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“उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।”

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

UNPUBLISHED LETTERS OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

I

To Miss Mary Hale

Ridgely Manor,
30 Oct. 1899.

My dear Optimist,

I received your letter and am thankful that something has come to force optimistic laissez-faire into action. Your questions have tapped the very source of pessimism, however. Modern India under the British rule has only one redeeming feature, though unconscious,—it has brought India out once more on the stage of the world; it has forced upon it the contact of the outside world. If it had been done with an eye to the good of the people concerned, as circumstances favoured Japan with, the results would have been more wonderful for India. No good can be done when the main idea is blood-sucking. On the whole the old regime was better for the people as it *did not* take away everything they had, and there was some justice, some liberty.

A few hundred modernized, half-educated, and denationalized men are all the show of modern English India, *nothing else*. The Hindus were 600 million in number according to Ferishta, the Mohammedan historian, in the twelfth century—now less than 200.

Through the centuries of anarchy that reigned during the struggles of the English to conquer, the terrible massacre the English perpetuated in 1857 and 1858, and the still terrible *famines* that have become the inevitable consequence of British rule ... take off millions—yet there has been a good increase of population, but not yet what it was when entirely independent, that is, before the Mohammedan rule. Indian labour and produce can support five times as many people as there are now in India with comfort, if the whole thing is not taken off from them.

This is the state of things. Even education will no more be permitted to spread;

freedom of the Press stopped already (of course we have been disarmed long) ; the bit of self-government granted to them for some years is being quickly taken off. We are watching what next ! For writing a few words of innocent criticism men are being hurried to *transportation for life*. Others imprisoned without *any trial* and nobody knows when his head will be off.

There is a reign of terror in India for some years. . . . We are in a *terrible gloom*—where is the Lord ? Mary, you can afford to be optimistic, can I ? Suppose you simply publish this letter—the law just passed in India will allow the English Government in India to drag me from here to India and kill me without trial. And I know all your Christian Governments will only rejoice because we are heathens. Shall I also go to sleep and become optimistic ? Nero was the greatest optimistic person ! They don't think it worth while to write these terrible things as news items even ! If necessary the news agent of— gives exactly opposite news fabricated to order ! Heathen murdering is only a legitimate pastime for the Christians ! Your missionaries go to preach God and dare not speak a word of truth for fear of the English who will kick them out the next day.

All property and lands granted by the previous governments for supporting education has been swallowed up, and the present Government spends even less than Russia in education. And what education !

The least show of originality is throttled—Mary, it is hopeless with us, unless there really is a God who is the father of all, who is not afraid of the strong to protect the weak, and who is not bribed by wealth—is there such a God ? Time will show.

Well, I think I am coming to Chicago in a few weeks and talk of things fully. . . .

With all love, ever your brother,
VIVEKANANDA

P.S. As for religious sects . . . they were only voices of apology to our English masters to allow us to live ! We have started a *new India, a growth*, waiting to see what comes. We believe in new ideas only when the nation wants it and what will be true for *us*. The test of truth for these—is 'What our masters approve'; with us, what the Indian reasoning and experience approves. The struggle has begun, not between the—and us, for they are gone already, but a harder, deeper, and more terrible one.

V.

II

To the same

1921 W 21 Street,
Los Angeles,
17 June 1900

My dear Mary,

It is true I am much better, but not yet completely recovered. Anyway the complexion of the mind is one belonging to everyone that suffers. It is neither gas nor anything else.

Kali worship is not a necessary step in any religion. The Upanishads teach us all there is of religion. Kali worship is my special *fad* ; you never heard me preach it or read of my preaching it in India. I only preach what is good for universal humanity. If there is any curious method which applies entirely to me, I keep it a secret and there it ends. I must not explain to you what Kali worship is as I never taught it to anybody. . . .

By anglicization is meant, people who, by their manners and conduct, show that they are ashamed of us poor, old type Hindus. I am not ashamed of my race or my birth or nationality. That such people are not liked by the Hindus I cannot wonder.

Ceremonials and symbols etc. have no place in our religion which is the doctrine of the Upanishads, pure and simple. Many people think the ceremonials etc. help them in realizing religion. I have no objection.

Religion is that which does not depend upon books or teachers or prophets or saviours, and that which does not make us dependent in this or in any other lives upon others. In this sense Advaitism of the Upanishads is the only religion. But Saviours, books, prophets, ceremonials etc. have their place. They may help many as Kali worship helps me in my *secular work*—they are welcome.

The Guru however is a different idea. It is the relation between the transmitter and the receiver of force—psychic power and knowledge. Each nation is a type—physically and mentally. Each is constantly receiving ideas from others only to work it out *into* its type, that is, along the national line. The time has not come for the destruction of types. All education from any source is compatible with the ideals in every country; only they must be nationalized, i.e. fall in line with the rest of the type manifestation.

Renunciation is always the ideal of every race. Only other races do not know what they are made to do by nature unconsciously. Through the ages one purpose runs sure. And that will be finished with the destruction of this earth and the sun! And worlds are always in progress indeed! And nobody as yet developed enough in any one of the infinite worlds to communicate with us! Bosh! They are born to show the same phenomena and die the same death! Increasing purpose! Babies!! Live in the land of dreams, you babies!!

Well, now about me. . . . I am dead tired of the platform work. . . . It does not please me any more. I retire and do some writing, do some scholarly work if I can. . . .

I have worked for this world, Mary, all my life and it does not give me a piece of bread without taking a pound of flesh.

Ever yours in the Lord,
VIVEKANANDA

P.S. If ever a man found the vanity of things—I have it now. This is the world hideous—beastly corpse. Who thinks of helping it is a fool! But we have to work out our slavery by doing good or evil; I have worked it out, I hope. May the Lord take me to the other shore; Amen. I have given up all thoughts about India or any land. . . .

‘He who revealed unto Brahma (the first of the gods) the Vedas, who is manifest in every heart, unto Him I take refuge hoping deliverance from bondage.’

V.

‘Taking the Upanishad as that mighty weapon, the bow, place upon it the arrow sharpened by meditation. Then, having drawn it back with a mind directed to the thought of Brahman, strike that mark, O my good friend—even that Imperishable being!’

—*Mundaka Upanishad.*

CONVERSATIONS OF SWAMI VIJNANANANDA

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION SEVASHRAMA, RANGOON : DECEMBER 1936

While on a short visit to Rangoon, in the course of conversation with devotees, Swami Vijnanananda described with great fervour how Sri Ramakrishna prayed earnestly to the Divine Mother. He also narrated how Lord Nrisimha appeared from a pillar in order to protect His ardent devotee Prahlada. One day the Swami said, 'The Master (Sri Ramakrishna), during the period of his spiritual practices, used to gaze steadily at the sun with open eyes, from morning till evening, and, after sunset, used to rub his face on the ground in intense and agonizing earnestness for obtaining a vision of the Divine Mother. On the following morning, he would be blessed with a vision of Mother Kali in the orb of the rising sun. Every whole-hearted prayer is certainly responded to. The secret of attaining God-vision and spiritual illumination is to possess infinite yearning for them both.'

The conversation continued, and the Swami vividly described the incomparable dispassion of the Master who looked upon money as no better than mere earth and whose renunciation was so perfect that he would feel pained and suffocated when even casually a coin touched his body or was placed under his bed. The Swami imparted spiritual instruction mainly through narration of touching incidents from the Master's life as well as parables from the scriptures in support of them. That day, the Swami concluded the talk saying, 'Mother Kali is most active. But She is also most inactive. When active, She is with attributes and form and is known as Shakti or the Mother of the Universe. When not active and without attributes, She is Brahman, the Ultimate Reality.'

* * *

On another day, questioned by a devotee whether there was any harm, spiritual or

otherwise, in taking any food or drink immediately before commencing the daily Puja or other spiritual practices, the Swami replied: 'That has to be decided by the person concerned according to his strength of mind and general health. If you think it will take a long time to complete the Puja, then it is better to take some light refreshments. That should be quite enough. If you fast completely till a very late hour, you may feel exhausted and be unable to do the Puja or other practices attentively. Again, on the other hand, if you fill your stomach with food and drink prior to beginning the Puja, you are likely to be overcome by lethargy and sleep. Hence the best thing is to follow the middle course and take some light refreshments only. It is very common for widows (in Hindu families) to fast completely, without taking even a sip of water. After a time they get used to it. When a man becomes habituated to occasional fasting, he does not find it difficult. But then, it is not generally necessary to formulate too many regulations or restrictions regarding the taking or not taking of food.'

Seeing that Swami Vijnanananda could not be persuaded to give initiation to householders eager to receive his blessings, a senior monk of the Sevashrama appealed to the Swami saying, 'It is so very difficult to approach Gangadhar Maharaj (Swami Akhandananda, the then President of the Math and Mission) to request him to give initiation. Moreover, it is too hard for householders to faithfully adhere to the rigid conditions he imposes on the initiates.' Hearing this, Swami Vijnanananda said, 'Gangadhar Maharaj is quite right in insisting on his conditions being fulfilled. What does it profit a man if he formally takes initiation without being able to fulfil the

conditions imposed by the Guru? When the aspirant fails to carry out the instructions of his Guru, initiation into spiritual life will be of no avail. Rather, after having taken initiation, if the person does not follow the prescribed spiritual practices regularly and with due regard, it is definitely harmful to him. This should never be allowed to happen. But what I say is this that it is absolutely necessary for those who have taken initiation to lead a well regulated and restrained life as far as possible.'

That afternoon the following conversation took place between the Swami and some devotees:

Questioner: 'Maharaj, how are purity and control of the mind attained?'

Swami: 'It is quite essential to practise meditation and Japa regularly every day. Then only will the mind become calm and steady. And one has to live alone, away from crowds, most of the time. He indeed is a Sadhu who lives mostly a solitary life. The Lord Almighty who creates, sustains, and dissolves the universe is eternally One without a second. For there is but One God. He is mostly invisible, and very few persons are able to see Him. Yet He is omnipotent and omnipresent. Thus, even in this world, those who are infinitely great and good always prefer to remain in solitary aloofness, hidden from public gaze. But such is the unfortunate habitude of common people that they are always eager to push themselves forward in order to gain notoriety. This is not desirable for a spiritual aspirant. One should certainly do good to others as much as it lies in one's power, but never do so by blowing one's own trumpet. And one should spend the rest of his time in silent contemplation. Thus gradually the mind becomes steady.'

Questioner: 'Maharaj, in spite of our best attempts, the mind does not at all feel inclined towards the object of meditation. Therefore dejection and disappointment often result

from this state of mind. What is the remedy for this?'

Swami: 'There need be no worry on that account. Everything will come all right in time provided Japa and meditation are regularly practised every day, both in the morning and evening. Even if deep meditation were found to be difficult, Japa should never be given up. One should never lose heart. It is a fact of everybody's experience that the mind refuses to remain calm and steady at all times. Yet, occasionally it does attain steadiness and firmness. Maybe, it remains steady just for a minute only in the course of fifteen minutes. Meditation should be practised at intervals. Japa culminates in Dhyana, and Dhyana in Samadhi. Divine visions and other spiritual experiences come to a person only during deep meditation.'

Questioner: 'What has one to do if he does not find sufficiently long time to spare for Japa and meditation?'

Swami: 'Dhyana and Japa can be practised by a person even while he is walking along the road. The main purpose is to engage the mind in the constant thought of God. Hence it should always be your endeavour to direct your mind towards Him.'

Addressing all the assembled devotees, Swami Vijnanananda continued: 'A maid-servant in a household does all the work allotted to her while her mind is constantly dwelling on her own husband and children at home. Even so you all have to conduct yourselves in this world. Carry on your duties in life, both at home and outside, but always direct the mind towards God. You should try your best to see that you repeat the Lord's holy name with every breath you take in or give out. While breathing in utter the first letter 'rā' and breathing out utter the second letter 'ma', thus constantly repeating the name 'Rama'. When one gets into the regular habit of such Japa, one need not count one's prayers on the fingers or on a rosary. Everyone should try his best to practise Japa after this manner.'

That evening, as the Swami concluded the day's talks, he told his ardent listeners, 'It is no use listening to too many spiritual instructions all at once. It is far better to hear and concentrate on a few main instructions and carry them out in practice. Nothing is gained by merely hearing a lot of things about spiritual life and not following anything in practice. Make it a point to try to strictly practise in letter and spirit whatever good words of instruction you happen to listen to in your life.'

* * *

During Swami Vijnanananda's stay in Burma, he was taken to the Buddhist shrine at Pegu to see the massive recumbent image of Buddha. The Swami stood motionless and in an exalted spiritual mood in front of Buddha's image, and this ecstatic mood of his persisted for a long time that day. Though remaining silent and serious, disinclined to speak of his divine experience on this occasion, the Swami, on being repeatedly requested by those who accompanied him, said, 'Lord Buddha graciously vouchsafed me His divine vision today. I clearly saw that the recumbent image of Buddha was living, as it were. How very wonderful was the effulgence of His beautiful form!'

The Swami also related how he had had a vision of Buddha at Sarnath, following which he went into a state of divine ecstasy, losing all outward consciousness. Further, the

Swami spoke of his having had the vision of the River Goddess Triveni, the well-known and sacred confluence of the rivers at Allahabad.

Referring to Swami Vivekananda for whom Swami Vijnanananda cherished great love and regard, the Swami said, in an inspired mood: 'You see, none of Swamiji's (Vivekananda's) immortal words can fail to come true. Once, at the Belur Math, Swamiji said to me, "Look here, new Smritis suitable to our present-day conditions will have to be written. Do you understand? The old Smritis are becoming obsolete and out of date." I replied, "Sir, how do you expect your new Smriti to become current and be acceptable to all?" Hearing this Swamiji, like a querulous child, complained to Swami Brahmananda about my doubting if the country will accept his (Swamiji's) message. Swami Brahmananda pacified Swamiji and told him in an assuring tone, "What does that young boy know? The country will certainly accept your message some day or other." Swamiji, like a child, expressing his joy at being thus reassured, exclaimed, pointing to me, "Did you hear what Swami Brahmananda said? So my message is sure to be accepted by the country." What un-failing and prophetic words were uttered by Sri Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) that day! In how many ways Swamiji's immortal message is inspiring the nation today!'

'Go beyond knowledge and ignorance; only then can you realize God. To know many things is ignorance; pride of scholarship is also ignorance. The unwavering conviction that God alone dwells in all beings is Jnana, knowledge. To know Him intimately is Vijnana, a richer knowledge. God is beyond both knowledge and ignorance.'

—Sri Ramakrishna

INDIA MARCHES ON

BY THE EDITOR

'I stand in awe before the unbroken procession of scores of shining centuries, with here and there a dim link in the chain, only to flare up with added brilliance in the next, and there she is walking with her own majestic steps—my motherland—to fulfil her glorious destiny, which no power on earth or in heaven can check,—the regeneration of man the brute into man the God.'

—*Swami Vivekananda*

The celebration of the Independence Day, though a routine annual event in every modern country, is always accompanied by great national rejoicings signifying man's deep and spontaneous yearning for freedom. Such an occasion gives rise to a thrill of nationality and patriotism in every citizen whose love of the motherland finds vivid expression in the awakening of a popular consciousness of the sacredness and unity of the whole country from end to end. This national day is also a constant and true reminder to the people of the great need for vigilance, strength, and solidarity on their part in order to be able to preserve their independence and national self-respect. To us in India, the Independence Day is of immediate and supremely touching significance. The formation of a composite, sovereign Indian nation, with full political self-government, has been achieved once again, after long years of bitter but determined struggle. The urge to freedom, to independence, and the refusal to submit to alien domination has always been there in the Indian nation. The indomitable spirit of India quailed not for a moment before the might of the assailants, though years of patient suffering and sacrifice elapsed ere the time became ripe for final fruition.

The triumph of the Indian nation in its struggle for independence is a unique and major world event of the last decade, or rather of this century. To the people of India as well as to the rest of the world it appeared nothing short of a miracle. Notwithstanding the tragic events of the post-

independence period, India rejoiced at this historic achievement and the pulsations of hard-won liberty were felt in the heart of every Indian irrespective of rank, religion, or riches. But the fruits of freedom were not without their bitter rind. Expectations were high and, by contrast, disappointments appear sharp. According to some, the people must not halloo till the country is out of the wood but must work hard and learn how to shoulder new responsibilities instead of merely harping on rights and privileges. According to others, our freedom is not worth the name if it does not banish forthwith poverty, illiteracy, disease, unemployment, and a host of other evils that are still much in evidence in the country. It appears as though independence has to bring everything everybody wants—to the poor: sufficient food, clothing, and living space; and to the rich: less taxes, no controls, and no nationalization. Even such an obviously healthy measure as prohibition has come in for adverse criticism from vested interests. But with all its inevitable limitations, independence is the life-breath of a nation. The right to govern itself and to manage its own affairs, no matter how imperfectly, is an indispensable factor in the making of a nation.

Today we are all happy that we have the freedom to live the life of our choice. There is an end to the monstrous injustice of domination by a far-away alien nation over a great and ancient country like ours, with a rich and immemorial past. The process of degradation, material as well as moral, brought on by this alien rule, has

been halted, and there is certain hope that our losses will speedily be made good as soon as the nation turns the corner and comes to its own. But on Independence Day, when the people, wild with joy and pride at the thought of the motherland, greet one another with 'Jai Hind!' or 'Bharat Mātā ki Jai', what exactly is their conception of Mother India? Is it this village or that district, this State or that, or the whole territory from border to border, taken as one geographical unit? Does India represent anything apart from her physical or political aspects? When we say we love India, do we mean we love her mountains, rivers, and forests? Do not the millions of inhabitants, spread over this vast land, constitute the essential part of India? And again, what do these people stand for when we look upon India as a very ancient land, with a rich and hoary civilization? Where does India's real greatness lie, and what is that India which we all adore, whose cultural heritage we are proud of, and whose future promises to be more glorious than her great past?

It is the India of our long-cherished dreams and endeavours, the blessed *Punya Bhumi* whose sacred soil has been trodden by the greatest sages and seers and sodden by the blood and sweat of her immortal martyrs and patriots. It is the same India which has unflinchingly withstood the shocks of centuries, the onslaughts of several foreign invasions, and the vicissitudes of hundreds of upheavals of manners and customs. It is the same land of Bharata, of Asoka, and of Akbar which stands even to this day firmer than any rock in the world, with its undying vigour and indestructible vitality. When we proclaim 'Victory to Mother India', we have in mind not merely the geographical, political, or cultural India, not solely the citizens of this sub-continent,—but all these and much more. In short it is the Eternal India which has peacefully existed for thousands of years as a vital spiritual dynamo, generating an unbroken current of high ideals

and ideas precious to human society and freely distributing the same over the whole world.

Swami Vivekananda, the great patriot-monk of modern India, whose love for the motherland rose to the sublimest heights, when asked by one of his most intimate Western admirers how best she could help him, replied, 'Love India!'. To the Swami, India, the Mother, was the holiest of the holy, as it was the storehouse of spirituality, of everything great and good. Animated by the fervour of his irrepressible love for his country and countrymen, the Swami made no secret of the fact that his life's allegiance was to his motherland and that he would consecrate every moment of even a thousand lives to the unselfish service of his countrymen. For, he had known the country and its people through and through and was fully aware of their greatness and strength as well as their weaknesses. Hence the Swami's inspiring utterances are bold and convincing. Rousing his countrymen to an awareness of their grand national heritage, the Swami says:

'And what a land! Whosoever stands on this sacred land, whether alien or a child of the soil, feels himself surrounded—unless his soul is degraded to the level of brute animals—by the living thoughts of the earth's best and purest sons, who have been working to raise the animal to the Divine through centuries, whose beginning history fails to trace. The very air is full of the pulsations of spirituality. This land is sacred to philosophy, to ethics and spirituality, to all that tends to give a respite to man in his incessant struggle for the preservation of the animal, to all training that makes man throw off the garment of brutality and stand revealed as the Spirit immortal, the birthless, the deathless, the ever-blessed—the land where the cup of pleasure was full, and fuller has been the cup of misery, until here, first of all, man found out that it was all vanity; here, first of all, in the prime of youth, in the lap of luxury, in the height of

glory and plenitude of power, he broke through the fetters of delusion. Here in this ocean of humanity, amidst the sharp interaction of strong currents of pleasure and pain, of strength and weakness, of wealth and poverty, of joy and sorrow, of smile and tear, of life and death, in the melting rhythm of eternal peace and calmness, arose the throne of renunciation! Here in this land, the great problems of life and death, of the thirst for life, and the vain mad struggles to preserve it only resulting in the accumulation of woes, were first grappled with and solved—solved as they never were before and never will be hereafter; for here, and here alone was discovered, that even life itself is an evil, the shadow only of something which alone is real. This is the land where alone religion was practical and real, and here alone men and women plunged boldly in to realize the goal, just as in other lands, they madly plunge in to realize the pleasures of life, by robbing their weaker brethren. Here, and here alone, the human heart expanded till it included not only the human, but birds, beasts, and plants; from the highest gods to grains of sand, the highest and the lowest, all find a place in the heart of man, grown great, infinite. And here alone, the human soul studied the universe as one unbroken unity whose every pulse was his own pulse.'

The history of a nation is not made in a day. It is the result of the silent but steady interaction of manifold creative forces for centuries. The growth and expansion of a nation are closely linked with its historic past. One of the most important problems before Indians today is the re-creation of a powerful national idea, the re-awakening of a strong national consciousness. For this there must be a close acquaintance, nay identification, with those stimulating principles of India's true cultural genius and traditions. Out of the past we have arrived at the present, and derive inspiration to visualize and strive for the future. The more

we are able to awaken in us this keen sense of history and associate ourselves with the essential features of the past, the more shall we be able to gather from them the prophecy of the future. It may be said that this faithful and rigid adherence to the past is at once India's strength as well as weakness. While, in other parts of the world, nations and civilizations have flourished and disappeared yielding place to new patterns erected on the old ruins, in India there has never been a complete break with the past, never a period of cultural stagnation. On the other hand, a definite and vivid continuity from time immemorial has always been maintained, often interspersed with long, brilliant periods of renaissance.

There is some truth in the argument that too much preoccupation with the non-permanent traditions and accumulations of the old order is sometimes apt to make the past a heavy burden, stunting real cultural and spiritual growth. 'Yet the past is ever with us and all that we are and that we have comes from the past. We are its products and we live immersed in it. Not to understand it and feel it as something living within us is not to understand the present. To combine it with the present and extend it to the future, to break from it where it cannot be so united, to make of all this the pulsating and vibrating material for thought and action—that is life.' (Jawaharlal Nehru: *The Discovery of India*). Even as an adult individual is deeply influenced and moulded by heredity, family environment, and thoughts and actions from infancy onwards, a nation's advancement is powerfully determined by the priceless treasure of its past achievements and by the lessons of its past failures.

There are no two opinions about the utter futility of blind adherence to outworn customs and shibboleths or slavish imitation of foreign ideas and models. Untouchability and fanatical communalism, which have no religious sanction or support whatsoever, cannot be tolerated in any form. National

independence has brought remarkable changes in the body politic and the body social, and has raised a host of new problems too. The form and shape of the old set-up of things in individual and national life need reorientation and readjustment to suit modern conditions. But in the name of reformation and modernization, essential and long-established values and norms of the past cannot be scrapped or dispensed with. Leaders of nations rouse people to great effort and sacrifice by appealing to them in the name of the glorious traditions of their past history. As Pandit Nehru has rightly expressed, 'Inspired by their past, nations must live in the future and act in the present.'

At this hour when every field of thought and action in India is full of revolutionary changes of great national importance, and when the future of independent India is taking form with unexpected speed, Indians should not forget to bear in mind that apart from merely political, economic, or material advancement, we, as a nation always set store by essentially cultural and spiritual values. They should remember that in addition to becoming a powerful democratic nation, they should, by their supreme efforts win back for India her pre-eminent position of spiritual leadership. For India is destined to play her best and most eminent part in determining the spiritual future of mankind. Lest we forget, Swami Vivekananda has drawn our pointed attention to this supreme necessity. He says: 'Here in this blessed land, the foundation, the backbone, the life-centre is religion and religion alone. In India religious life forms the centre, the keynote of the whole music of national life. . . . and when that goes, India will die, in spite of politics, in spite of social reforms, in spite of Kubera's wealth poured upon the head of every one of her children. I do not mean to say that other things are not necessary. I do not mean to say that political or social

improvements are not necessary, but what I mean is this, and I want you to bear it in mind, that they are secondary here, and that religion is primary.'

The Constitution of India confers on every citizen the right freely to profess, practise, propagate religion, and entitles every one to full freedom of conscience. Though the Constitution does not lay down that India shall be a 'secular State', it says that religious instruction in educational institutions shall not be either provided for or made compulsory under different conditions. But it is occasionally and unofficially made known to the public by members of the Government and some other leaders of the people that India is a secular State where persons belonging to different religions can live in harmony and peace, without the least fear or favour from the Government on religious grounds. This statement has been further amplified to convey the assurance that though the State is religiously neutral and does not profess any official religion, it shall be the Government's duty to see that everyone living in it is freely entitled to follow his or her religion without let or hindrance. This has naturally given rise to serious doubts and apprehensions in the minds of the public to the great majority of whom religion is a vital and essential part and parcel of their very existence.

The obvious fear of the consequences of secularization that assails the devoted heart of an Indian, cannot be said to be wholly unfounded when we are painfully aware of the disastrous consequences of such secularization in other countries. It would indeed be a sad day for India if she turns so completely 'secular' as to go counter to the main current of her eternal life-stream by breaking away from her age-old national ideals and cutting herself adrift from her essentially spiritual moorings. But we are confident such a day will never come. For the soul of India is impregnable. Though repeatedly overwhelmed by ruthless and proud con-

querors, the spirit of Mother India has ever remained unsubdued and unconquered. 'I love India', wrote Rabindranath Tagore, 'not because I cultivate the idolatry of geography, not because I have had the chance to be born in her soil, but because she has saved through tumultuous ages the living words that have issued from the illuminated consciousness of her great ones'. India has existed and progressed through trackless centuries, producing, from age to age, great prophets, seers, scholars, and patriots, both men and women, who never let her deviate from the central theme of her being and who carried on the traditions of her hoary culture, adapting them to the changing times as and when necessary.

We have been constantly referring in these pages to the one indisputable fact, well-known to every enlightened son and daughter of India, that Indian culture is neither wholly secular nor materialistic, but that it is pre-eminently spiritual. Today, more than anything else, India needs a readjustment on the spiritual plane. For, as Pandit Nehru has very appropriately pointed out in his immortal work, *The Discovery of India*, 'Long subjection of a people and the denial of freedom bring many evils, and perhaps the greatest of these lies in the spiritual sphere—demoralization and sapping of the spirit of the people.' It is this spiritual malady and the consequent ethical distemper that are at the root of all the other evils that have afflicted the body politic and the body social. 'So, in India,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'social reform has to be preached by showing how much more spiritual a life the new system will bring; and politics has to be preached by showing how much it will improve the one thing that the nation wants—its spirituality.' And according to Mahatma Gandhi, '... the most spiritual act is the most practical in the true sense of the term'. For, he says, 'I do not believe that the spiritual law works on a field of its own. On the contrary it expresses

itself only through the ordinary activities of life. It thus affects the economic, the social, and the political fields.'

India is once again awake from her slumber. India of the present, in one sense, is and, in another sense, is not the same India of the centuries. Her entire past has become to us today a vivid and unmistakable reality. Independence has brought new cheer and fresh hopes into the hearts of the hitherto downtrodden masses. Their eyes are lighted up with a new radiance, and they are eagerly looking forward to shouldering the burden of democratic self-government with courage and confidence. Swami Vivekananda considered the neglect of the masses by the upper classes a great national calamity. The Swami said: 'I consider that the great national sin is the neglect of the masses, and that is one of the causes of our downfall. No amount of politics would be of any avail until the masses in India are once more well educated, well fed and well cared for. They pay for our education, they build our temples, but in return they get kicks. They are practically our slaves. If we want to regenerate India, we must work for them.'

Communal amity and religious harmony are the *sine qua non* of peaceful and orderly progress in India. It was so in the past, and it has to be so or even better now and in the future years to come. The remedy for communalism and bigotry lies in fostering a healthy and tolerant religious outlook springing from a common spiritual basis. Apart from the functions of law and order in keeping under proper check those fanatical antisocial elements who seek to sow seeds of communal discord, positive efforts have to be made to enlighten the large mass of people on the essential universal truths common to all religions, and to disabuse their minds of all dogmatic and bigoted ideas of religion. All Indians irrespective of caste or community have to live together and act in unison in order to be able fully to share and enjoy the fruits of independence

and uphold the dignity and fair name of the motherland. Once again we turn to Swami Vivekananda who says, 'For our own motherland, a junction of the two great systems, Hinduism and Islam—Vedanta brain and Islam body—is the only hope. I see in my mind's eye the future perfect India rising out of this chaos and strife, glorious and invincible, with Vedanta brain and Islam body.'

In this fast changing world nations have to be dynamic and ever on the alert in action and outlook. Or else they run the risk of being outstripped or overwhelmed by the more powerful and energetic ones. India while consistently laying stress on spiritual values above all other things, has never remained indifferent to all-round material advancement and industrial progress. In fact India has never exhibited any apathy to or backwardness in secular achievements. She has all along possessed abundant material resources as well as expert skill and ability for industrial development. She has achieved remarkable success whenever she has had a chance to do so, even under foreign yoke, in spite of opposition, exploitation, and continuous drain. Today, unfettered by extraneous vested interests, India is making all-out efforts to increase production and raise the living standard of the people through industrial efficiency and advanced scientific research. India, as of old, once again bids fair to succeed in ushering in a synthetic civilization, combining science with religion, reason with intuition, and the highest secular achievements with the highest spiritual achievements.

The annual ceremonial observance of the Independence Day has a deep and lofty significance to the people of India. It is a solemn and sacred occasion to pledge themselves anew to hold aloft and carry forward the torch of liberty and spirituality handed down to them by their noble ancestors. They should reiterate their determination to rise above selfish motives and petty differences and attain to the glorious heights of service and sacrifice in the cause of the motherland. A great and special responsibility lies on the shoulders of India's youth. It is they—India's sons and daughters of the rising generation—who will soon be called upon to undertake the strenuous task of navigating this ancient ship of State through billows and rocks to the haven of peace and plenty. They have to make the nation strong and invincible through unity of purpose and action. They should guard against the easy temptation of frittering away their youthful energies in a light-hearted, futile, and undisciplined manner. In moulding the future destiny of their great and ancient motherland, let them proceed to work with a clear conception of India's mission as definitely stated by Swami Vivekananda: 'This is the theme of Indian life-work, the burden of her eternal songs, the backbone of her existence, the foundation of her being, the *raison d'être* of her very existence—the spiritualization of the human race. In this her life-course she has never deviated, whether the Tartar ruled or the Turk, whether the Mogul ruled or the English.'

'The world about us is sacred. It becomes unreal only when we have found a greater reality beyond it. Till then, it is of infinite moment that we should deal with it in manly fashion. Not succumbing to self-interest; not bribed by vanity or comfort; not enslaved by mean ideals; so let us push on to the greatest that we know.'

—Sister Nivedita

INDIA, PAST AND PRESENT

BY SWAMI NIKHILANANDA

On August 15, 1947, Great Britain formally transferred her political powers to the Indians. The country was divided into the Indian Union and Pakistan. On January 26, 1950, India, with an area of about 1,246,880 square miles and a population of about 337,110,000 proclaimed herself a Sovereign Democratic Republic. The attainment of India's political freedom is one of the major happenings of our time. The manner of its attainment has impressed the outside world. It is being recognized that India will soon play an important role in the cultural, political, and economic life of South-East Asia and will influence, to a considerable extent, the course of world events. The rest of the world is eager to know what human values will be preserved and what human rights vindicated in free India.

For the proper understanding of Indian culture it is important to remember the two broad divisions of Indian history. For about four thousand years the Indo-Aryans, the builders of Indian culture, were the masters of their own land. During this time, generally known as the Hindu period of Indian history, the philosophical, political, and social systems took definite shape, many outsiders, such as the Shakas, Huns, and Scythians, were assimilated; and India's civilization spread beyond her own boundaries. The culture reached its height. The second period began with the Moslem conquest of Delhi in 1192. The new rulers, according to their temperament or religious zeal, either tolerated the culture of the land or tried to destroy it. It was their dream eventually to superimpose Islam on India. The Hindus, for self-protection, became conservative. They lost their dynamic spirit. Then, in 1757, the British laid the foundation of their future empire. They ruled the country virtually as a colony, almost until the time

of their final withdrawal. Both the education and administration introduced by Great Britain were alien to the time-honoured Hindu traditions.

The cramping social and religious customs that one finds in India today came into existence during the past thousand years, when the country was under foreign rule. These are not the true index of Hindu thought. India, in the words of the English historian Vincent Smith, suffers today in the estimation of the world not because of any lack of achievements but because of the world's ignorance about them. If a person is interested to know what the real Hindu culture is he must look beyond the past thousand years and study the Upanishads, the *Bhagavad Gita*, the *Mahabharata*, the Puranas and the various books on Hindu polity, drama, and literature, as also the accounts of foreigners like Hiuen-Tsiang and Megasthenes. The ideas and ideals recorded in these volumes not only created India's greatness but also preserved the structure of Hindu society during the long period of foreign domination. Beneath the encrustations of present-day usages, the discerning eye will discover many of the old precious truths. India has never broken away from her past. The present Indian Constitution, while accepting the realities of the modern world, has been influenced by that past. Its framers are wise enough to recognize that those who want to see far into the future of a nation must look far into its past.

In the Hindu view, the law, as protector of human rights, is the application of ethics in society. Ethics, in its turn, is derived from certain even more fundamental religious and philosophical beliefs and tenets. In India, the basic beliefs about man and his destiny, on which the social and political practices are founded, have their roots in the sacred scriptures, the Vedas, and in the

major interpretations that have grown out of them. The essence of the Vedas, called Vedanta, is the epitome of Hindu philosophy, and perhaps the most influential moral and spiritual force in Hindu India today. The goal of the Hindu religion is the manifestation of the divinity already in man, and the goal of Indian education is the manifestation of his inherent perfection. Absolute freedom of the individual to choose his own spiritual path has been the keystone of Hinduism. Devotion to one's own religious ideal and respect for the ideals of others form an important part of India's spiritual heritage. Hindu ethics asks people to cultivate non-violence, self-control, austerity, chastity, detachment, desirelessness, tranquillity, and truthfulness. But moral actions conducive to the welfare of others are not neglected. According to the Upanishadic teaching, the gods, who are the zealous custodians of social stability, will not allow a man spiritual liberation unless he has fulfilled his social obligations.

Personal values were emphasized in the ancient Hindu systems of ethics because the Hindus believed that a perfect society could be founded only on perfected individuals. Further, the people of India were by nature generous; aggressive competition was not encouraged, and the country was prosperous. In a society where all classes of people are expected to perform their respective obligations to others, the need for organized charity is not keenly felt. Lastly, Hindu philosophy believes in the ultimate perfection of the individual. The ideal of a social progress in which the ills of life would be gradually eliminated, leaving in the end only the good, an ideal emphasized by the West, especially since the advent of science and technology—was not seriously cherished by Hinduism. The cosmic process, characterized by good and evil, pain and pleasure, and the other pairs of opposites, was seen as remaining always pretty much the same. Yet a man was required to fight evil when confronted

by it; for thus alone could he make individual progress and attain ultimate freedom. The purpose of religious and ethical disciplines in Hinduism is to enable man to manifest his highest potentiality, which is the realization of his divine nature, by controlling his natural impulses and egotistic desires. The acquisition of wealth (*artha*), the enjoyment of sense-pleasures (*kāma*), and the cultivation of righteousness (*dharma*) are approved of as the generally coveted goals of human life; but the supreme goal is represented as liberation (*moksha*) from ignorance, through self-knowledge. In the context of the present-day world, however, India will have to learn from the West the social value of moral action.

A vital feature of Hinduism is the doctrine of rebirth. The influence of the doctrine of rebirth and Karma is seen in Hindu law. In the place of fundamental rights, much prized in the West, the Hindus conceived the idea of fundamental duties or obligations. An inferior position in the present life was ascribed to unethical deeds in the past life. Let an inferior man discharge faithfully the duty of his station, and he will in future attain to a superior position by the same law of Karma. Further, if a man of superior position abuses his power, he will, by the same law of Karma, assume an inferior birth in the future. The *Bhagavad Gita* states that if a person performs his own duties perfectly, whatever they may be, regarding them as a religious discipline, he may attain even the highest freedom in this present life. The laws of the State should protect the different members of the society in the performance of their respective duties, permitting them to work with warmth and love, without let or hindrance from others, and in a spirit of dedication, so that both their individual liberation and the total welfare of the group may be assured. The law of Karma and its implications are sometimes considered as being opposed to 'fundamental human rights' and 'democratic prin-

ciples' by Western thinkers who give a naturalistic and mechanistic interpretation of life. Certainly, if a man's existence is confined to the present life alone, their contention is justified. But the Hindus believe that the soul is immortal, and the present life and its experiences are a passing but significant, phase of the soul's evolution.

Duty and not rights, then, is the key to understanding the evolution of Hindu society. Duty is called Dharma, an untranslatable word, perhaps akin to the Chinese *Tao*. Dharma suggests law, duty, righteousness, and religion, but expresses much more. Derived from the root *dhri*, to uphold, it means the law of inner growth which sustains a man during the various stages of his evolution and also points the way to the Highest Good. Dharma cannot be superimposed from outside. It is the inner character of living beings, formed by their past actions, and causes them to react to the world in their unique ways. It makes each thing what it is—a horse, horsy; water, watery; and man, human. Dharma manifests itself in the blush of a girl, the laugh of a boy, the strength of a man, the grace of a woman. It is one's code of honour, which one dares not neglect; each must fulfil it even at the risk of his life. There is no other way of progress except through Dharma. The Hindu law-books describe various Dharmas or duties—the duty of a saint, the duty of a king, the duty of a warrior, the duty of a farmer, the duty of a worker. Every person belonging to society has his duty or moral obligation to fulfil. The *Bhagavad Gita* says that it is better to pursue one's own duty, however imperfect, than to imitate another's, however perfect it may appear, lest there should be confusion and a delay of progress. It is stressed that the faithful performance of individual worldly duty paves the way to the realization of the highest, universal Dharma, which is the realization of complete freedom.

An important institution of Hindu society, sanctioned by religion and based upon

inherent human inequalities, is the caste system. In early Vedic times, caste was determined by virtue and action. Nevertheless the conception of Dharma still preserved the social harmony. The caste system originally sought to prevent the exploitation of the weak by the strong and to eliminate friction and unhealthy competition. Everyone was expected to do his duty according to his Dharma. In later Vedic times, however, as society became complex and a large number of non-Hindus were admitted into the Hindu fold, caste gradually became hereditary and stratified. For many years the caste system and untouchability have been sharply and justly criticized by foreigners. Educated Hindus also have been critical of undue caste privileges. But it should not be forgotten that during the past eight hundred years, this system, with its iron-clad laws, protected Hindu society from aggressive foreign influence. But for it and also the system of the Panchayat, a council of five village elders which decided all the affairs of the community, Hindu society would perhaps have disintegrated, being unable to withstand the onslaughts of foreign hordes who invaded and held sway over parts of India.

Untouchability is a blot on Hindu culture. How is it that the Hindu religion, with its many noble concepts, tolerated this ignoble custom? In India, as in several other countries in the world, the problem arose as to what should be done when a strong race with a superior culture came in conflict with a weaker race possessing an inferior one. The ancient Hindus sought the solution not by exterminating the weaker race or by forcibly superimposing their own culture upon more primitive people, but by the process of gradual assimilation. There are instances of group absorption of non-Hindus. Even their gods and goddesses found a place in the Hindu pantheon. This process continued for a long time; and then came the foreign conquest. As already stated, Hindu society became extremely conservative. Its creative forces stopped functioning. But religious

leaders protested, from time to time, against untouchability and caste arrogance. Saints preached the equality of men before God. During the past hundred years several religious movements have been directed towards social reform. Mahatma Gandhi became the uncompromising champion of the untouchables, whom he called 'Harijans', or 'God's own men'. At one time he threatened to fast unto death in order to open the eyes of bigoted Hindus to the evils of untouchability and also to frustrate the British plan for a separate electorate for the untouchables to safeguard their interests. Gandhiji wanted them to merge into Hindu society. One of the first acts of free India was to abolish untouchability by law.

India is going through a vast social revolution. The caste system is being undermined. The leaders of society are investigating if such a system is compatible with the industrial revolution which India needs in order to improve the standard of living of the masses. People's consciences are awakened. The Western influence is also at work. Centuries will perhaps be traversed in a decade. But real social reform is a matter of education, and cannot be superimposed by law. Swift and radical reforms are neither possible nor desirable in a country with differences in languages, social usages, and patterns of life. Humanity in its present state is far from the realization of equal opportunity for all men. Power controls society and perhaps will continue to do so for a long time. This power may be exercised by spiritual men, or by military men, or by the wealthy, or by the labourers. Every system has its own good points and its bad. The society emphasizing spiritual ideals may prefer to be guided by truly spiritual men.

The early Vedic literature mentions both the republican and the monarchical form of government. Military necessity arising out of constant fighting with non-Aryans was partly responsible for the institution of kingship. At first elective, it gradually

became hereditary. The king had to rule by Dharma. Dharma was superior to the king. There are instances of kings being suppressed for violating the law. The king ruled with the help of a popular assembly and a council of elders.

In ancient Hindu law the fundamental rights of the people were recognized and protected. Hindu law admitted that there was a limit to the power of the State over the individual, that there was a law of nature higher than the positive law of the State, that the power of the State was derived ultimately from the assent of the subjects and therefore limited by their consent, and that the customs of society were supreme over the enacted laws of the State. In the peculiar context of Hindu culture, what are called in the West fundamental rights were conceived of as fundamental duties.

India's dark age began in the twelfth century, when the royal caste, which, in co-operation with the Brahmins, had acted as the custodian of Hindu religion and society, declined in power, and the vast Indian sub-continent, which had never developed any sense of political unity, fell a prey to the Moslem invaders. What was the cause of this downfall? In spite of its many achievements, there was one weakness inherent in Hindu culture. Spiritual and intellectual in character, it had been created and dominated by the Brahmins, and these, since they ruled by knowledge, made their knowledge exclusive: none but Brahmins had access to it. The Shudras, or labourers, who constituted the great mass of the people, were denied the study of the sacred books and direct participation in many religious ceremonies. The Brahmins safeguarded their own rights and those of their children by all sorts of laws, and the result was the same as such practices have produced everywhere in the world. Power corrupted the Brahmins, the lower classes were exploited, and when foreigners invaded the country, there was no strength to resist.

History records two kinds of national growth and decline. Some nations are born, as it were, with a certain mission, and after fulfilling it pass out of existence altogether. Others, however, show an amazing power of survival. These go through periods of rise and fall, yet continue to endure: there is no movement in a straight line, but rather a series of cycles. The people work feverishly for a period to create new ideas, and then become weary. They lose their creative dynamism and become preoccupied with non-essential details. If their culture is based upon fundamental truths, however, these reassert themselves after a period of stagnation. If a society pays homage to truth and adjusts itself from time to time according to its new demands, it lives on; but if, for the sake of temporary national aggrandizement, a society ignores spiritual truth, it perishes. Many societies seem to be at loggerheads with spiritual truth.

It will be seen from the foregoing that according to the Hindu belief the Divine Spirit lies hidden in man and is to be manifested through suitable disciplines at different stages of his evolution. It is the duty of society and the State to help him achieve this goal. Social organization, based upon the inequality of men's aptitudes and temperaments, should be conducive to the best interests of all its members. The State is the protector of the individual from the exploitation of society, as also of society from the tyranny of the individual. These three must work in harmony to liberate man from bondage, both inner and outer. In his striving for individual perfection, man must perform the duties belonging to his particular stage of progress, and thus qualify himself for higher duties. Social inequalities are not always artificially created, but often are the results of certain factors inherent in human evolution. They are not removed by insistence on rights but by the fulfilment of obligations. Rights are not derived from power, but from service. Individual rights

and duties are related to each other in the same way as the authority and responsibility of those who are entrusted with the government of a State. Society and the State in India have been created by the genius of the Hindus and sustained by their efforts. To be sure, Indian culture has been enriched from time to time by other influences, but its basic ideals have always remained the same. Western civilization, likewise, has drawn heavily from the tenets of Christianity. The many social and political revolutions India has passed through have been led as a rule by the Hindus. The present revolution is no exception.

Today, the leviathan of the Indian masses, after a sleep of centuries, is again awake. The political leaders of the land have determined to reinterpret the ancient national ideals in the light of modern conditions. They have drawn up a new charter guaranteeing fundamental rights to the people. The Constitution guarantees to all citizens, irrespective of 'religion, race, caste, sex, or place of birth,' the fundamental rights of men. These can be enforced by law. They include equality, freedom of conscience and of expression, free practice and propagation of religion, cultural and educational rights, the right to property, and the right to constitutional remedies. It shall be the duty of the State to apply certain principles in making laws, so as to ensure economic along with political democracy. The State shall so direct its policy that all citizens, men and women equally, may enjoy an adequate means of livelihood, a fair distribution of wealth, the right to work, to education, and to public assistance, in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness, or other disability, and the right to a higher level of nutrition, higher standard of living, and improvement of the public health.

The Constitution abolishes untouchability and forbids its practice in any form. Any breach of this provision is an offence punishable by law. Adequate provision is made

for the protection of the legitimate rights, interests, and privileges of minorities.

According to the old Indian tradition, independence must begin at the bottom. In ancient India every village was a kind of republic, endowed with full powers. The present Constitution lays down that the State shall take steps to organize village Panchayats, or councils of five elders, and endow them with such powers and authority as may be necessary to enable them to function as units of self-government.

Under the new Constitution women enjoy the same rights as men and may hold any public office. From very ancient times the women of India have contributed notably to the building up of the national culture. The Vedas describe them as the centre of the family life, radiating grace and contentment. Girls, though not considered the equals of boys, received an excellent education. Wife and husband were co-partners in the practice of religious duties. Women theologians and philosophers held their ground in learned debates with men opponents. Some excelled in mathematics, some in astronomy. As queens regnant or regent and as leaders of victorious armies, women have left a deep impress on the pages of Indian history. Since India's attainment of freedom three years ago, women have been appointed to such important posts as Governor of a State, foreign ambassador, and member of the United Nations; and women have become members of the Central cabinet, provincial legislatures, and the Parliament.

A University Commission, appointed by the Government of India, has recommended far-reaching changes in the educational system of the country. It has suggested special measures for the education of the untouchables. Scientific and technical education have been emphasized. This latter is in line with the Government's policy of instituting large-scale projects for the electrification, irrigation, and industrialization of the country.

Three hundred and forty millions of Indians have accepted a republican form of government. For the first time in Indian history it is open to the lowest and humblest citizen to become the President of that great land. The population of Europe minus Russia is three hundred and seventeen millions, and Europe has never been administered as a single government. Only a few times during the past five thousand years was the whole of India under a common rule. The republics known in Indian history comprised only small territories. About six hundred native States, covering more than one-third of the country and including more than one-fourth of its population, with divergent political traditions varying from flimsy representative government to absolute autocracy, have now joined in a single new republic. The members of the Central Parliament and the provincial legislative assemblies will be elected on the basis of adult suffrage.

India has been drawn into the vortex of world politics. She cannot remain a disinterested spectator of the significant things happening in other parts of the world. The world will have to be patient with India. Whatever picture finally emerges from the shifting scenes of the Indian world, or whichever party controls the government, India has unalterably committed herself to uphold at any cost justice, peace, and human rights. Fascism or dictatorship in any form is alien to India's spiritual culture. She will not allow the stifling of man's natural rights nor will she cease to encourage the manifestation of his spiritual potentialities.

India is confronted, no doubt, with many difficulties both from within and from without. But the vitality of her people, as shown by their remarkable power of survival, their amazing resilience, enabling them to recover from an apparently hopeless state of stagnation, their loyalty to the spiritual ideals of the country, their natural inclination to righteousness, as expressed in their adherence

to Dharma, or religious duty, and their un- assets for India in her coming hours of trial and
bounded faith in God and man, will be priceless stress. We can only strive, hope, and pray.

MOTHER IND !

Let me lie at thy feet my mother Ind !
And get a glimpse of thy Immensity
In the glorious Inner Self; Creation behind
Seeks real meaning in thy profound ditty
Of Beauty and Truth. Often and again
In the midst of fummy complexity
The coil unwinds its knots in the fountain
Of Harmony—the emblem of Calm Purity.
Baptized in thy Inner Fire, let me glow
In the Inner Light—thy mountain and wood
The message of silence in essence doth know
Which, the wreck of Time, so long has withstood.
Let me kiss thy feet, mother, and let me know
The significance of the Reality that in the trifle doth glow.

—STARSON GOSSE

INDEPENDENT INDIA TAKES DECISIONS

BY SWAMI NITYABODHANANDA

August the fifteenth brings us to the third milestone of India's new destiny. The India that we find is the India chastened by suffering and disillusionment, but strengthened by hope, courage, and a new vision. The three years of freedom have called forth from India her best efforts and resources to maintain herself. The colossal problems of refugee relief and rehabilitation, the food problem, the upsurge of communistic antisocial elements in different parts of the country are only a few of the heartaches and headaches that filled the cup of troubles for India. One often wishfully thinks what strides India would have made if she were allowed to divert into constructive channels the energy and resources that went into the solution of these problems. What a great truth it is that the path of a young free nation is strewn with hurdles set up by reactionary forces ! We cannot afford to forget that India's advance in these three years had been checked

by reactionary anti-Indian forces, the dying embers of foreign domination. That India withstood these shocks is itself something remarkable.

Steering through this time of troubles India has achieved certain ends of great moment and has taken decisions that declare the genius of her culture and determine her future. The integration of five hundred and eighty odd States of all sizes and descriptions into the Republic of India has been accomplished. The vision and the utmost human touch with which the integration was achieved are things which will go down into history. As a result India today is ten times stronger materially. Spiritually too, because the teeming millions in these States today think and act in terms of one India. The Grow-more-food campaign and other constructive programmes have not yielded results commensurate with the expectations and expenditure. But as in other things,

the Grow-more-food campaign has put a new confidence in India's farmer-millions and has no doubt placed India far on the road of self-sufficiency in food.

Another very significant event in the current history of India after her independence is her emergence as a moral force in world-politics and as the leader of Asia. Ever since India could make her voice heard in the councils of the world she has been boldly and disinterestedly sponsoring the cause of subject-peoples in Asia and taking a firm stand against imperialism and racial discrimination. Indonesia, which, has become free today from Dutch domination, gratefully acknowledges the deep debt of moral and spiritual support India gave in her fight for freedom. Never before was the cultural *entente* between these two countries as strong as it is today. India entered her strong protest against racial discrimination in South Africa. India did not choose to be a party in the cold war ; not that she agrees with Russia in everything she does or professes but that India prefers to be neutral. India was one of the first to recognize the new Republic of China, and the first again to propose aid to Burma in her fight against the insurgents. In these India offers an eloquent testimony of her being guided by idealism and justice in international affairs and by the ideal of the dignity of man and racial equality of peoples. Unlike other nations India's precept and practice agree and all these have raised India in the estimation of the world and has increased her prestige as a moral influence on the conscience of warring and designing countries of the world. Not by immediate results are the above achievements to be judged but by the vision that inspires them and the objectives they seek to achieve. India has no territorial ambitions nor is she going to ally herself with aggressive powers who entertain such ambitions. As she is tolerant and appreciative of divergent religious views at home, she is accommodating to different political views abroad to the extent they are

not aggressive. She will be neutral. In the world where every nation is anxious to hide its own weaknesses and is engaged in running down other nations as decadent and retrogressive, the ideal of mutual respect and appreciation as practised by India is bound to be a great moral and spiritual influence abroad. It is remarkable that India today is fulfilling the international role which Swami Vivekananda prophesied for her. When India comes into her own, the Swami said, she will be a moral mentor, a great power for good among the nations of the world, and her ideal conduct will influence the conduct of nations.

Our main purpose in this article is to examine some of the momentous decisions Independent India has taken in regard to the nature of the State. For they indicate what destiny she is going to shape for herself. India, by accepting as her national insignia the Dharmachakra of Ashoka, has virtually chosen Ashoka's ideal of sovereignty. Ashoka was the unique example of a supreme and active humanist on the throne and was perhaps unrivalled in his success of bringing religion to direct and influence the art of governance. He applied the Buddhist Dharma of equality, justice, and non-injury to the functions of kingship, and his kingdom was the largest and his rule the most beneficial and successful. In the ideal of Dharma, whether of Buddhist or Hindu connotation, we have the most dynamic ideal to forge a nation, united and strong, an ideal widest in its application and deepest in significance. The concept of Dharma, the quintessence of Hindu religion and culture, is really the quintessence of all religions and cultures and has thus an international bearing.

Dharma is that which holds people together and impells them towards the realization of higher values both in individual and collective life. Here religion spontaneously enters into the entire social life of man as a transforming influence, as social justice and political honesty. In it we have all that is

socially dynamic and useful without being obtrusively religious. What all religions inculcate in the words, 'love thy neighbour as thyself' and 'every man is thy neighbour', and what religions value in themselves as the socially cohesive *elan*, is alive and working in Dharma as equality, justice. The *Brihadāranyaka Upanishad* beautifully depicts the emergence of justice as a social value, as the most necessary binding force in society. 'He (Reality) projected the four castes, Brahmana, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Shudra. Yet He did not flourish. He projected that excellent form, justice (Dharma). This justice is the controller of the Kshatriya. Therefore there is nothing higher than justice. Even a weak man hopes to defeat a strong man through justice, as one does through the king.' (I.iv.15). One supreme fact emerges from the above: the weak, the minorities are the special trust and responsibility of the State, the king. Democracy is tested and proved by a State's treatment of its minorities.

In India today where the Hindu majority has formed the government, its practise of justice (Dharma) and democracy lies along the razor's edge. The minorities see danger lurking round the corner, the danger of the Hindus imposing on them the Hindu way of life, religion, and culture. In whatever the Hindu says or does the minorities see the coercive hand of religion lurking. In an effort to disarm these misplaced fears and suspicions, if the Government declares itself a secular State, the Hindu community comes down with the cry, 'Hinduism in danger'. Thus the path of the Government lies along the razor's edge.

It is not the fault of the minorities if they see 'religion' in all that the Hindu says or does. Nor is it the fault of the Hindu if religion pervades his life. But it is really a faulty vision to see Hinduism as a coercive religion. In India religion cannot be separated from life and this has made the minorities think that the Hindu always uses his religious stick to beat them with. Religion somehow

pervades all phases of life in India—sociology, art, politics, customs, and manners to such an extent that it is even correct to say that the Hindu eats and drinks religiously. For one who takes religion in a narrow or denominational sense, Hinduism will appear a sort of coercive totalitarian faith that is anxious to bring all departments of life within its rule and jurisdiction. But those who take an impartial view will find that the Hindu religion presents itself as the most universal of religions, as an idealistic passion that transforms life both in its individual and collective aspect. When Hinduism touches life at all points, viz. sociology, politics, customs, and manners, it is not to coerce them into a particular mode of thought but to illumine these phases of life with a higher vision and a spiritual ideal and integrate them into one single whole. Ignorance of this aspect must lead to a misunderstanding of Hinduism as a totalitarian creed, as a veiled self-interest, even as ignorance of the full implications of Hinduism has led the Hindus themselves to declare accommodation and charity to other views a suicidal aberration. The way out is to give correct ideas about Hinduism as a culture and not as a religion. No doubt in India culture has sprung from religion, but a cultural approach to her genius and treasures will elicit a more sympathetic response than a purely religious one. This, it may be said, is a special trust of any government that is true to India and her ideals. But the very name of Hinduism is now being resisted by the minorities. It is well known that no truth can be imparted when there is a resistance-complex in the recipient. And so the first step to dislodge this resistance is to disabuse the minorities' minds of the religious bugbear by declaring India a secular State and not a theocratic one. This our Government has done in good faith.

In declaring India a secular State, a double responsibility rests upon the leaders: as India is overlaid with religious ideas and

traditions, the idea of a secular State is sure to be misunderstood. Hence the conception and practice of secular democracy must be fully explained and implemented in action. Secondly, as we have seen above that an incorrect or inadequate understanding of the religion of India has been the cause of fear and suspicion both amongst the Hindus and the minorities, the Government must take up the task of giving true ideas about Hindu religion as culture to all sections. In the discharge of the first duty the leaders have tried time and again to explain the conception of a secular State. But from the criticisms that continue to appear, though less vehement, in the Press and on the platform, we have to conclude either that the sponsors have failed to explain the idea fully and implement it perfectly or that the explanation and the conception itself of the secular State have not been found acceptable and satisfying to many. Pandit Nehru, and following him others, have said that *secular* does not mean irreligious or atheistic. Secular State only meant that every individual in it was free to profess any faith he chose and no disability would rest on him by reason of his faith. This has been affirmed as one of the Fundamental Rights that finds a place in the Constitution which reads: 'Subject to public order, morality, and health, all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise, and propagate religion; every religious denomination will have the right to establish and maintain institutions for charitable and religious purposes, to manage its own affairs in matters of religion'. From these and similar other declarations characterizing the nature of the secular State, two facts emerge. Freedom of conscience and action in matters religious amounts to the recognition of equal status to all religions and religionists so far as the State is concerned. May we not gather from this that the State in India today is anxious to practise the realization of Sri Ramakrishna that as all religions lead to

the same goal, they must be recognized as true and great in their own dignity as sisters? Secondly, before the State, before Law, all are equal and none shall be treated with preference because he or she belongs to a certain particular religion or community. This is definitely intended to knock the bottom out of all fears and suspicions that a 'Hindu' Government may follow the traditional way of applying the law leniently to the 'higher strata' in society. According to the Hindu law of old, the Brahmins enjoy certain advantages in society which others are denied, and the same crime committed by the Brahmin, the Kshatriya, the Vaishya, and the Shudra was punished differently by the State. While the Hindus ruled, this preferential treatment on grounds of religion found favour with the rulers; but it must be remembered that during the time of Ashoka, for instance, this preferential treatment was not current and all were equally treated. Law in the hands of Kings was like chevevel gloves: the Kings turned and twisted them to suit their preferences. A Mogul emperor of the type of Aurangzeb not only treated Muslims preferentially but imposed taxes on the Hindus. During the British rule however all communities in India were treated equally before the Law; and in this respect we may say, the secular State had already come into being. The treatment of man or woman as such and not as a member of a social or religious group is a historical necessity in the India of today, composed as she is of numerous divisions and sub-divisions. The leaders have cognized this historical necessity and its implications are worked out through a secular democracy.

Yet the Government have not been able to implement their decisions fully in this regard and certain contradictions in its practice have left people in doubt and have led them to declare the secular State as unsatisfying and impractical in India. The Constitution gives the freedom to profess and propagate any religion. But the State has

disallowed religious instruction in schools, with rare exceptions. This is not only a contradiction but a failure to see the supreme need of giving correct ideas about religion to India's youth to displace the incorrect and dangerous ideas. The Gresham's Law operates more banefully in the plane of religion than in any other field. We do realize that in affording religious instruction in schools the Government is faced with a dilemma. If Hinduism is taught even in its universal aspects it will go to prove the fears of the minorities. If the other alternative of separating the students according to religious denominations for religious instruction is adopted it will help to perpetuate the divisive and separating consciousness in the students. But these are not sufficient reasons to throw away the baby with the bath.

A very promising solution suggests itself to us in this context : Indian culture is a big banyan that spreads its branches far and wide with its roots deep in the Indian soil which fed it with the nutriment from the religions and cultures of the world. This has no other parallel, this meeting of the religions and cultures of the world on the soil of India and India evolving her own culture accepting all that she could not reject and rejecting all that she could not accept. No student of history can contradict the above fact about India's history, the great synthesis of cultures and religions she has achieved in her culture. Can we not present Indian culture in this dynamic aspect of synthesis to the youth of India? We are sure that such a presentation of Indian culture will dislodge many of the misapprehensions about it and will elicit from all sections and groups in India a sympathetic response of study and healthy understanding. The Western democracies are secular and it was only the other day that we read England resolving to find a definite place for religious instruction in its school curricula. The Western democracies have a State religion, but what of India!

Then again the leaders have never got over the temptation of adopting Hindu ceremonials to dress up events of national importance. The launching of a new ship or the foundation of a new scheme are performed in right Hindu fashion, with Vedic chants and Hindu mode of worship. Secular India spreads the ashes of its departed leaders according to Hindu rites; the reception and handing over of the relics of Buddha's disciples was again a national event set in religious ceremonials. Some are left in doubt as to the consistency of these gestures with the declaration of secular democracy and one wonders what type of secular State emerges from behind the scenes of Vedic ceremonials and Hindu worship!

The Hindu Code Bill, which is being pushed up against opposition and by which some leaders said the present Government stands or falls, is yet another contradiction between the theory and practice of secular democracy as it is obtaining in India. Is the Government going to apply this legislation only to the Hindus and if so where is the equality of all communities before law? The Madras Government some time ago enacted a Bill authorizing it to use temple funds for educational purposes and it has been utilizing the funds of rich temples like Tirupati for running colleges and orphanages. In a secular democracy such a law should apply to all religious institutions, including churches, and mosques. Many are left in doubt as to why Hindu temples alone are singled out for such treatment.

In spite of these contradictions we think it is wisdom to take to this new dispensation in all good faith. For the declaration of a secular State is an act of faith on the part of the present Government, done in the hope that the Hindu majority will realize the supreme necessity of such a measure to disarm the fears and suspicions of the minorities and that the Hindus will unstintingly give all that is required of their tolerant understanding and sympathetic co-operation for

implementing this measure and making it a success. It is also wisdom to understand the declaration of a secular State not as a political expediency nor as a counterblast to the declaration of a theocratic State by Pakistan, but to understand it as sheer political realism.

The majority community, taking up the reins of government, is bearing the cross of the nation. It is a trust which can be fulfilled by the vigilant practice of the virtues of charity, and mutual appreciation and accommodation. Only when all communities and groups practise these virtues can the State fulfil the trust and fulfil itself. Today the Government has come in for the criticism that it is practising suicidal charity to hold the minorities. Let us not forget that charity and tolerance have been the virtue and weakness of the Hindu race and sufferance its badge all along its history. By these qualities has the Hindu culture conquered, not by the

sword. India's cultural disciples in the South-East and Middle East, nay all the world over, have been gathered to her through virtues of tolerance and universal sympathy. Shall India change her character and the technique of her conquest? There is a school of thought in India which strongly feels that Hinduism and India are losing by the practice of charity and universality and it wants India to win by their opposites. Will India thrive and fulfil her destiny if she is guided by force, narrowness, and fanaticism or will she flourish when inspired by virtues of acceptance, harmony, and peace? This question has to be decided by India's teeming millions and let us hope that they will decide it in a way that will be acceptable and honourable to India's genius, culture, and traditions—traditions which have made India what she was and which will build the India of the future.

THE CHARM OF THE BHAGAVAD GITA

BY SWAMI RANGANATHANANDA

The 'Song Celestial', as Edwin Arnold has called the *Bhagavad Gita*, has exercised its fascination on the hearts of men and women ever since it was first sung on the battlefield of Kurukshetra, a place hardly eighty miles from Delhi, the city from where I am addressing you now. Many famous books of the world have exercised their fascination on the human mind, some of them deeply and abidingly. They belong to the class of 'Literature Immortal'. But among all such the *Gita* holds a unique position; for, its appeal has a universality not found elsewhere. If a book appeals to a scholar and thinker, it may not appeal to the common man; if it appeals to both, it may fail to evoke the response of a man of affairs. What stirs the feeling and emotion of one may

leave the intellect and reason of another cold, and *vice versa*. The universality of a book or of anything else consists in its appeal to different types and grades of mind and mood, irrespective of race or creed. And the *Gita* precisely belongs to this category. If we take a cross-section of humanity which has responded to its charm, we shall find in it a cross-section of human temperaments, endowments, and moods; among its votaries can be found intellectuals of a high order, simple men and women of piety and faith, and practical men of affairs, as also men and women drawn from a variety of races and creeds. Vyasa, Shankara, and other Acharyas of ancient India, and Swami Vivekananda, Lokamanya Tilak, Sri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi in our own time have responded to the

intellectual vigour, emotional appeal, and spiritual depth of this great book. As in the past, so in the present, it continues to draw the hearts of millions and millions of Hindus of all sections and sects. In modern times, its empire in the hearts of men and women has extended beyond the geographical limits of India; men of the calibre of Emerson and Carlyle, Walt Whitman and Thoreau, and an ever-increasing circle of the common man and woman of the modern West has come under the spell of this music of ancient India.

It was a prophecy that Warren Hastings, the first British Governor-General of India made in the eighth decade of the eighteenth century when he entered the following remarks in his introduction to the first English translation of the *Gita* by his friend, Sir Charles Wilkins. 'The writers of the Indian philosophies will survive', says Warren Hastings, 'when the British Dominion in India shall long have ceased to exist, and when the sources which it yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance'. Exactly two weeks ago, that perishable empire founded by him in India ceased to be, as anticipated by him. The empire of the sages of India, on the other hand, has been widening ever since he wrote those fateful lines. The love of truth and intellectual energy of the modern West have contributed much to the wide diffusion of these thoughts in the modern world. The activity of renaissant India in this line begins with the historic appearance of Swami Vivekananda at the Parliament of Religions at Chicago in 1893. Since then that empire has been making spiritual conquests in many a heart and intellect of the modern world, including the England of Warren Hastings himself. The march of this empire needs no armies in its front, nor diplomats in its rear; for, it is the march of the 'Wheel of Dharma' which silences, according to the Ashokan inscriptions, the war drums of human separation and sounds the music of human unity. 'Like the gentle dew that falls unseen and unheard,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'yet brings

into blossom the fairest of roses, has been the contribution of India to the thought of the world'. This is the real India with a continuity and persistence all its own, and it has exercised a mesmerism on the contemporary world at every epoch of her long history. With the peaceful ending of that empire of Warren Hastings, this India has a chance to come to its own, and an opportunity, not restricted as in the past, but thanks to science, world-wide.

The India of the Vedas, and of Sri Krishna, of Buddha and of Shankara, of Ashoka and of Akbar is now politically free. After centuries of political immobilization, she has found her soul and her voice. The world around her, as much as her own children, are deeply interested in the march of her feet and the accents of her voice. There is no doubt that at this hour our hopes are mingled with fears. Will she, in her new-found freedom and power, stray into the path of what Nietzsche admiringly termed 'violence of deed and demeanour', and disturb with her powerful tread the already distracted world? Will her new-found voice, catching the infection of the jarring world around, fail to ring in accents of hope and cheer for man and his civilization? Will she not continue to be the witness to the deepest reality in man and nature and thus be a beacon-light to a world enveloped in darkness but seeking light? Will she not be true to her historic mission of peace and friendship, renunciation and service in this unfolding epoch of world history? In short, will not Free India discover herself in her true spirit and temper, courageously set to music the tune of human unity and solidarity that is haunting the ears and hearts of millions in the modern world?

The answer to these questions will be furnished in the course of the next few decades. But if faith in the past of India is any guide anticipating her future movements, we can definitely assert in advance that India will fulfil the expectations the world has of her.

The past in this case is reinforced by the present through the dynamic national experience expressed in Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi. The ideology and influence proceeding from these spiritual giants are the forces that are steadily but silently moulding the national mind in the light of the universal and human in its spiritual legacy, and helping India to re-discover and pursue her historic world mission in the modern context. And in quest of a light to guide her footsteps in this great national and international adventure, India has discovered her ancient Vedanta with a new comprehension and comprehended its finest exposition in the *Gita* with a new insight. This new comprehension of and insight into the meaning and scope of our national philosophy is the spiritual legacy of Swami Vivekananda to this new epoch of our history.

It is a happy augury that the Vedanta as expressed in the *Gita* is having a profound attraction for the thinking mind of India today. Unlike the philosophies elsewhere and other systems here, the Vedanta is a living philosophy, it has saved India twice in the past from spiritual death, according

to Swami Vivekananda. India has always borne in her mind and heart the impress of this philosophy. But we have to confess that her vast body politic bore other impresses, specially in recent centuries, which are often not very edifying, nor appropriate to her Vedantic mind and heart. The present epoch is destined to witness the steady emergence of a body politic in India based on the Vedantic ideals of human dignity, equality, and unity, leading to the evolution, for the first time, of a complete Vedantic civilization on the Indian soil. This consummation will largely be achieved through the inspiration provided by the spirituality and social ethics of the *Gita* which will find in this an application intended by its great Teacher, but neglected and overlooked by His people in the past epoch. An understanding of the fundamentals of this Vedanta and the attitude it brings to bear on life and its problems will help us to capture the mental climate of the *Gita* of Bhagavan Sri Krishna and the mood of the India of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and Mahatma Gandhi which is the India of the future. (*By Courtesy : All India Radio.*)

SWAMI VIVEKANANDA'S MESSAGE TO MODERN INDIA

BY B. S. MATHUR

The hour of decision has come. As one sees around, there is apparently non-stop darkness. There is frustration, killing of hopes and joys. Our effort for accomplishing happiness is magnificent. There is progress in science, art, and literature. But yet we are far away from the realization of our hopes and ambitions. We have witnessed the dawn of freedom in India. But it has demanded of us its full price—toil, sacrifice, and suffering. We could not prevent the shattering of our dreams. Almost a madness is in

possession of us; brothers are strangers to brothers.

In this hour of decision, when we have to decide this way of happiness or that way of unending destruction, why not turn to the great patriot Swami Vivekananda? He is an eternal philosopher, guide, and friend. He is nothing if not many things in one. Many may think of him as a religious sage. That he was and that he still is. But he was and he is more than that—a comprehensive and complete man, at once divine and human, always

inspiring mankind with light, power, and love. He is the great and unique synthesis of the divine and the human. That synthesis we still need, and that synthesis alone will effectively take us near our goal. Till then we ought not to stop.

There is God in all of us. What was in the beginning of things? God alone. But how long could He continue thus? In course of time He felt an urge to express Himself and expressed Himself in the many. We are the 'many' and we have God in us. Our ceaseless effort is to express that divinity in our dreams, ideas, and deeds. This we have to do if we are keen on freeing ourselves, for ever, from our inevitable but unwelcome companion today, viz. all-round frustration and darkness. And this we can achieve if we continue to remember that we are still divine though human and act accordingly. Hence the need for that synthesis.

The task may be rather difficult. At times, it might look altogether impossible. But we should not be disheartened. 'Arise, awake, and stop not till the goal is reached.' This is the call. What a clear and joyful call! So captivating and so compelling!

Swami Vivekananda has very powerful ideas: they are also so practical. He writes: 'Expand your hearts and hopes, as wide as the world. I want the intensity of the fanatic plus the extensity of the materialist. Deep as the ocean and broad as the infinite sky, that is the sort of heart we want.'

Swami Vivekananda wants nothing impossible from us. He is aiming at a combination that is definitely wonderful. There are so many millions upon millions in the world who are simply fanatics. We condemn them, and rightly so. Swami Vivekananda has no condemnation for them, but he does not want them to stop at that. They will have to go beyond their fanaticism. On account of fanaticism they have intensity but no 'extensity'. That they can possess if they become 'true' materialists, thinking in terms of the entire world. Intensity plus extensity

—that is the real thing in life. Intensity will lead to devotion and love and service. But the peculiar devotion we possess on account of fanaticism is narrow in a sense, and it leads to what we have been led to today—utter and continuous destruction and frustration. The materialist wants to possess all the best things of the entire world. His vision must be as big as that—the world itself.

And then all emphasis is placed upon the heart. Where the head has failed, the heart will prevail. It is not a visionary idea. Science is marching from power to more power. That is the victory of the intellect. But has that march, the victory of the head, really given us what we want, viz. possession of perpetual happiness? With the intellect our heart has not kept pace. Hence the present tragedy. What we need today is a peep into our hearts. Not that only. Our hearts must change, and become as deep as the ocean and as infinite as the sky. And then we will have a great unfolding, the manifestation of the divine. That is the thing. That is our aim in life. Indeed, that is life.

We want a revolution in society so as to be able to march towards happiness and comfort. Let us, first, set our own hearts in order. If we possess the right sort of heart our reason will accordingly be set right. Wars begin in men's minds. That is what great minds of today say. That is wrong. Wars begin in our hearts. So we have to expand our hearts and hopes as wide as the world.

But all this means a lot of sacrifice and a lot of patience. We will have to strive. But our efforts will have to be ceaseless. Rightly Sri Ramakrishna says: 'He who will learn to swim must attempt swimming for some days. None can venture to swim in the sea after a single day's practice. So if you want to swim in the sea of Brahman, you must make many ineffectual attempts at first before you can successfully swim therein at last.'

A philosophy of action, indeed! Let us

start 'swimming' and let us do so for days and days before we can swim in the sea of life, continuously disturbed by waves and tempests. Hope and action must go together, hand in hand.

Here is also something of perennial meaning to those who are in the field of education. The masses have to be properly educated and enlightened. They may not possess literacy. That is not a fundamental thing. What they want is light and experience to give them a proper culture. The educationists must, therefore, be keen on the education of society as a whole. The present schemes of social education have a tremendous significance.

Swami Vivekananda's philosophy is a 'song of the free'. This song we must sing today. We are free in one sense but in another we are not. We still have lingering in us many attributes of the slave. They must disappear. We have freedom from foreign domination in the political sphere. We must be free in all spheres. How beautifully Swami Vivekananda sings, in his intensely spiritual and elevating ecstasy:

'Let eyes grow dim and heart grow faint
And friendship fail and love betray,
Let Fate its hundred horrors send
And clotted darkness block the way—

'All nature wear one angry frown
To crush you out—still know, my soul,

You are Divine. March on and on,
Nor right nor left, but to the goal!

(*The song of the Free*)

These lines reveal a poignant picture of the world in a touching manner. In life, we may get no love, no friendship; there may be cessation of light. Fate might inflict innumerable horrors. But all that will disappear if we do not forget our *divine* essence. Never lose faith in God; never, even for a moment, forget that all of us have come from Him.

Swami Vivekananda is a practical idealist and does not insist on any doctrinal worship in its narrow form and meaning. But he goes deeper and sees the thing in itself. He wants all of us to lead a life of constant worship and sacrifice. We may go to a temple and worship God there. But is that worship alone enough to lead us anywhere if our general and continuous life is not a constant worship? Our life has to be a constant prayer. And our temple is the world. Consider the world a temple and worship God therein, and remain devoted to humanity, with confidence in your own self. Living in the world we are to worship God. This is Swami Vivekananda's call to the people of India, young and old. And this is the only way—the most ancient and modern way—to a life full of peace, love, and joy.

THE EVOLUTION OF PHILOSOPHY IN INDIA

BY K. S. RAMASWAMI SASTRI

The *shad-darshanas* or six systems of philosophy, though they seem to attack and criticize one another relentlessly, are yet in a relation of mutual synthesis and harmony and lead us up an ascending stairway of thought. They accept the infallibility and supremacy of the *Vedas*. They accept the

three *pramanas* or sources of right knowledge, viz. *pratyaksha* (direct perception), *anumana* (logical inference), and *shabda* (*Shruti* or *Vedas*). They are called *astika shad-darshanas*, the six orthodox systems of philosophy, and consist of Nyaya, Vaisheshika, Samkhya, Yoga, Purva and Uttara Mimamsas. The

Nastika shad-darshanas (the six heretical systems) consisted of the Charvaka School, which denied the *Veda* and soul and God, and was pure materialism; the Jaina School; and the four Buddhist Schools (Sautrantika, Vaibhashika, Yogachara, and Madhyamika). The latter denied the *Veda* and did not affirm or deny Ishwara (God). The Buddhist Schools denied also the reality of the cosmos in diverse degrees. The orthodox systems stress the *Veda* and Soul. Though some are silent about God, the others stress God. Nearly all affirm creation and preservation and dissolution of the cosmos though they hold diverse views about the ultimate reality of the world. They affirm *moksha* or Liberation, though they may describe it in diverse ways.

Madhusudana Saraswati says in his *Prasthanabheda* that the authors of the six orthodox systems were sages and not mere philosophers who are prone to differ from one another. They give us different facets of the Truth and help us to conceive of the soul as such, and emphasize the need for dispassion and introspection for realizing the nature of the soul. I may observe that even the Jain and Buddhist systems help us spiritually by interdicting sensuality and stressing the ethical life.

From the realism of Gautama's Nyaya system and the pluralism of Kanada's Vaiseshika system we rise to the dualism of Purusha and Prakriti in Kapila's Samkhya system and to the concept of Ishwara as the primeval Guru and of Samadhi in Patanjali's Yoga system. The Purva Mimamsa of Jaimini makes us realize the intricate workings of Karma and affirms gods but not the Supreme God, while the Uttara Mimamsa (*Brahma Sutras*) of Badarayana leads us to God as the Creator and Preserver and Destroyer of the Universe and as the Immanent and Transcendent Supreme Eternal Infinite Perfect Being who is the substratum of the immeasurable diversity of things and beings.

The *Brahma Sutras* have had many inter-

preters. Badarayana was keen about rising to a monistic view, but his interpreters have represented him diversely while trying to give us logically coherent systems. They differ *inter se* in regard to the nature of God and Soul and Universe; but taken together they form an ascending stairway leading to God.

The Advaita of Shankara, who is the earliest interpreter whose work is current, stressed the formless, quality-less Absolute Brahman as the substratum of all things and the ultimate identity of Brahman and Atman. He preached that the world is due to *maya* and has only a phenomenal reality (*vyavaharika satta*) and has no noumenal reality (*paramarthika satta*) like Brahman. He did not say that the world was non-existent or illusory but asserted that *Avidya* was *bhavarupa*, and that the world appeared to change and evolve (*vivarta*). It is, of course, sublated in the ultimate realization of the identity of Brahman and Atman. He was thus a Monist and affirmed the complete identity (*aikya*) of Brahman and Atman (Soul).

Bhaskara came afterwards (about 900 A.D.) and stressed the *bhedabhedavada*. According to him the causal state is unity whereas the effect-state is multiplicity and both are real. Things are non-different in their causal aspect and different in their effect aspect. God possesses infinite auspicious attributes and perfections. Bhaskara accepts the *parinamavada* (the theory of the actual evolution of the universe) and rejects the *vivartavada* (the theory of the apparent evolution of the universe.) Matter acts as a limiting factor (*upadhi*) to Brahman in the form of the body and gives rise to individual souls. The *upadhis* are real and are due to *Avidya*. The individual soul is in essence one with Brahman and bears the same relation to it as spark to fire. *Karma* is an *anga* of Jnana, which is the means of salvation.

Yadavaprakasha (11th century A.D.) taught that though Brahman changed into *chit* (spirit) and *achit* (matter) and *Ishwara* (God), yet remains the same Itself. He is

thus an upholder of *bhedabheda* (simultaneity of difference and non-difference). All things are one in their causal aspect and different in their effect-aspect.

His disciple Ramanuja affirmed that Brahman is Vishnu, who is possessed of form, and infinite auspicious attributes and who is the immanent Being whose body is *chit* and *achit*. He attacks the theory of *maya* and teaches the reality of the world and the reality of evolution (*parinama*). He affirms, like Shankara, that God is the efficient cause as well as the material cause of the universe. The *advaita* element in the Vishishtadvaita Vedanta of Ramanuja means only that the Brahman who has subtle *chit* and *achit* as His subtle body in the causal state of the universe is one with the Brahman who has evolved *chit* and *achit* as His body in the effect-state of the universe. Liberation (*moksha*) is the attainment of *Vaikuntha* (Heaven) by the souls through *bhakti*. There the liberated soul enjoys supreme infinite eternal bliss with God (*samya*) but has no world-rulership or lordship over Lakshmi.

Srikanta's theism is akin to Ramanuja's view except that he says that Brahman is Shiva.

Madhva's (born 1199 A.D.) doctrine is one of Realism and Pluralism. He teaches the five differences or *Panchabheda*—the difference of God from soul, of soul from soul, of God from matter, of soul from matter and of matter from matter. God is the efficient cause of the universe while matter is the material cause. Even Lakshmi is only a *jiva*. The souls attain *moksha* by *bhakti* but have only graded bliss (*tāratamya*) there. Some souls are eternally bound and some are eternally damned, and some are eligible for liberation.

After Ramanuja and before Madhva, Nimbarka (11th century A.D.), in his *Vedantapārijāta Saurabha*, propounds the system of thought known as *Dvaitādvaita*. He says that the evolution (*parinama*) of Brahman as the world, *jiva*, and *prakriti* is

dependent (*paratantra satta*) on Purushotama and that there are real entities. *Jiva* is limited but *Ishwara* is Infinite and self-existent (*swatantra satta*) and is called Radhakrishna. *Jiva* is *bhokta* (enjoyer); *Prakriti* is *bhogyā* (enjoyed), and *Ishwara* is *Niyanta* (controller). *Achit* consists of (1) *aprakrita* world, (2) *prakriti*, world, and (3) *Kāla*. *Ishwara* is possessed of infinite auspicious attributes. The world is real. *Tattavamasī* means that the soul is a spark of Brahman. *Karma* obscures the real nature of the soul and *bhakti* leads to *mukti*. Nimbarka differs from Ramanuja in some respects and denies that *chit* and *achit* are only modes of Brahman. He asks, what is that entity from which it is distinguished by such distinguishing marks?

Vallabha (born 1401 A.D.) has taught the *Shuddhadvaita* system. According to him *chit* and *achit* are real and are in essence one with Brahman. *Jiva* and *Kāla* and *Prakriti* are eternal but depend on Brahman. Vallabha says that Shankara is not a pure *Advaitin* as he accepts *Maya* as a second entity and that Brahman can create the world without any connection with *Maya*. Brahman has infinite auspicious qualities. His name is Krishna. He can be attained through *bhakti* or *jnana* obtained through *bhakti*. The *jiva* is atomic in size and is a part of Brahman. In the *jiva*, *ananda* is obscured, in *Prakriti*, *ananda* and *chit* are obscured. The world is as eternal and real as Brahman. The *jivas* are *shuddha* (ever-free) or *baddha* (bound) or *mukta* (liberated). *Maya* is the power of *Ishwara*.

Chaitanya (15-16th century) has given the *Achintya-bhedābheda* system of thought. Baladeva's *Garuda Bhashya* on the *Brahma Sutras* expounds that system. God is Vishnu i.e. Radhakrishna. He is *nirguna* i.e. free from the qualities of *prakriti*, and *saguna* i.e. possessed of infinite auspicious attributes. He is the efficient and material cause of the universe. His highest quality is his bliss-power (*hlāadini shakti*) and its name is Radha. Brahman and Bhagawan are one. The world

is real and is one with God and yet dependent on God. While Ramanuja says that *chit* and *achit* are *visheshanas* of God, Chaitanya's system regards them as the manifestations of God's *shakti*. By *Prema* (love of God) we can break the fetters of *karma* and attain *mukti*.

In the *Shaiva* and *Shakta* schools we find a position intermediate between the above positions. The *Shaiva* system consists of the Southern School of *Shaiva Siddhanta* and the Northern *Pratyabhijna* School of Kashmir. In the former the Supreme God is Shiva. The *jiva* is called *pashu* (animal) and bondage is called *pasha* or *mala*, whereas God is called *Pati* (Lord). *Pasha* is of three kinds : (1) *ānava mala* which makes the Soul limit itself to the body and imagine itself limited in knowledge or power ; (2) *karma* which unites the body to the soul ; and (3) *maya* which is the seed of the cosmos. The *Shaiva Siddhanta* affirms thirty six *tattvas* (categories) as against the twenty-five categories of the Samkhya. Above these twenty-five Samkhyan categories, it postulates the *pancha Kanchukas* (five envelopes) of *niyati*, *kāla*, *raga*, *vidya*, and *kalā*. Above these are Maya, Shuddha Vidya, Ishwara, Sadashiva, Shakti, and Shiva. Shiva is one category ; Sadashiva, Ishwara and Suddhavidya are the *vidyatattvas* ; and the other thirty-two form the *atmatattvas*. The world is real. By grace the *jiva* attains *mukti*. In *mukti* the *jiva* attains oneness with Siva i.e. becomes utterly like him but has not got the *pancha karma* (creation, preservation, destruction, obscuration, and grace) which belong to God Shiva alone. The freed souls can be in an embodied or disembodied state. The aforesaid *Shaiva Siddhanta* School was clearly formulated by Maikandar in his *Sivajnanamritam* (13th century) which was founded on twelve verses

in the *Raurava Agama*.

In the *Pratyabhijna* system there is a clear Advaitic trend. God Shiva is Infinite Consciousness. He Himself is the cause of creation and He creates by the force of His will. By His *Shakti* He appears as souls and the universe. His *Shakti* has infinite aspects. Thirty-six *tattvas* are postulated. By *pratyabhijna* (recognition of the real nature of the soul as being one with Shiva) *mukti* is attained.

The *Shakta* system is akin to the *Shaiva* Schools but pursues its own way. In it Shiva is the static Absolute. The dynamic source of creation etc. is *Shakti*. But both Shiva and *Shakti* are in reality one. Under Her direction Brahma, Vishnu, and Shiva create, preserve, and destroy the Universe. This system also posits thirty-six *tattvas*. *Jiva* is liberated from *maya* by devotion leading to Grace. The path of liberation is open to all castes and to both sexes. This system has much affinity to the Yoga system (especially *Hatha Yoga*). The Yogi can rouse the *kundalini shakti* and pierce the six *chakras* in the body and attain union with Shiva-Shakti in the *sahasrara* (the thousand-petalled lotus in the brain).

Thus the crown of the various systems of thought is the Uttara Mimamsa because it reveals to us the principle by which the apparent multiplicity of things is resolved into unity, the apparent finiteness of things is shown in true infinitude ; the apparent temporal and spatial order is transcended, and God is revealed as immanent and transcendent, and the soul achieves the *summum bonum* of life by realizing its identity with God. All the various systems built on the basis of the *Brahma Sutras* have this supreme merit. Let each *adhikari* prefer the system which he likes best, but let us realize the grand unity of philosophy in India.

A HINDU VIEW OF CHRIST *

BY P. S. NAIDU

At a time when thoughtful men and women of the East and the West are trying to understand one another in order to forge a deep cultural unity between the Orient and the Occident so that lasting peace may be established, the publication of a book like the one under review must be welcomed by all concerned. Swami Akhilananda has won a place for himself in the hearts of all cultured persons through his original presentation of *Hindu Psychology*, and now, with the same catholic outlook and rare insight, the Swami is interpreting the personality of Christ as seen through the eyes of a Hindu who has realized the highest truth. This is the first comprehensive and systematic work on the life and teachings of Christ by a Hindu Sanyasin, and as such has great value for seekers of truth. The inner approach of the Swami, unlike that of writers on Comparative Religion in the West, is born of intense personal religious experience. So convincing, and so refreshing is this approach that the learned Professor who has written the introduction is constrained to ask 'whether some aspects of Eastern Philosophy of Religion may not be closer to earliest Christianity than some forms of it born amid the despair of Western society'.

Swami Akhilananda strikes the key-note right at the commencement by presenting the Hindu conception of Incarnation, and revealing Christ as an Avatar who willingly underwent 'the troubles of rebirth in the world in order to teach and lead on struggling humanity to its goal'. As often as man denies God in order to commit ungodly deeds, so often does God incarnate Himself to win back man through love and sacrifice. God incarnated Himself as Christ in Judea in the same way as He incarnated as Krishna,

Rama, Buddha, and Sri Ramakrishna in India. And on every occasion, it was unspeakable moral chaos that called forth the Avatar.

The chapters that follow, dealing with the spiritual life of Christ, are, in the opinion of the reviewer, the most valuable in the book. Western interpreters of Christ, except the medieval Christian saints, are significantly silent on this aspect of Christ's mundane life. To set an example to His disciples, to help the ordinary run of men to rise to the full stature of the divinity hidden in them, and in order to live out to the full the human life He had taken on voluntarily, Christ practised the Yogic spiritual discipline and continued the practice till the last day of His sojourn on this earth. Without such intense discipline it is impossible to retain God-consciousness, and to know and carry out the Will of God.

With us philosophy is life as religion is life. Philosophical convictions and religious professions must make themselves evident in the right attitude to the practical problems of life. The learned Swami, therefore, devotes a few important chapters to the discussion of the bearing which his interpretation of Christ has on the burning problems of our day. Specially significant is the light thrown on power politics, and the conception of 'relative ethics' in contemporary life. 'The highest religious ideal in political activities is followed by those who do not want to compromise or dilute the ideal of soul force.' And he exposes the fallacy that religion is the cause of India's subjugation by foreigners.

The concluding sections of the book present refreshing reinterpretations of the message of the Cross and the Easter, and of the functions of religious teachers. And

* HINDU VIEW OF CHRIST. BY SWAMI AKHILANANDA. Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York 16, N. Y., U.S.A. Pages 291. Price \$ 3.00.

the final chapter on Christian Missions brings home to the minds of Missionaries truths hitherto hidden from their view.

The liberal, catholic spirit running through the entire work shines like a beacon-light in the storm-tossed world of today. Spirituality must triumph and will triumph over the forces of economic materialism, pseudo-humanitarianism, and ungodly communism. And the triumph can be hastened if the two great repositories of spirituality in the world, the democratic countries which still believe in Christ and the fountain-head of spirituality, India, join hands in the fight against evil. Not only should they join hands, but each must enter into and partly imbibe the spiritual heritage of the other. Bhagavan Sri Ramakrishna demonstrated in his own life how this may

be done. And Swami Akhilananda is carrying on that great tradition. His book opens out refreshingly new avenues of approach for the Christian into the heart of Hinduism, and for the Hindu into the hitherto hidden heart of Christianity.

The book under review kindles hope afresh when fighters for spiritual values are beginning to feel a little downhearted, and infuses new strength in them. The reviewer has not the least hesitation in affirming that Christian Missionaries in India will understand Christ better, and Hindus will see deeper into their own religion after a reverential study of *Hindu View of Christ*. Swami Akhilananda has placed all lovers of peace under a deep debt of gratitude to himself and to the Ramakrishna Mission.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

India is celebrating this month the third anniversary of her Independence with the added significance and solemnity appropriate to her present status as a sovereign democratic republic. On this occasion, when her people's thoughts are naturally turned to their motherland—her past, present, and future—, it is necessary that Indians should remember the true purpose of India's eternal striving in order to be able to render greater service to the country.

Swami Vivekananda, one of the greatest luminaries in the historical firmament of modern India, was dynamically associated with the all-round awakening in Indian national life. He was not only a great Seer and spiritual leader but also a fiery patriot, and was keenly aware of India's honoured role among the nations. The Swami's inspiring Letters written to his numerous followers and disciples, most of which have already

been published, contain his bold utterances as well as his valuable instructions to those who work for the cause of India. Recently, through the kindness of friends, we have been able to secure a number of unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda, and we are glad to present some of these valuable Letters to our readers in these columns. This issue opens with two *Unpublished Letters of Swami Vivekananda* written to Miss Mary Hale, daughter of Mr. G. W. Hale and Mrs. Hale of Chicago, both ardent disciples and devoted hosts of the Swami. In the first Letter we get a glimpse of the Swami's strong feeling of righteous indignation at the gross injustices and repressive measures India was subjected to under alien domination during the closing years of the last century. Though the circumstances that occasioned the writing of this Letter are facts of past history and may appear anachronistic in strange contrast with those in present-day India, the contents of the Letter have yet a profound historical

and national significance. In the second Letter we find the Swami briefly touching upon various subjects, evidently in reply to the points raised by his correspondent. . . .

In *India, Past and Present*, Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York, presents, with admirable clarity and vividness of expression, the aspirations and attainments of the three hundred millions of Indians during the past three thousand years of their chequered history. . . .

Swami Nityabodhananda, formerly Editor of *Vedanta Kesari*, Madras, critically analyses the implications of the far-reaching *Decisions taken by Independent India* on essential matters of national importance. This thoughtful and dispassionate analysis is of special interest in view of the fact that much controversy obtains on the subject. . . .

Swami Ranganathananda, President of the Ramakrishna Mission Centre at New Delhi, gave a series of six illuminating radio talks on the 'Bhagavad Gita' over the All India Radio (External Services Division), New Delhi. The talks were broadcast once a week during the months of February and March last. We are indebted to the All India Radio for kind permission to reproduce these talks for the benefit of our readers. We publish this month the first talk of the series, viz. *The Charm of the Bhagavad Gita*, delivered by the Swami on 10th February 1950. The remaining talks will appear serially in successive issues of the '*Prabuddha Bharata*. . . .

Principal B. S. Mathur neatly sums up *Swami Vivekananda's Message to Modern India*. . . .

In his short but illuminating article on *The Evolution of Philosophy in India*, Sri K. S. Ramaswami Sastri, a well known scholar and writer, shows the relation of mutual synthesis and harmony between the various schools of Indian philosophy, and how they form an ascending spiral of philosophic thought culminating in the Advaita Vedanta.

INDIA AND EAST-WEST CULTURAL SYNTHESIS

'East is East, West is West, and never the twain shall meet', this once much-current idea has now become ridiculously obsolete and bereft of all meaning. We realize now how the world is one and is drawing closer together every day. The world needs today both the scientific and technological culture of the West and the spiritual culture of the East. The East and the West supplement each other and a synthesis of their cultures is a desideratum for the forging of a complete world civilization. It is daily becoming clearer to the world that if any country could bring about this union it is India—India, with her genius for cultural assimilation and her historic mission of cultural synthesis, which she has been fulfilling for ages, though on a less ambitious scale. It was Swami Vivekananda who first defined to India her historic mission of cultural synthesis and inspired her to dynamic and selfless endeavour in fulfilling that mission. Later Mahatma Gandhi lived and worked for harmony and world peace through the propagation of the noble ideals of truth and non-violence. Both of them wanted to equip India for the larger task of bridging the gulf between the East and the West.

Srimati Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, India's Ambassador to the USA, recently (15 June 1950) unveiled a bronze statue of Swami Vivekananda at the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Centre, New York. In the course of her illuminating speech on this occasion, she said: 'What the world needs is the spirit of Vivekananda, a spirit that is alive in India today. . . . Swami Vivekananda taught how to blend spiritual well-being with material happiness by mastering the laws of truth and of Nature. He was a fighter even more than a philosopher, a man who knew the importance of science as well as that of religion. But how could man master science unless he was master of his own self? That was the essence of Vivekananda's teachings. Until

that basic thought, which the seers and sages of India had handed down, finds true response in the hearts of men, there can be no real solution for the troubles through which the world is passing.'

Swami Nikhilananda, Head of the Centre, gave an account of Swami Vivekananda's work in the United States and his achievement in bringing India and the Western world close together. 'Vivekananda taught,' the Swami said, 'how to integrate science, religion and philosophy. He desired that religion should follow the scientific method of reason and experience. He taught that the ideals of the East and the methods of the West could be combined for the attainment of peace and the liberation of the human spirit.'

THE 'NEW' IN RELIGION

At no time has the world been wanting in men who glorified the laws of the flesh and who found 'freedom in the thousand bonds of delight' and to whom the realities of spiritual transformation were 'an over-estimation of man, and spiritual life at best a dextrous paralysis'. Like the Jesting Pilate these people go about asking, 'what is Truth' but would not wait for an answer. And like the Pilate they sit in judgment over everything except themselves, their self-sufficient philosophies, self-adulating fancies, or self-styled indignations. The denizens of the world shall never be in need of the gospel of such people who ask them to sail along world's current, to go the worldly way. No seers or scriptures are wanted to tell the youths to go the way of their senses: the ends the senses seek are evident and are well known without instruction.

But seers and scriptures *are* needed to tell us of things that are not evident, that are not on the surface of life and are found deep in our soul. To tell us of a Reality, the fountain-light of all our lives, which is extra-experiential but yet the source and sustenance of all experience, we require seers

who have seen through this life and have conquered the appetites of the flesh and who are the towers of strength and solace to those who toil in the mire of worldly misery. Such were Buddha and Christ. It is here that spirituality works wonders by producing men who, though in the world, can stand apart and offer hope and inspiration to those in the world in moments of crisis. Civilization stands on the true estimation of the greatness of Buddhas and Christs and not on the over-estimation of Jesting Pilates.

To swear by experience alone is today an awfully out-dated philosophy, when even the scientists are swearing by an extra-experiential Reality. They are more or less unanimous that to count without such a Reality is to play Hamlet without the Prince of Denmark. That Reality or Spirit is the soul of all life and experience. To recognize this supreme truth of life and give primacy to the Spirit is just to practise the very necessary motto in life, 'first things first'. Religion is the practise of the wisdom, 'first things first', and Christ spoke out this wisdom when he said, 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and all things will be added unto you'. To reckon with Spirit in all its implications is to integrate life to a dynamic unity and to inspire it with meaningful dexterity. But to reckon without the Spirit is to go about indenting for a dextrous futility that not only paralyses but kills. The point needs no illustration to the modern world.

There is again the argument that religion is stale, for it talks of the oldest things in the world, soul, God and renunciation, while life with its pleasures and thrills is so new and alluring. Perhaps this argument is as old as pleasure itself. If religion is old, then what of the drabness and dreary monotony that is being repeated through the sense-pleasures ever since man started desiring things in this world? Millions of men and women have gone through the mill of the same sense-pleasures and yet new people seek newness in them. To say that this

newness is in the flesh is to say that it is matter that animates life and not Spirit. It is the never-old and ever-young Spirit that creates new beauties in this old and drab world and in this otherwise uneventful and stale life. As man grows old and his blood becomes weak, he continues to discover new beauties in the same old things. It is not the flesh that inspires this vision, but the eternally young Spirit. It is the Spirit again that brings about a revival and resurgence in society, a renaissance in cultures. It is natural that those who are not inspired by the vision of the Spirit within see spiritual darkness outside. They complain that institutions started by great seers are without life as they have not produced new seers. They ask for new and more 'Vivekanandas' to come up, for they are blind to what the great Vivekananda has already done. It is just like the blind man asking for more light which he cannot see. What a great truth it is that spiritual blindness is the greatest malady of the times!

EDUCATION IN ANCIENT INDIA

In modern times our learning is vast in scope and breadth; our knowledge of man and Nature is immense; and the subjects studied are varied and numerous. Withal we miss that depth, and something of that love and reverence for learning we find among the ancients. The modern educational institution lacks the sublime relationship between the teacher and the taught of the olden days. We can, with profit, study and adapt some of the educational ideals of ancient India to supplement our present-day educational ideals. Srimati Malati Srikhande's article in the June issue of *The Modern Review* on 'Taxila—The Seat of Learning in Ancient India' reveals some of the characteristics of ancient Indian education. She writes:

'The most important feature of ancient Indian or Hindu civilization is that it has been moulded and shaped in the course of its history, more by religion than by any other influence. ... This distinctive ten-

dency of Hindu thought manifests itself the most in the sphere of learning and education. ... It was sought as a means of self-realization which was the highest goal of life, i.e. Mukti or 'emancipation'. The individual's supreme duty according to them is thus to achieve his expansion into the absolute; his self-fulfilment for he is a spark of the Divine. Education therefore must help in this self-fulfilment and not in the acquisition of mere objective knowledge. ... Its method is ... the method of Yoga. ... This method of Yoga is the most remarkable feature of the educational methods of ancient India. This can be achieved only by the reconstruction of self by discipline and meditation with the help of an efficient and capable teacher. It is therefore obvious that ancient Hindu education being an individual concern was an intimate relationship between the teacher and the student. ... As ancient India believed in its domestic system of education all centres including universities, therefore, were based on this fundamental principle.' ...

'In ancient times, although travelling was not easy or quick, Indian parents were very particular in sending their sons to far and distant countries to complete their education in order to chasten their pride and conceit and to acquaint them with the ways of the world. ... The insistence upon certain standards of simplicity and discipline in life, levelled all kinds of distinction among them within the school, whether he was the son of a king or of an ordinary man. He did not possess any private money to spend as he liked, during his stay at school. Nor did the offences of the king's son escape their usual punishment. It shows that these ancient kings out of policy deliberately used to place their sons under such discipline and education for their best training in manners and morals and as a democratizing influence.

'Plain living and high thinking was their motto. The food that was given to them was also very simple. ... Life of the student was ... very hard. His conduct was controlled by many strict rules. Obedience on the part of a student was considered as the primary and the most important virtue and was demanded under any circumstances.' ...

'At last the finishing touch was given to the education of the students by advising them to travel in distant countries to enable them to qualify themselves for their life in the world. It was insisted upon to provide opportunity to the students to broaden the range of their experience and to deepen their insight into human affairs, to build up their physical constitution by inuring themselves to hardships of travelling and by standing all weathers and climates. Lastly, it was insisted upon to inspire the spirit of democracy and fraternity in the princes and nobles under strange conditions in foreign lands.'

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

LETTERS OF SRI AUROBINDO. (SECOND SERIES). *Published by Sri Aurobindo Circle, 32 Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay 1, Pages 599. Price Rs. 8.*

Sri Aurobindo's contribution to the world of literature is immense. As a valiant fighter for freedom and as a great exponent and teacher of 'Integral Yoga', he has been enriching the cultural and spiritual thought-world with his brilliant and masterly analysis of Indian thought and culture. Those who have had the inevitable impression that Sri Aurobindo was leading a recluse life will be pleasantly surprised to learn from the foreword to this book 'that regularly for six to eight hours every day, over a period of about ten years, he gave replies to the innumerable inquiries addressed to him by the spiritual aspirants in his Ashram and elsewhere'. As a result we have a very large number of highly illuminating and instructive letters, useful in a variety of ways. The present volume is the *second series* of collections from the vast store of Sri Aurobindo's letters. The first series was published in 1947, and the present series is complementary to and more intimately elucidative of the subject-matter mainly covered by the first.

In this volume, the letters are arranged under sixteen sections, divided according to the nature of the subject-matter. The first five sections deal with Sri Aurobindo's system of 'Integral Yoga', its method, object of Sadhana, realization, and its relation to other spiritual paths as well as to religion, morality, and idealism. The next six sections treat of the problems,—psychological and spiritual—that arise in the course of Sadhana. The last five sections are devoted to the practical application of Yoga in life, Avatārhood and Evolution, death and rebirth, and some other general topics. Each letter is given a suitable heading denoting the topic of its contents, which indicates to the reader the vast variety of subjects that have been treated in these letters. The relevant and generally most useful portion only of each letter is published, omitting all names and personal references for obvious reasons. These letters are of absorbing interest both to the spiritual aspirant as well as to the general reader. As regards the subject-matter and the way of presentation it is clear and systematic. Though, with due deference to the great author of these letters, one may not agree with all the conclusions therein, one cannot but feel the convincing force of the arguments.

Here one finds the strikingly synthetic approach of Sri Aurobindo, harmonizing the various spiritual paths, his clear exposition, in forceful language, of the complex psycho-spiritual phenomena as well as the distinctive features of his Yoga. Such recondite subjects as psycho-vital-physical phenomena of both embodied and post-mortem existence, the various theories of eschatology, rebirth, metempsychosis, hell and heaven, ghosts and

seances, and astrology and prophecy are dealt with in a simple clear manner, as best as could be done in the course of a letter. The theories of divine manifestation and evolutionary Avatāravāda are substantiated from a fresh point of view. Writing of the commonly perplexing problem of violence and non-violence, Sri Aurobindo says: 'There is a truth in Ahimsa, there is a truth in destruction also. ... Non-violence is better than violence as a rule, and still sometimes violence may be the right thing. I consider Dharma as relative; unity with the Divine and action from the Divine Will, the highest way. ... Destruction in itself is neither good nor evil. It is a fact of Nature, a necessity in the play of forces as things are in this world.' (pp. 594-95).

Sri Aurobindo observes, 'I do not agree with the view that the world is an illusion, *mithyā*'. (p. 3). In his opinion, the object of the Yoga is not 'Moksha' but 'the Divine for the Divine's sake alone'. (pp. 3-4). It may however be pointed out that the rendering of the philosophical term '*mithyā*' into 'illusion' and '*moksha*' into 'liberation', i.e. achievement of something not already present, is not in accord with the traditional interpretation of Vedānta. The phenomenal world is declared to be a projection of Avidyā (or Māyā)—a metaphysical ignorance which is of a positive nature (*bhāvarūpa*). It is not real (*satya*) in the same sense as Brahman is; and, as such, it is characterized relatively as *mithyā*. Moksha, according to Shankara, is 'becoming Brahman Itself' (*Brahmabhāvashcha-mokshah*). The world as it is seen now is realized as *mithyā* when true knowledge dawns, because, in its essential nature, the world is nothing but Brahman which is the sole and ultimate Reality. If the world is finally 'real' as it appears now, then all search after truth and all attempts at divinization of the human personality lose their meaning, for what is already *real* cannot be subject to any change. We may speak of divinization of the human from a *vyāvahārika* standpoint, but from the (highest) *pāramārthika* standpoint of Reality there can be no divinization as an *achievement*; there can only be a realization of the ever existent self-effulgent Divine Presence, resulting from the sublation of the superimposed ignorance.

THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY. BY SATISH-CHANDRA CHATTERJEE. *Published by Das Gupta & Co., Ltd., 54/3, College Street, Calcutta 12. Pages 345. Price Rs. 6-8.*

Dr. Chatterjee of Calcutta University has established his reputation by his substantial volume on the *Nyaya Theory of Knowledge*, and the excellent *Introduction to Indian Philosophy* in collaboration with Dr. Dutta of Patna University. The volume under review is by far the best introduction to the problems of philosophy

with special reference to the difficult branch—*theory of knowledge*. The treatment of each difficult problem is full, critical, and systematic. The book is brimming with facts and information concerning the latest developments in philosophy. There are several introductory books to the study of philosophy but none of them is so compact and definitive as this volume. Dr. Chatterjee's volume compares favourably with Dr. Joad's *Guide to Philosophy*, and Patrick's *Introduction to Philosophy* with the advantage that it covers the Indian philosophical standpoint.

The volume begins with the definition and the different concepts of philosophy, outlined by different thinkers, criticizing each of them after duly evaluating their worth. The philosophical discipline and its specialized methods are compared with those of science and religion. Then follows a series of chapters on the nature and the function of knowledge and a review of several current theories of Realism. In these pages we see Dr. Chatterjee at his best, and he is on his home ground. Then we have a clear and coherent account of the nature of *universals* and theories of *internal and external relations*. To be clear on these difficult problems is no small merit. Dr. Chatterjee's account is very helpful and critical. The book concludes with a chapter on 'Thought and Reality'.

It is not easy to give an adequate estimate of such a difficult and important book in the course of a short review. The book deserves to be prescribed for the graduate and even the post-graduate classes in philosophy. It is a splendid and successful attempt at expounding the intricate problems of philosophy.

DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

DIVINE DWELLERS IN THE DESERT. BY GURDIAL MALLIK. *Published by Nalanda Publications, P. O. Box No. 1353, Bombay 1. Pages 80. Price Rs. 3-12.*

Sri Gurdial Mallik is a familiar author. His name always stands for something good and sincere. *Divine Dwellers in the Desert* is a fine collection of illuminating lectures, delivered at Shantiniketan, during 1932-33, at the invitation of Rabindranath Tagore. The essentials of Sufism, its origin and growth, have been beautifully and admirably delineated. Sri Mallik is definitely in a happy position to enable us to make a near approach to the Sufi mind. In Sufism the fundamental thing is love, followed by understanding. A true Sufi, though an enlightened mystic, insists on living in the company of people in the world. For deliverance does not lie in merely fleeing from the world. There is God everywhere. Why not find Him in all living beings around us? We can see Him, if we try, everywhere, in everything. This is the essential teaching of Sufism which in many respects closely approaches Vedantic thought.

The lectures are highly fascinating and thought-provoking. They seem to rise to the level of something great and perennial. They can be termed true pieces of literature which people might not like to forget and which are bound to give many of us true moments of sacred joy. Students of literature, especially those who have an acquaintance with the sublime poetry of Rabindranath Tagore, will find delight in the work of the author who draws inspiration from the immortal writings of the great poet.

B. S. MATHUR

SWITZERLAND—LAND OF PEACE AND LIBERTY. BY ROBERT DE TRAZ. (TRANSLATED BY R. GRANDVOINET). *Published by Swiss Office for the Development of Trade (OSEC), Place de la Riponne 3, Lausanne, Switzerland. Pages 96. Price Sw. frs. 4.50.*

This beautiful folio, published by the Swiss Office for the Development of Trade, provides ample relishment for the aesthete as well as for the common man eager to know the distinctive features of this beauty spot of Europe. The text is tastefully interspersed between splendid photographs on nearly every page, and gives a short illuminating survey of whatever is obvious and conspicuous in that 'land of peace and liberty'. It is more than merely an artistic Baedeker and inevitably rouses our desire to visit this mountainous country which has attracted the largest number of visitors to the Continent. All sides of Swiss life are briefly but lucidly dealt with—the land and its people, historical survey, economic resources, the State and its active role of international importance, science, art, and letters. The gorgeous collection of picture materials—over fifty prints, partly in colour and partly black and white—bears ample testimony to the achievements of the best Swiss painters, craftsmen, architects, and amateurs.

Switzerland, with its charming scenery, reminds us of our imposing Himalayas, and the Swiss, in their picturesque national costumes, very much resemble our own hill folk. Apart from its aesthetic and commercial appeal, Switzerland offers a healthy example of unity in diversity. Though professing more or less permanent neutrality in all wars, the Swiss people have testified to a feeling of rational fraternity despite differences of race, religion, and language. For this and other progressive characteristics of a democratic civilization, they have, no doubt, earned the admiration of the world and especially of the people of Independent India who are no less earnest in building up a welfare State based on the sovereignty of the people possessing a common heritage. All who like to know, at first hand, authentic facts about Switzerland should not hesitate to add this little gem to their library.

BENGALI

VIDYAMANDIR PATRIKA. *Published by the Principal, Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir, P. O. Belur Math, Dist. Howrah (West Bengal). Pages 71.*

We gladly welcome the latest issue (for the year 1949) of the *Vidyamandir Patrika*, the annual magazine of the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyamandir, hitherto conducted in a manuscript form, now excellently printed and widely circulated for the first time. In keeping with the distinguished traditions of the Vidyamandir, this issue of its illustrious organ, in its present improved form, bears ample testimony to the literary abilities and devoted efforts of the young and enterprising votaries of this shrine of wisdom. The readable articles and poems contributed by students of the first and second

year classes reveal an amazing and delightful standard of intellectual acumen and general knowledge. The rich contents and impressive get-up of this initial number of the new printed series of the *Vidyamandir Patrika* augur of great success in the coming years. It is a happy and commendable achievement on the part of the organizers of the magazine and they deserve congratulations as well as unstinted encouragement. The *Vidyamandir Patrika* has glorious opportunities of playing a prominent part in serving the motherland in an ever increasing degree in the future. We are confident it will acquit itself well by becoming a worthy mouthpiece of the institution and its eminent ideals for which it boldly stands.

NEWS AND REPORTS

RAMAKRISHNA MISSION VIDYAPITH, DEOGHAR

REPORT FOR 1948

The Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, started 27 years ago, is a residential High School run on the lines of the ancient Gurukula system. It gives training to the students in various subjects beginning from handicrafts and gardening to typewriting, journalism, and banking, besides literary and religious education. It combines the modern direct method of teaching with the ancient didactic method. During the period under review, class lessons were taught on tutorial basis and terminal examinations were done away with. Promotion was determined by the records of progress in the classes and surprise class examinations.

There were 176 resident students and 15 day-scholars who were evacuees from East Bengal, in the school. The boys appeared as private candidates at the Matriculation Examination of the Calcutta University. Hindi was introduced as a compulsory subject in classes V to VIII. The Matriculation results have been uniformly satisfactory. Cent per cent of the boys passed during the last three years, and two-thirds of them were placed high in the first and second divisions.

The health of the boys was well maintained through regulated life, nourishing food, and regular medical examination. Physical training through sports, games, and military drill was provided for. Marked improvement in health was noticed in a good number of boys, some of whom won prizes for all-round development of physique, dexterity in parallel-bar exercise, boxing, etc.

The boys were given religious education by means of weekly discourses, congregational chanting, prayer,

devotional songs, and celebration of religious festivals and birthday anniversaries of leaders of all religions.

The boys were given practical training to conduct their affairs themselves so that they might turn out to be useful citizens. They had their own court to settle disputes and quarrels. They had also Pratinidhi Samitis and Sevak Mandalis to attend to various places.

Regular classes were held on flower gardening, tailoring, vocal and instrumental music, leather-bag making, envelop making, spinning, drawing and painting. The boys were given training in first-aid. They managed their own Bank and Co-operative Stores creditably.

The boys' Literary Society organized debates fortnightly and held meetings on special occasions such as the birthdays of leaders and prophets. The Society successfully published the hand-written daily *Vivek*, as also its weekly editions and special numbers. The junior boys published the hand-written monthly *Kisholoy*. The senior boys conducted a night school for the servants of the institution. The boys started a Welfare Fund with which they helped needy students and distressed people in the villages.

The Vidyapith also conducted a charitable dispensary which rendered medical aid to about 3000 patients, including poor villagers from the neighbouring places.

Several deserving boys were given concessions and free-ships to the tune of Rs. 3,000/-.

The Vidyapith maintained a dairy of 72 cattle, which yielded daily about two maunds of milk. It brought under cultivation about 12 bighas of land. The construction of a new dormitory, costing about Rs. 20,000/- was undertaken.

MAYAVATI CHARITABLE HOSPITAL

REPORT FOR 1949

Origin and Growth : The Advaita Ashrama at Mayavati was started by Swami Vivekananda—far away in the interior of the Himalayas in the Almora district, U.P.—to be a suitable centre for practising and disseminating the Highest Truth in life. In addition to its religious and cultural work through publication of books and the magazine *Prabuddha Bharata*, and a Library consisting of about 6,200 select books on various subjects, the Ashrama also runs a hospital to serve the suffering humanity as embodied divinity, without any distinction of caste or creed, and high or low.

The Mayavati Charitable Hospital came into being in response to most pressing local needs. The condition of the villagers, mostly ignorant and poor, is so helpless in times of disease and sickness that even the stoniest of hearts will be moved to do something for them. The regular dispensary was opened in 1903. Since then it has been growing in size and importance. Now quite a large number of patients come from a distance of even 50 to 60 miles taking 4 or 5 days for the journey.

In the hospital there are 13 regular beds. But sometimes arrangements have to be made for a much larger number of indoor patients—there is so great a rush for admission. People come from such great distances and in such helpless condition that they have to be accommodated anyhow.

The operation room is fitted with most up-to-date equipments and as such various kinds of major operations can be done here. This has been a great boon to the people of this area. There is also a small clinical laboratory, which is a rare thing in these parts. Now almost all kinds of medical help that one can normally expect in a small town in the plains are available here.

Work During 1949 : The total number of patients treated during the year in the Indoor Department was 302 of which 250 were cured and discharged, 23 were relieved, 23 were discharged otherwise or left, and 3 died. In the Outdoor Department the total number of patients treated was 8,785 of which 7,052 were new and 1,733 repeated cases. Altogether 49 different kinds of diseases were treated and 49 operations were conducted.

The visitors' remarks show a great admiration for the tidiness, equipment, efficiency, and usefulness of the Hospital. Sri R. Choksi, Director, Sir Dorabji Tata Trust, Bombay, writes : 'I saw the work of the Hospital and was greatly impressed. A hospital, well-designed and well-equipped in this isolated mountain region, is a notable achievement and gives splendid expression to the Ramakrishna Mission's spirit of service in the cause of the poor and the neglected. ... I should like here to record my admiration for the work of the hospital.'

The hospital has to depend for the most part on the generous public for donations and subscriptions. The Receipts and Payments Account for the year ended 31st December 1949 shows Rs. 6,966-7-3 as the net expendable receipts, and Rs. 7,132-12-3 as the expenditure during the year. The hospital needs funds for its improvement and expansion. Contributions for endowment of beds, one or more, may be made in memory of near and dear ones.

The management expresses its grateful thanks for the donations by the generous public and hopes they will extend the same co-operation on which the work of the hospital depends and thus help to serve the sick and the diseased in this far-away mountain region.

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

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