarest pearl hidden in the depth of the ocean is mother Sumitra, doubly blessed through her own life as well as that of her devoted son. Like a tiny seed which buries itself underground to give birth to a mighty tree is she, who, through her silent life of service, prayer, and self-effacement, gave birth to the heroic Lakshman. Out of consideration for her reserve and modesty, Tulsidas has paid no open homage to her. He understood her greatness well for she belongs to a type of India’s mothers who lived in complete forgetfulness of self, but who through their quiet and noble lives inspired their sons with courage and strength, and what is more, with a clear and correct vision of life and its abiding values.

Valmiki says that Ram once put his head on his mother’s lap and wept, but not thus does Tulsidas speak of him. He says,

*Nava gayanda Raghuvīra mana, rāja alāna
samān;*

*Chhuta jāni bana gavana suni, ura ānandu
adhikān.*

‘The mind of Ram was like a young elephant, and the kingdom was a pricking iron chain that bound him; finding that he would be freed from this chain by going to the forest, the joy of his heart increased.’

In the *Kavitāvali* he says,

*Kīrake kāgara jyon nrīpachīra, vibhūshana
uppama angani pāyī.*

‘As a parrot discards its old wings (in spring and rejoices), so Ram discarded his princely robes and ornaments (and was happy).’

*Audha tajī magavāsa ke rūkha jyon,
pantha ke sātha jyon loga-lugā.*

‘Just as a passer-by pays no attention to the line of trees on either side, and also passes by other fellow-travellers that he meets (on the way), so he gave up Ayodhya and its men and women (without a pang).’

*Sanga subandhu punīta priyā, mano
dharmu kriyā dhari deha suhāyī.*

'It seemed as if Dharma and duty had embodied themselves in the form of his good brother and devoted wife who accompanied him.'

Rājīva lochana Rāmu chale taji bāpako rāju batāu kīn nāyī.

'Lotus-eyed Ram left his father's kingdom as a traveller leaves (behind, the road on which he walks).'

It was because Ram's mind was so calm and balanced that he was able to fulfil his father's difficult promise and also give consolation and strength to all those around him. He entrusted the responsibility of looking after the servants to Guru Vasishtha. He beseeched everyone to behave in such a way that the king may not grieve too much. The nobility of character that he showed at this unexpected turn of fortune drew all hearts to him, but we can also imagine that had his attitude been different, public opinion, now in his favour, might not have been so unanimous in supporting him.

The citizens of Ayodhya were deeply grieved at his departure to the forest. Tulsidas describes their feelings thus,—

*Lāgati Avadha bhayāvani bhārī,
Mānahu kālarāti andhīārī.*

'Ayodhya seemed as fearful as the dark night of death.'

*Ghora jantu sama pura nara nārī,
Darapahin ekahin eka nihārī.*

'The men and women of the town seemed like wild beasts; they feared to meet one another.'

*Ghara masāna parijana janu bhūtā,
Suta hita mīta manahu jama dūtā.*

'Their homes became like the cremation-ground and members of the family like ghosts; son, well-wisher, and friend were like the messengers of the god of death.'

*Bāganha vitapaḥ beli kumhilāhīn,
Sarita sarovara dekhi na jāhīn.*

'Trees and creepers dried up in the gardens and one had no desire to look at the river and tanks (they looked so deserted).'

Haya gaya kotinha kelimriga, pura pasu chātaka mor;

Pika rathānga suka sārīkā, sārāsa hamsa chakor.

'Crores of elephants, horses, the domesticated deer, the town animals (like the cows and goats), peacocks, Koyals, parrots, swans, cranes, Chātaks, and other birds.'

Rama viyoga vikala saba thādhe,

Jahan tahan manahun chitra lakhi kādhe.

'In their separation from Ram, they silently stood here and there, looking immovable as a picture.'

Sahi na sakai Raghuvāra virahāgī,

Chale loga saba vyākula bhāgī.

'People could not bear this fire of separation from Ram; sorrow-stricken, they ran after him.'

Sabahin vichāru kīnha mana māhīn,

Rama Lakhana Siya binu sukha nāhīn.

'In their hearts they all thought over it and came to the conclusion that without Ram, Lakshman, and Sita there could be no happiness for them.'

Thus they followed Ram for a day, and it was only at night, when, tired and exhausted, they slept under the stars, that Ram stole away quietly, driving the chariot round and round so that the marks of the wheels would be difficult to trace. So much affection was showered on Ram that his departure from Ayodhya became a kind of a triumphal march that any conquering king might envy, and in this way his banishment which was planned to bring disgrace and ignominy on him became his greatest moral achievement and crowing glory. There is a valuable lesson to learn from this willing acceptance of Ram of his father's command. Firstly, it is not the external circumstances that make or mar our life but our inner reaction to it; and secondly, if we carefully consider our individual environment, we will find that usually the best method of defeating our special obstacle in the outer world is to step on it firmly, like a rung of the ladder from which we are to scale the heights of noble man or womanhood.

Bharat, who was the innocent cause of Ram's exile, was the last to get this news. After his father's death, he returned from his visit to his maternal grandfather. Though unaware of the happenings at home his heart was somehow uneasy. His mother first informed him of the old king's death and then, with great joy and pride, she told him how she had secured the throne for him.

*Bharatahin bisareu pitu marana, sunatā
Rama bana gaun ;*

*Hetu apanapau jāni jīya, thakita rahe
dhari maun.*

'Hearing that Ram had gone to the forest, Bharat forgot his father's death and finding himself to be the cause of all this trouble, he was struck dumb.'

After a few minutes he said,—

*Jaun pai kuruchi rahī ati tohī,
Janamata kāhe na māre mohī.*

'If you disliked me so much why didn't you kill me at birth ?'

*Jaba tain kumati kumata jīyan thayāi,
Khanda khanda hoyi hridaya na gayāū.*

'O thou of evil resolve ! When this evil thought entered your mind why didn't your heart break into pieces ?'

Seeing Kousalya, Bharat wept inconsolably and said,—

*Mātu tāta kahan dehi dekhāyī,
Kahan Siya Rama Lakhanu dou bhāyī.*

'Mother ! Show me my father ; where is Sita, where are my brothers Ram and Lakshman ?'

*Kaikayi kata janamī jaga mājhā,
Jau janami ta bhayī kāhe na bānjhā.*

'Why was Kaikayi born in this world ? If she was born, why didn't she remain childless ?'

*Kula kalanka jehi janameu mohī,
Apajasa bhājana priyajana drohī.*

'For she gave birth to me who am a stain on the family, the object of blame, and the enemy of my dear ones.'

*Ko tibhuvana mohi sarisa abhāgi,
Gati asi torī mātu jehi lāgi.*

'Who can be more unfortunate than myself in all the three worlds, who has been

the cause of bringing you into this sad plight, O mother ?'

Later he refused to become the king of Ayodhya and went to meet Ram in the forest. On the way he asks a boon of Mother Ganges, saying—

*Aratha na dharama na kāma thāchi, gāti
na chahaun nirabān ;
Janama janama rati Ramā pādā, yaha
baradāna na ān.*

'I desire neither wealth, nor righteousness, nor the fulfilment of desires ; I do not wish for salvation, but the boon I ask for is that life after life I may have devotion for the feet of Ram.'

*Jānahun Rama kutila kari mohī,
Loga kahau guru sāhibāi drohī.*

'Though Ram himself may know me to be wicked, though the world may call me the enemy of my master and Guru,'

*Sita Rama charana rati moren,
Anudina badhayi anugraha tore.*

'But through your grace may my love for Sita and Ram grow from day to day.'

The latter half of Ayodhya Kānda bears full witness to the loving heart of Bharat. Tulsidas ends this canto also in praise of him in lines that deeply move the reader's heart. He says :

*Siya Rama prema piyūsha pūrana hota
janama na Bharata ko.*

'If Bharat was not born full of the nectar of love for Sita and Ram,'

*Muni mana agama jama niyamā sama
dama vishama vrata ācharatā ko.*

'Who would perform all Yama, Niyama, fasts, and austerities which are impossible even to the mind of the sages ?'

*Dukha dāha dārida dambha dūshand
sujasa misa apaharata ko.*

'Whose good name would serve as an excuse to remove the spiritual poverty, misery, pride, envy, and other defects ?'

*Kalikāla Tulasī se sathanhi hathi Rama
sanamukha karata ko.*

'And in this harsh Kali Age, who would force wicked men like Tulsi with the presence of Ram ?'

Valmiki, though a great saint and poet, was a contemporary of Ram. So we do not feel surprised at his writing the *Ramayana*. But that Tulsidas could picture in the minutest detail not only the incidents of this holy life, not only its significance and divine glory, but that he could through his powerful pen bring to us with such vivid poignancy the drama of a great life lived thousands of years ago is indeed a matter of great wonder and surprise. We are, therefore, obliged to say that though Bharat may have brought Tulsidas into the presence of Ram, but in this age

of scepticism and rationalism it is doubtful if we would have felt His presence had Tulsidas not been born full of the sweetness of love for Him. As we have neither the poet's genius nor his saintly heart, so we shall borrow his own words and sing to him as he sang to Bharat, substituting Tulsidas for Bharat and ourselves for Tulsidas,—

'O Tulsidas, if you were not born full of the nectar of love for Sita and Ram ... in this harsh Age of Kali who would bring wicked ones like us into the presence of Ram?'

(To be continued)

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

From this month, we present to our readers the *Conversations of Swami Vijnanananda*, another direct disciple of Sri Ramakrishna and a former President of the Ramakrishna Math and Mission. Such informal talks of great spiritual persons, who have lived and moved with God, are always inspiring and instructive, and help one to understand religion in practice.

The clash and conflict in the world today among nations and races, cultures and religions, is largely the consequence of the lack of a balanced programme of action and achievement in the individual and collective lives of men and nations. The modern political and national State has come to stay as a powerful human institution, eclipsing the importance of essential life-values. The schism in the soul of man is widening ever more, leading nations into the abysmal depths of parochial politics. In many parts of the world, politics has become a byword for iniquitous nationalism and unscrupulous exploitation. Ethical and spiritual values which exerted a great sobering influence on politics have been ignored or cleverly outmanoeuvred by the dialectical materialists in the West. But India, following the great line of her prophets and patriots down to

Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi in our own day, has yet a chance of giving the war-weary world her eternal message of true religion and spirituality. In a learned and thought-provoking article, based on one of his public lectures delivered at Sylhet last year, Swami Ranganathananda of the Ramakrishna Mission points out that religion, though essentially individual and transcendental, has yet an important collective function in every day life. He discusses, at length, in a lucid and critical manner, the secondary yet significant *Role of Religion in Politics* and other vital spheres of human relations.

In *Does Religion Matter?* Prof. Aniya Kumar Mazumdar tries to answer some of the current and widely held criticism of religion and points out that religion truly understood answers to an essential demand of the human heart for fruitful existence.

RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND ACCEPTANCE

All religions lead to the same goal, though it be by different paths suited to the nature, temperament, and environment of different people; this is an ancient truth, but, yet, there has been violent intolerance among the followers of different religions. Tolerance

is often preached ; but it should not be mere tolerance but *universal acceptance*, for 'Man travels not from error to truth, but from truth to truth, truth that is lower to truth that is higher'. There is really one Eternal Religion of which the others are but different adaptations. The goal of religion is to evolve man the beast into man the God. So it is essential to establish a 'fellowship among the followers of different religions, knowing them all to be so many forms only of one undying Eternal Religion'. A universal religion cannot be one that tries to force its own doctrines and dogmas on all but one that is 'deep as the ocean and broad as the sky' and accommodates every type of mind from the highest to the lowest, and says nay to none. Every religion should try to approach this universal ideal. Then all fights cease. It is but meet that a session of the International Congress of World Fellowship of Faiths should have been held in India where universal religious acceptance has been preached and practised from time immemorial. Sri C. Rajagopalachari, speaking at the Congress, drew the attention of the people to this aspect of our culture. He used the current word 'tolerance' in the higher sense of acceptance. He said :

'If you try to translate tolerance into any one of our own languages in India, you will find it hard exactly to hit it off. We do not exactly have a word for what is implied by religious tolerance. But because we have not a word for tolerance exactly conveying the sense, it does not mean we are intolerant. On the contrary it may mean that since our whole attitude to religion is based on tolerance, we have no special word for it.

'It is only when a man has not a thing that he has to refer to it constantly trying to acquire it. As far as I am aware, there is no reference in our religious literature to the attitude of mind which is denoted by the word "tolerance" and, as I have just said, I attribute it to the fact that we have based our religion always and entirely upon the spirit to which we refer when we use the word "tolerance".

'As was very ably explained' by Swami Ranganathananda, tolerance of a negative character is different from what is implied when we use it in the present context of the Congress of Fellowship of Faiths. We tolerate and we do not quarrel with one another, we let people do what they like within the limits of their liberties—that is tolerance which is implied in any secular scheme of good citizenship. If you are not tolerant in a good secular State, you will be sent to prison—but when you refer to tolerance in a Fellowship of Faiths you mean something active, as was pointed out by Swamiji.

'There is all the difference in the world between a conviction of mind which backs your faith in a particular approach to the mystery of the universe when that conviction is supplemented by arrogance and when it is mitigated by humility. A conviction that is supplemented by humility of approach creates tolerance. A conviction that is strengthened by arrogance creates intolerance. The same conviction may lead to tolerance, and intolerance. . . .

'In our country, whatever the causes may be, our ancient religion that was conceived in India went into so many denominations in course of time and was handled by such a variety of good and powerful minds that they soon discovered the need for humility. In other countries particular religions came out with the missionary purpose of convincing other peoples of a new faith and the eternal conflict between that conviction and the people around them produced a militant attitude. In our country the very variety of denominational differences produced an atmosphere which developed tolerance. While in other scriptures you find an insistence on the certainty of certain dogmas or opinions, in our scriptures you find, in the earliest records, emphasis laid on the doctrine that all paths lead to God and Truth.

'There is nothing in any other scripture corresponding to what we find in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. There is particular emphasis laid on this truth, namely, that all paths lead to

God and it is made an article of faith that you should also believe this among other things, that whatever may be the form of worship which a man may follow, God is reached by him even as you reach through the method prescribed in the Hindu scriptures. This is a part of Hindu faith itself. The *Gita* says with reference to other forms of faith that every faith leads to Isvara and so one should not be proud or arrogant. There is a great difference between a positive approach and a mere negative approach of "live and let live". . . .

OUR NATIONAL LANGUAGE AND ITS DEVELOPMENT

After a storm of controversy, the question of the national language has been settled in an amicable manner, with the full understanding and cooperation of the non-Hindi speaking people. But, apart from the various considerations which have weighed in the selection of Hindi, it is not a fully developed language so as fully to serve the purpose of a national language. It is a happy sign that this fact has been fully recognized and efforts are being made to improve and develop Hindi on progressive lines and also to co-ordinate it with other languages so that a common vocabulary might be evolved. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, addressing the Oriental Languages Association of Vivekananda College, Madras, said that he had no doubt that Hindi was going to have a big and tremendous change in its vocabulary and grammar so as to be acceptable to all people in India. He pointed out, 'Now that Hindi had been adopted as the national language, it had to shape itself according to the convenience and desires of all those who did not speak Hindi. It could no longer afford to treat itself as something different from other languages. It should go to other languages for help so that it might be acceptable to all.' Giving the details of work being carried on for the development of Hindi, he said that he 'was glad that steps had been taken, after the Constituent Assembly had adopted Hindi as the common language, to

convene a conference of learned men from all over the country to compile a vocabulary which would be acceptable to all. If Hindi were ever to become the common language for official purposes, it could not afford to have a vocabulary which was altogether different from the vocabularies of other provincial languages.'

Continuing, he said that after fifteen years, laws of the country would have to be in Hindi. They should, therefore, have a common vocabulary to express legal terms. The same applied to scientific and other technical terms. 'We have already taken steps to compile a common vocabulary for constitutional and legal expressions', he added. A conference of educationists and linguists, convened by the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh would take up the task of compiling a common vocabulary to cover all scientific and technical expressions. In this way, he hoped, they would be able to have a common vocabulary for the whole country. 'I know that if we have to evolve a common language which will be understood by a large section of the people, it can only be on the basis of Sanskrit', he said. The Constituent Assembly had recognized this and that was why Sanskrit was made a regional language.

In this connection the observations of Pandit Ravishankar Shukla, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, at the All-India Hindi Sahitya Sammelan Session, at Hyderabad, are also noteworthy. He said among other things:

'We must remember that the establishment of Hindi as the State language will not be possible without the goodwill and co-operation of the non-Hindi speaking people. The time has come, therefore, when Hindi can no more remain within its narrow limits even if she wishes it. She will have to enlarge her frontiers and accept broader dimensions. As the leader of the family, she will have to take into account the likes and dislikes, the needs and difficulties of others. . . .

'It is universally admitted that for the purposes of administration, art, commerce,

industry, and science, we must have a common vocabulary for the whole country. When the objective is so common, it has become all the more necessary that there ought to be a co-ordination in all the efforts that are being made in this respect and that foundations are laid for the preparation of an authoritative, standardized all-India *Paribhāshik* (technical) dictionary. Similarly, it will be necessary to introduce necessary changes in the grammar and pronunciation of Hindi in the light of these developments. ... A language always gathers life, vitality and richness by constant

give-and-take and contact with other languages. We must see to it that we invite the great literary artists of the different provincial languages to lend us their helping hand for the construction of the great mansion of the national language.'

It is a task not only for the Sammelan but also for the whole country. It is needless to add that original and classical works in Sanskrit, bearing on various aspects of national life, should be consulted, and the cooperation of scholars and linguists of non-Hindi speaking areas should be called for and utilized.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

STEPS TO THE DIVINE (SHANKARA'S PHILOSOPHY OF UNIVERSAL UNITY). BY PROF. HELMUTH VON GLASENAPP. Published by Buchler-Verlag, Baden Baden, Germany (French Zone). 1st Ed. 1948. Pp. 178.

Shankara is the founder of a super-philosophy which transcends all narrow limitations, although it is strictly orthodox in the Brahminical sense. Professor von Glasenapp—easily the first among German indologists of the present day—has in this most recent work of his not confined himself to the *Brahma Sutras* only, thus differing with his preceptor Deussen, who held that the *bhashya* on it contained all that is worthwhile in Shankara's work, but has made use of all the available material attributed to the great *parivrajaka* master.

Hinduism, not being a creed formulated by one particular prophet or person, but rather having been evolved from manifold concepts of ever-present spiritual truths, does not have any precise dogmas which are the core of almost all the credal religions; it thus leaves ample scope for any attitude its votaries may adopt as conducive to their development. There are three things, however, which give a common background to the numerous schools and ways of life which go by the name of Hinduism, viz. cosmology, the authority of the scriptures, and a set of certain customs and views.

Dharma and *Karma* are wonderfully described in brief in the introduction, and it is indeed astonishing, how these very intricate notions can be comprehensively elucidated in barely one page (P. 17). We must attribute this fact to the exactitude and precision of German scholarship, which finds its summit throughout all the works of this renowned savant.

This book is nothing short of a miniature encyclopaedia

of nearly all the main systems of Indian philosophy. Glasenapp has well mentioned how some of our ancient philosophers set about to convince the followers of their particular views with all their ingenuity. What Swami Vivekananda has so aptly termed 'text-torturing' the Professor puts in the following words:

'Even those theologians who constantly refer to Vedic passages with a desire not to be taken as anything but expositors of the truths contained in those scriptures, are handling the words of the Sacred Texts very arbitrarily, thus forcing their own views upon them.' (P. 20)

He gives a short and objective summary of the six classical *darshanas*, pointing out in brief their purport and methods.

Then follows a short description of the heterodox systems of Jainism and Buddhism with their various schools. Vasubandhu's doctrine has been dealt with carefully, and the professor has rightly pointed out the striking agreement of that system with Advaitic thought, as well as their mutual interrelations. He adds an objective explanation of Shankara's reputed indebtedness to Buddhist philosophy and dialectics.

Subsequent to this, we find a short exposition of the means of knowledge as treated in Indian philosophy.

The two views of Truth (*Para* and *Apara*) as expounded by Shankara are the only means of reconciling many apparently contradictory statements of the *shastras*.

The conception of *Maya* has been dealt with extensively. Glasenapp equates *Maya* with the *principium individuationis* of Schopenhauer. He adduces an interesting simile, used by Shankara on the one hand and by Kant and Schopenhauer on the other, which is curiously identical: the latter have called space and time 'some-

thing like multiplying glasses'; the former, in his *Aparokshanubhuti*, has termed the identification of the body with the Self, as *upanetra*, which amounts to about the samething—a remarkable coincidence.

The twelve categories of judgment formulated by Kant, which were subsequently reduced to Causation by Schopenhauer, is much akin to the Vedantic concept of Avidya. Shankara has thus anticipated, to an extent, the doctrines of both Kant and Schopenhauer. This was long ago pointed out by Swami Vivekananda to Dr. Deussen.

Glazenapp stresses the fact that although there are remarkable parallelisms between Vedanta and the German transcendental idealism, the methods of approach are diametrically opposed, the latter having been established by a process of pure theoretical reasoning, whereas the former came into existence through 'ingenuous intuition'. The final purpose of Kant was to philosophize, that of Shankara to redeem and deliver. It will, however, be untrue to say that Shankara made no use of theoretical reason. He did it in a remarkable way and tried to reduce to a system facts which belong to the two apparently disparate orders of experience.

The 'twin-storeyed edifice of the Teaching' (i.e. *vyavaharika* and *paramarthika*) has been divided into esoteric and exoteric branches by Deussen. Glazenapp abandons these terms as inadequate, for they lead to the misconception that they are mutually exclusive, whereas in fact both the systems are simultaneously valid on different planes of experience—even the Jivanmukta moves most definitely on the lower plane, whenever he emerges from the state of Oneness. But we have to add that the Jivanmukta does not see the lower order in the same light as others do.

The progression from the phenomenal, pluralistic world toward the noumenal existence of and in Brahman, which has been indicated even in the earliest *Vedas*, has supplied the title of this book.

The constant forms of all manifestations, the *Niyatakritis* are identified with the Ideas of Plato. Emphasis is also laid on the immanence plus the transcendence of the Divine.

The text is interspersed with beautiful renderings of Sanskrit passages: Shankara's *Dakshinamurti* and *Hari Stotras* have been interpreted in delightful verses.

There is also an interesting analogy between Shankara's vindication of the relative reality of the phenomenal world against the Buddhist idealistic doctrine of the *Vijnanavada* and Kant's famous refutation of Berkley almost exactly one millenium later. The transcendental Spirithood of the cosmos does not nullify its empirical reality.

The professor hits the very core of what his Western and Westernized students are inclined to ban from their ken, alleging it to be unpractical, ergo, useless:

'... that the state of *turiya* can be experienced practically by the meditating person—if but periodi-

cally—serves as the empirical Vedantic proof of the fact that the objectless cognition of the One Universal Self is possible and that the world of appearance can be overcome.' (p. 120).

Deussen has expressed his disagreement with Shankara's depiction of the ideal philosopher; the former rejects the claim of faith (*shraddha*) which is made incumbent for the man of wisdom; he believes in the Cartesian dictum that *de omnibus dubitare* (to doubt everything) is the beginning of wisdom. Glazenapp refutes this as unjustified, declaring the necessity of *shraddha* splendidly as the *conditio sine qua non* for true philosophy, and he adduces as an argument in his favour Schopenhauer's own admission, who in later years used to call himself 'a theoretical saviour.'

In an attempt to find an appropriate synonym for the main tenet of the Vedanta in the terminology of Western philosophy, Rudolf Otto had suggested 'acosmistic theopanthism'. Glazenapp adheres to it, adding his own term 'pan-en-Theism' for the lower (*vyavaharika*) knowledge.

In connection with Shankara's devotional leanings, the author has quoted a most fitting stanza from the great medieval German mystic Angelus Silesius, who has sung in his *Cherubic Wanderer* as follows:

'Slave, friend, son, bride, and spouse—
Fivefold the steps in God—
He vanishes who yonder goes—
Of, number knows he naught.'

A striking resemblance to the five *bhavas* of Bhakti philosophy, recognized by Shankara as a sound stepping stone from the lower to the highest Truth.

A short digression into the dicta of the Ashtanga Yoga and Shankara's adoption of some of its practical disciplines brings us to the end.

The book concludes with a free and beautiful rendering of Shankara's *Mohamudgara*, (The Hammer for—the destruction of—Delusion), being a very poetic and powerful exhortation for the application of the great monistic doctrine in life.

WHAT SHALL WE DO? BY 'AN OBSCURE HINDU'.
Published by Thompson & Co., Ltd., Printers and Publishers, 33 Broadway, Madras. Pages 225. Price Rs. 4.

What shall We Do? is a critical analysis of the recent events in Indian political history from the standpoint of a staunch, but by no means narrow Hindu who looks at Indian affairs from a practical commonsense view, without allowing considerations of conventional principles and ideals to stand in the way of a frank expression of his bold opinions. The author has also dealt with social questions affecting the Hindus and suggests what should be done for strengthening and consolidating Hindu society as a united whole. The 'Obscure Hindu', as the author styles himself, is not prompted by communalism or reactionary orthodoxy. The deplorable condition of Hindus who have had to

suffer untold miseries both before and after the partition of India, the gradual decline in the general norm of honesty and integrity of the once powerful Hindu race, and other appalling problems that stare India in the face today have provoked the author to make these observations in the blunt way he does.

In the first three chapters, the author analyses the events that have led to the partition of the country. He adduces quotations profusely and maintains: that the Muslims in India have been mostly anti-national, looking for inspiration outside, without any regard for Indian culture; that while the Muslim League and its leaders followed a policy of hatred, preaching violence in action, the Congress, though it pursued a bold policy with regard to the British and fought them valiantly, followed an appeasing policy with regard to the Muslim League; that the reactionary and communally minded Muslim leaders followed a practical policy, taking advantage of every situation arising out of the fight of the Congress with the British,—themselves avoiding fight with the British and fighting the Congress instead—while the Congress, in trying to follow a generous and non-communal policy, sacrificed the interests of the Hindus, and, at the same time, by their uncompromising fight against the British, earned the revenge of the latter who succeeded in partitioning the country; and that the Britishers set up the Muslims against the Hindus deliberately.

In the next three chapters, he considers the 'secular state' ideology, India's foreign policy, capital and labour, linguistic provinces, the national language and script question, the food and cloth problem, and other allied subjects. In all his conclusions, he is vehemently critical of the policy of the Congress and the Government. He is against linguistic provinces, favours one national language with one script, and the continuance of English for international purposes.

In the next chapter, he answers 'many of the charges against the Hindu religion and defends image worship, plurality of gods, the doctrine of Karma and rebirth. Treating of the caste system, he observes that those who decry the higher castes, especially the Brahmins, cannot afford to ignore the great contribution of the Brahmins to the growth and preservation of Hindu culture. He deplors the present condition of the Brahmins and advises them to re-establish their pristine pure Brahminhood in order to gain the leadership of Hindu society. He wants that the other communities should strive to attain excellence in their

respective fields of Jāti Dharma instead of merely fighting the Brahmins. He favours the absorption of Muslims and Christians into the Hindu fold, with the caste-names *Chandrakula* and *Christakula* respectively, they retaining their modes of worship but only changing a little in dress and food. For this, he says, the establishment of equality of castes in Hinduism is necessary and the orthodox should shed their narrowness and welcome the new-comers. He shows from the history of Kashmir and Malabar that the intransigence of the orthodox Hindus prevented the Muslims and others from entering the Hindu fold and indirectly drove others to embrace non-Hindu faiths.

In the last chapter, he deals with the place of women in Hindu society, their ideals—past and present, their education, and their sphere of activity. He compares the ancient and modern ideals of womanhood in India, and also the position of Indian women with that of women in other countries. He says that the idea of equality of sexes has been misunderstood and misapplied. Though he is not opposed to the advancement and freedom of women, he considers that their sphere of activity and their ideals of progress are different from those of men. He advocates the ancient ideal of Indian womanhood, with emphasis on purity of character, nobility of bearing, and heroic motherhood.

The subject-matter of the book and its lucid treatment, though directly bearing on the vital problems of the day, raise highly controversial issues. The author expresses throughout his admiration for Mahatma Gandhi, though he differs from him on several issues. But his tirades against some of the distinguished personalities of the Congress and the Government appear at places disproportionately condemnatory. The book is undoubtedly thought-provoking and offers much healthy and helpful criticism. Though one may not agree with all the conclusions of the author, there is much food for serious consideration in the original point of view so very convincingly presented in these pages.

WHO AM I? BY MOHAN SINGH. *Rajkamal Publications Ltd., Delhi. Pp. 52. Price Rs. 4/-.*

'Who am I?', 'What is this Universe?', and 'What is the relation between the two?'—these are an eternal problem to be solved by everyone in his inmost depths individually, thought outside help can be freely taken. This book contains some of the thoughts that crossed the mind of the author as he tried to discover himself in the universe around him.

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION HOME OF SERVICE, BANARAS REPORT FOR 1948

The Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Banaras, has been doing immense public service in the medical field for the last fortyeight years. The following is a brief report on the working of the institution for the year 1948 :

Indoor General Hospital: The hospital had 115 beds. The total number of cases admitted during the year was 2269. Of these 1888 were cured and discharged 48 were relieved and discharged, 67 were discharged otherwise, 150 died and 116 remained under treatment at the end of the year. The total number of surgical cases in the Indoor Hospital was 279 of which 158 were major cases. The total number of ghat and road-side cases admitted was 138.

Refuge for Aged and Invalid men: This refuge which has 25 beds is meant for poor invalids stranded in the city of Banaras. Though it has a capacity to accommodate 25 invalids, it was possible to keep only 3 permanent inmates during the year, for want of funds.

Refuge for Aged and Invalid Women: In this refuge which has 50 beds there were 13 inmates during the year. Many deserving cases had to be refused admission for want of sufficient funds.

Chandri Bibi Dharmasala Fund: Under this head 467 men and women were given food and shelter. The income of Rs. 234/- per annum accruing from this fund is insufficient to meet the demands on the Home in this direction.

Outdoor Dispensaries: The total number of new patients treated at the Outdoor Dispensaries of the Home of Service was 1,04,332 and the total number of repeated cases was 2,35,829. These include the patients who were treated at the Outdoor Dispensary of the Home at Shivala, where the total number of new cases was 43,787 and that of repeated cases was 64,435. The total number of surgical cases during the year was 1844. These include 586 operation cases at the Shivala Dispensary.

Outdoor help to poor invalids and helpless ladies of respectable families: Under this head 89 persons received monthly outdoor relief and total expenditure incurred was Rs. 1,553-15-0 in cash. Besides this provisions, blankets and clothing were also given.

Special and Occasional Relief: Under this head 128 persons were given help in the shape of either books for students, food for stranded travellers or similar relief as occasion demanded, to the tune of Rs. 393-7-0.

Finances: The total receipts for the year under

various heads were Rs. 1,01,857-11-2 and the expenditure Rs. 1,19,517-15-9.

The Home needs funds not only to meet the recurring expenditure for its running but also for equipment and improvement of the hospital. Its immediate needs are these: (a) Endowment for beds in the Indoor Hospital and Invalid Home; (b) Bedding and clothing; (c) A building for the Outdoor Dispensary; (d) A Septic Surgical Ward; (e) An X-Ray plant, which is the most urgent need of the Home, for which about Rs. 40,000 are required; and (f) General Fund.

Contributions for any of the activities of the Home will be received and acknowledged by:

(1) The Assistant Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission Home of Service, Banaras.

(2) The General Secretary, Ramakrishna Mission, P.O. Belur Math, District Howrah, Bengal.

SHRI V. SUBRAHMANYA IYER

We are deeply grieved to record the death of a great philosopher and thinker, Rajasevasakta Shri V. Subrahmanya Iyer, Retired Registrar of Mysore University, at Mysore on the 25th December 1949. He had endeared himself to the members of the Ramakrishna Order by his great devotion and service to the Mission. Shri Subrahmanya Iyer was specially well versed in the Mandukya Karikas, besides the Brahma Sutras and various other Upanishads. He was a reader in philosophy to Sri Krishnaraja Wodiyar IV, the late ruler of Mysore who was also a great patron of letters and through whose munificence, a study circle was formed during his life-time, as an annexe to the Sri Ramakrishna Ashrama at Mysore, with the sole idea of propagating Vedantic knowledge on scientific lines. Shri Iyer was one of the foremost guides of the studies in the circle.

He had occasions to visit Europe twice, once in 1936 along with the late Highness Sri Krishnaraja Wodiyar IV and again in 1937, as a delegate to the International Philosophic Conference held in Paris. Mr. Iyer presided over one of the sessions of the Congress and had occasions to exchange ideas with the leading scientists as well as professors of philosophy of the day such as Bergson, Max Planck, Sri James Jeans, Prof. Otto and others, to whom he revealed the greatness of Indian Vedantic Philosophy and traits of its close and visible approach to the latest theories of modern science. He was on the whole a powerful and courageous thinker.

He lived to the ripe old age of 81. He had a peaceful end. Till the very last moment he was quite conscious and could appreciate the Vedic chanting which was kept up continuously till he breathed his last. We send our condolences to his bereaved family, friends and admirers.