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Prabuddha Bharata

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उत्तिष्ठत जाग्रत प्राप्य वरान्निबोधत ।

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

SPIRITUAL TALKS OF SWAMI SHIVANANDA

Belur Math, September 8, 1923

Mahapurushji was returning from the shrine in the morning. Absorbed in his spiritual mood, he was singing in a low tone. As he walked over the terrace connecting the shrine with his room, he turned towards Dakshineswar and saluted with folded hands. Then he saluted Mother Gaṅgā and returned to his room. The *sannyāsins* and *brahmacārins* of the Math now came to him one by one, after finishing their own meditation and *japa*. They saluted him and went out. He did not speak to anyone, but sat silently with his mind absorbed in God. A little later, an elderly monk came, saluted him, and inquired about his health. The monk used to look after the day-to-day works of the monastery. After a little talk about the Math works, he raised the topic of the Dakshineswar temple and asked: 'Maharaj, now that the temple and its properties have been taken over by the receiver, will that bring any good?'

Mahapurushji: 'I think it will do some good. Recently, the Mother's worship etc. was being sadly neglected. Maybe, it is by Her will that

this arrangement has been made. Is Dakshineswar just an ordinary place? God Himself incarnated for the good of the world, and it is there that He undertook hard spiritual practices, such practices as the world had not seen before, and, maybe, will not see again. Dakshineswar is the epitome of all the holy places of the world; every particle of its dust is holy. It is a great place of pilgrimage to all aspirants of all sects, be they Hindus, Mohammedans, Christians, or even Śaivas, Śāktas, or Vaiṣṇavas. As for the other sacred places of the world, it is either that an aspirant has attained realization through a certain spiritual path in one, or that a realized person has cast off his body in another. But Dakshineswar has witnessed the spiritual struggles undergone by God Himself. Who indeed can tell of the infinite spiritual moods that found expression there? In course of time, people will realize the greatness of that place, when they will be eager to get the very dust of that sacred spot. The intense spiritual atmosphere of the place can never be destroyed. From the day that I heard that the Mother was not being properly served and adored, I have

been invoking Her here daily and offering worship mentally. To Her I say: "Mother, have your offerings here itself; accept our service instead." I shall be saved from all worries when the temple services and worship are suitably arranged for. . . . In a way, Mathur Babu made a gift of the whole property to the Master, in all sincerity; but the Master did not accept it then.* Now that his work is spreading on all sides and in many ways, it has become specially necessary to preserve that place. Mother willing, all that will come under the Math.'

The monk: 'But, Maharaj, it is very risky to come in close contact with money and all such worldly affairs; and to add to the difficulties, there is an estate to manage and protect. History records many instances of the fall of great religious organizations as a result of getting wealth and involved in worldly dealings, which deflected them from their ideal.'

Mahapurushji: 'What you say is quite true from one point of view. But do you know how it strikes me? Whenever a religious organization fell, the root cause was the absence of spiritual practices, austerity, and detachment. In this organization also, we have nothing to fear, and it will all run smoothly, so long as detachment and dispassion will shine bright and each member of the organization will believe that God-realization is the only goal of life and accordingly engage himself in spiritual practices and austerity. Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda) used to depict the true outlook of a holy man with the help of a beautiful illustration. He used to say that a monk should think that he was living under a tree even while dwelling in a palace; and even when being supplied with the best food, he should remember that he is after all living on alms that is free from all impurity. This means that the monk should remain detached under all circumstances and keep the fire of austerity burning within for ever. One need have no fear so long as the ideal remains unadulterated. It is only the ideal that counts. Besides, whatever you do, you do for God alone, and nothing for yourselves. So, work also becomes a spiritual prac-

tice for you. When one performs work as service to Him, one gets rid of the impurities of the mind; there can be no doubt about that. Of course, you have to undertake other forms of spiritual practice along with this, and that intensely. Troubles arise only when there is any slackness in spiritual struggle. You have to do His work without any attachment. Know it for certain that, if one goes on performing one's duties under the sincere belief that one is doing God's work, one can never suffer spiritually. God protects such a one for ever. But the fall comes as soon as egoism and attachment creep in. The Master used to say that there should be no self-deception in the matter of sticking to the ideal. One need have no fear so long as one clings to the idea "I am thankful that I am able to do His work, to serve Him through this". One should keep strict vigilance over one's mind, analysing it at every turn. Whenever you notice that the course of the mind is altering even slightly, you should at once start praying to Him with all humility, and you should apply yourself more intensely to your spiritual practices. Not that one has to work all the twenty-four hours of the day. And even while working, one has to maintain a constant current of thought about Him.'

The monk: 'Unless one has a living ideal before one, one can hardly keep one's life orientated towards the ideal. I think all will go well so long as you all (i.e. the disciples of Sri Ramakrishna) are here; but the Master alone knows what will follow afterwards.'

Mahapurushji: 'Why should it be so? Know it for a truth that the Master himself is the living ideal. We are also there to be sure. It is a mistake to think that everything ends with the body. When the mind becomes purified by spiritual practices, it feels the living and divine presence of God. That experience is what really counts; and its effect lasts through one's life. Besides, you, too, are not so insignificant, as you think. You have been blessed to see the really ideal lives led by the direct disciples of the Master before your very eyes, and you have

lived with them. This, too, is a result of past merit. You have nothing to fear. Those who have real dispassion and sincere detachment have nothing to fear at any time. God will reveal Himself before them; He will fulfil their life's goal by His blessed vision. The main factors that count are renunciation, detachment, purity, and sincere hankering for God-realization. This is a very propitious time; in this age, even a little practice will serve to rouse a man's spiritual consciousness. The Master's advent has now made the path of spiritual progress very easy. The spiritual current that has been set flowing by him will run for many centuries—there can be no doubt about that. A few days before his passing away, Swamiji (Swami Vivekananda) declared, standing in this very courtyard of the Math, that the current that has been released will run unimpeded for seven or eight centuries—nobody will be able to stop it. This spiritual current of the age will flow on out of its own inner strength; it will not depend on any person. This has been ordained by divine power; what can a puny human being do? But the man who will help in fulfilling the need of the age will be blessed. It was at the instance of the Master himself that Swamiji organized this religious Order for keeping intact the spiritual power with which the Master came to this world and which he bequeathed. Swamiji started that work with this Math as its main centre. This is the power-house of that spiritual energy. It is from here that the spiritual current will rush forth to deluge the whole world. That is why he carried the Master on his own head and installed him here.¹

'The Master had told Swamiji: "Carrying me on your head, wherever you place me, I shall live there." On the day that this monastery was inaugurated, Swamiji carried the "Ātmārāma" (i.e. the vessel containing the holy relics of Sri Ramakrishna) on his head and established it here. There was elaborate worship, sac-

rifice, and offering of food. I cooked the milk porridge for the offering. Installing the Master in this monastery, Swamiji said: "Today, the heaviest responsibility on my head in this world is off. Now it matters little even if I leave this body." All our spiritual practices centred round this "Ātmārāma" here. Swamiji, Maharaj (Swami Brahmananda), Baburam Maharaj (Swami Premananda)—all had undertaken intense spiritual practices here. They are all as good as incarnations themselves, the very apostles of the Master. They hardly come down unless it be in the company of a divine incarnation. So many great saints had undertaken their spiritual practices here. Now, think how great a place this holy monastery is. The Mother (i.e. Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother) herself came here. I heard it said that, even before this Math came into existence, the Holy Mother saw Sri Ramakrishna here (in a vision), while passing over the Gaṅgā in a boat. Of course, we went away now and then for solitary meditation in hills and forests, even after the founding of this monastery, but our minds remained ever pinned to this vessel of "Ātmārāma" here. As the immediate companions of the Master are returning to him one by one, it is now your turn to shoulder the task. You have the duty of keeping intact the influence of this Math with the help of your renunciation, spiritual struggle, prayer, and meditation. Your lives have to be moulded in such a way that, when people come in contact with you, they should feel that they are meeting the Master himself and his immediate companions. To sum up the Master's message in a few words: the only aim of human life is to realize God, and true life consists in renunciation, hard spiritual practice, and harmony of all religions.'

A monk, proceeding to a centre of the Math in South India for preaching the message of Sri Ramakrishna, now saluted Mahapurushji and sought his blessings, saying: 'Bless me, Maharaj, that I may realize God in this very life. I had been near you all so long, and now I am leaving for distant Madras far away from you. That pains me very much. Hereafter,

¹ Actually, he carried the vessel containing Sri Ramakrishna's holy remains, with which the Master was identified in thought.

I cannot meet you at will; you will be present in my meditation only. Please instruct me how I should live there.'

Mahapurushji blessed the monk heartily and then said with great affection: 'My son, you have taken refuge in the lotus-feet of Sri Ramakrishna; he will take care of you for ever. No matter where you are, have this faith ever in your mind that the Master is with you. You are very dear to him. You are well educated, pure in heart, and have renounced everything for his sake. Does he not know all that? Aha! At times, I think within myself that, if Swamiji were here now, how glad he would have been to see all these boys. The Master has many devotees even there where you are going. You tell them exactly what you have seen and what you have learnt from us. What really matters is to live the life of an ideal monk, full of renunciation and spiritual fervour. The Master's life was a living embodiment of blazing renunciation. You belong to his sacred Order, and you are going out to spread his message. The most eloquent preaching is to live an ideal life, so that through your lives people may understand and take refuge in the Master. So it comes to

this that the more you can build your life after the pattern of the Master and Swamiji, the more will their message speak out through you. Whenever you feel you are at a loss, pray to him with heart and soul; he is there within you, the very soul of your soul. He will throw light from within; he will show you what to do. Never harbour such an idea in your mind that you are going out to preach. The Master himself preaches his message. What preaching can we undertake? Who can understand him? His spiritual moods are infinite. Can we possibly draw any limit to them anywhere? Even so great a person as Swamiji said that he could not comprehend how great Sri Ramakrishna was. What to speak of others? The goal of life is to have faith in him and devotion to his lotus-feet. Go on with your usual spiritual practices and scriptural studies and discussions, as you were having them here; nay, more. That will be for your own good. This is the time for you to practise all these; you must lay the greatest emphasis on them. I pray sincerely that you may be filled with devotion, faith, love purity, etc. May your human birth find its truest fulfilment.'



'DO NOT SEEK HIM, SEE HIM'

The lure of the Unknown has ever attracted man to the discovery of his true self as well as what is Absolute. His seeking for something supreme can never be stopped, in spite of his busy life in this world. Man undergoes austerity, goes into solitude, courts privation, and renounces everything his own in its quest. Undaunted by the severity of hardship, he devotes himself completely to this search. Man becomes a philosopher, a mystic, a devotee, or a disinterested worker in his pursuit of the Unknown, through reason, or psychic control, or love, or work. Through unceasing endeavour, his instincts get sublimated into intelligent

search, and this finally into intuition. This intuition, resulting from man's longing for the Unknown, or born of his love for the Beloved, leads him on to the goal of self-realization, whence comes forth his vibrant voice: 'I know this mighty Person (Puruṣa) of the colour of the sun, beyond all darkness; only by knowing Him does man become immortal. There is no other way to reach the goal.'

In his march towards the goal, man's first encounter is with his body; then comes the external world in relation to it; and then the universe in relation to his mind. He finds himself lost in his varied experiences, and cannot dis-

tinctly recognize his true self. This uncertain state of his mind keeps him ever restless. Without knowing what he actually is, he attempts to find it out in the objective world. He finds himself often to be in error. There is a feeling of separation between the self and the non-self. Once the truth behind this separation is discovered, he realizes his real identity as the Self, the simplest thing to be known, which is free from all identifications assumed by the mind and the intellect.

A scrutiny of the human mind and its functions in its day-to-day experiences, keeping ourselves free from all prejudices, is highly interesting. A dispassionate study of its course, as to what actually happens to the mind, is really revealing.

II

Man feels that he exists. His existence is a reality to him, and this feeling is so spontaneous that he seldom doubts it. Whenever he thinks or says 'I', he is aware of his existence, and recognizes his identity in his actions and in relations with what appears to him as other than him. His perceptions are evidently within the dimensions of his senses. He knows that he has a body, because the senses are active through the instrumentality of different organs in it. If he does not see or hear or smell or taste or touch, he cannot have the feeling of the possession of a physical body. It is the functioning of these faculties, some or all, in relation to their objects, that gives rise to the feeling of the existence of the physical body. Of course, he is conscious of this experience only when his mind is awake. If his mind is inactive, he remains unaware of the body. Besides being conscious of the physical body, his mind thinks; the thoughts may be of something which is not immediately related to an external object. It may be memory or imagination. Apart from the body and its contact with the external objects, man is conscious of things existing far away, some known and others unknown, and also of actions outside the arena of his physical existence. He travels in the realm of ideas.

The awareness of actions, of the existence of the body, and of other objects gives rise to the conception of time and space in the human mind. Without the consciousness of actions, the idea of time is impossible to comprehend; without the consciousness of the existence of external objects, the idea of space cannot be formed. These ideas are worked out in the mind. Man cannot think of time and space as two distinct categories; the conception is a combination of the two ideas together; it is a time-space continuum. This is also relative to the idea of causation; without the principle of causation, time and space cannot be imagined, and *vice versa*. So time, space, and causation as absolutes are incomprehensibles.

The objective world is cognized within the sphere of this time-space continuum and causation; so its value is a relative one. Time, space, and causation being concepts of the mind, the phenomenal world exists only in the mind. Take the case of any individual. His experiences of his own world—his own body and sense objects; other people sharing his experiences and functioning similar to himself; all objects, animate and inanimate; all actions, past, present, and future; and whatever he perceives, feels, or thinks of—all these are worked out by the mind within itself. Beyond the mind, he cannot comprehend any existence or action; without the mind, there exists no universe for him. This is the experience of every human mind, and can be analysed by every individual for himself.

The above observations may be made clearer by analysing the state of dream and comparing the findings with the experiences of the waking state. During dream, an individual creates his own universe—several beings outside himself; a history with past, present, and future; various people sharing with him the same experience; etc. Everything as sharp and real as he experiences when awake is there in the dream state; they are not doubted or challenged of their validity so long as he is dreaming. Only when he is awake, the world of dream vanishes with all its contents, his dream personality and the conception of time, space, and causation

that existed for the time being. The universe of his dream was the creation of his own mind; it was real so long as he dreamed. There were in the dream births and deaths, aging and wearing, sobs and laughters, worries and thrills, ambitions and frustrations, love and hatred, laws and public opinions, and everything that man is familiar with. Viewed from its own state, the dream universe is similar to, and as real as, the universe of the waking state.

A dispassionate study of these two states makes it clear that the objective world is not really outside the mind. The external and the internal are only two different ideas as such within the mind. Man's conception of 'I' and 'mine', and whatever is distinct from this feeling, springs from within the mind. His physical body, his senses, the vital force and its workings, the solid earth on which he stands, and the things he longs for are not really external to him, but are mental projections. Even the birth and death of an individual, which are occurrences in time and space, are events of relative importance.

Besides waking and dream states, man experiences a third state, that of sleep. In this, he perceives no objective world. This experience is not of a relative nature; his mind as we know it does not function here. Only when he is awake can he find out that in sleep there was no objectification. When one finds oneself identified with one's waking state, there remains no dream, and one's dream experiences are known to be false. When, again, one is identified with the dream world, one's universe of the waking state does not exist for one. Thus man's awareness of his 'I' is possible only when he is identified with the waking or the dream state. But, in sleep, this awareness is totally absent.

III

Now, what is significant is that all the three kinds of experiences, though distinct in themselves, are linked by the feeling of an existence underlying them all. Man is ever conscious of this feeling, and refers to it as 'I' and says 'my

waking', 'my dream', and 'my sleep'. The I-consciousness of an individual never ceases to exist with the cessation of any of these states, though every time he identifies it with one or the other of these three distinct experiences.

It is also our experience that every cell of the body with which an individual is born changes. The body of his infancy can seldom be recognized in his body when old, but his feeling of 'I' continues to exist, being successively identified with his changing body and mind. The same 'I' exists all through—whether he is a helpless infant, or an ambitious young man with great hopes and future possibilities, or an aged man counting his days and brooding over his past. His feeling of 'I' is a constant factor passing through all the changing circumstances, itself remaining unchanged. What is more, it is due to the presence of this awareness of 'I' that all the functions of the mind as perceptions occur. When the mind desires and repels, enjoys and suffers, or otherwise functions, and when that, again, as his intellect, investigates, measures, judges, and ascertains, it does so because of the presence of this feeling of 'I'. The mind changes, the intellect appears and disappears and undergoes modifications, but the identity expressed as 'I' remains ever the same, existing as consciousness and independent of all experiences. It is not relative.

This consciousness of an individual expressed as 'I', as distinct from his body, senses, mind, intellect, and vital force, and not being relative to anything experienced, stands as the constant witness of all phenomena and makes possible the perception of the universe. It is the witness of the birth, existence, growth, change, decay, and death of all the things experienced, itself remaining ever unaffected. It is not born; neither does it undergo any change; nor does it die or cease to exist. As the sun remains unaffected by the objects illumined by it, this I-consciousness is not affected by the changing experiences that appear before it. Even as the sun is known indirectly through the objects illumined by it, the self-conscious 'I' is perceived as the witness behind all the experiences. It

can never be experienced as an object. It stands as the supreme subject.

It is well known that a subject can never be an object at one and the same time. The eye cannot see itself; the tongue cannot taste itself; neither can the tip of the finger touch itself. An entity, while functioning as the subject, cannot be an object too. Even the most ordinary thing, when it stands in the position of a subject, assumes some sort of importance. So the I-consciousness of an individual, which is the cognizer of everything within time, space, and causation as their witness, can never be an object of its experience. It is that very consciousness by which we cognize all objects. It is the light by which we see and the light which we see. There is nothing apart from it by which it can be seen. It does not do any function, nor does it undergo any change. The knower, the known, and the knowledge are all objects manifested before this witness, the absolute Consciousness.

IV

Man's eternal struggle is for the discovery of this absolute Consciousness, the realization of his true Self. His mind being glued to experiences, external as well as internal, and his intellect being clouded by superstitions, he gropes, as if in a strange dark room, and takes whatever he happens to catch hold of as the object of his search. First, deriving pleasure through his senses, he identifies himself with the body and thinks that it is his real self. Next, the mind is looked upon as the self; further, the intellect is taken to be the self. Then there is the ego which becomes identified as the self. This ego, however, cannot stand the penetrating scrutiny of the pure intellect. Consequently, it is stripped of its false superimposition, for it is subject to change, and feels delight, depression, elation, humiliation, etc. When falsely identified with the internal organ, the pure I-consciousness appears as the ego, and is directly expressed as 'I' in its relative sense.

Man's urge for knowing his true Self never keeps him contented until he reaches the final

goal. He may face failures initially. But, undaunted by failures, he devotes his whole being to his pursuit. Gradually, in his spiritual struggle, his body, mind, and intellect get purified, and his power of intuition reaches its consummation. Diving deeper and deeper, he sheds all attachment to the body, mind, and intellect. No more of darkness remains for him; his 'I', the self-effulgent reality in him, revels in its essential purity. When his real identity as the Self is thus revealed, nothing remains for him to long for. Everything is the manifestation of his very Self. There is nothing apart from the Self. The Self is all that is. The truth of this realization is expressed in the well-known Vedāntic statement 'Thou art That'. By the word 'Thou', the real Self of the individual is indicated; and the word 'That' stands for the basic Reality behind everything.

The individual identity as the true Self is discovered no doubt, but a sense of greater existences still persists. What about God? Where is Brahman, the omnipotent and omniscient One? How can an individual know the cosmic One? These are much greater than the 'I' of an individual. How can man know this great Being, the 'That'? The smallness of his relative self is due to his prolonged identification with the small things of the objective world. Owing to false superimposition, he thinks himself to be small, the *jīva* as distinct from the Great, Brahman. By the word 'That' in the above Vedāntic dictum, Brahman or God is referred to. The same reasoning, which helped man to know distinctly his real 'I', is equally valid to lead him to the reality behind the phenomena. Brahman is none other than his own pure Self, the *Ātman*. When the cosmic One is viewed from the standpoint of creation, It is *Śiva* or God. The individual self, in combination with its internal organ, thinks itself to be the *jīva*. The apparent difference is due to the former being the witness of *māyā*, or the whole creation, and the latter, of its internal organ. The whole creation and the internal organ, both being relative, are never real; distinct from these is the absolute witness, which is one without a

second. Thus the *jīva* is verily Śiva, and the individual has nothing to look for beyond his own Self. In the statement 'Thou art That', the same truth is indicated. In the words of the *Chāndogya Upaniṣad*: 'All this universe has the supreme Deity for its life. That Deity is truth. He is the universal Soul. Thou art That, Śvetaketu.' Thus 'Thou' and 'That' are identical from the absolute standpoint. The Unknown is thus discovered as the known in the awareness of 'I'; the beloved 'He' is seen as none other than 'I'.

Thus, when his real identity is discovered, man sees the whole universe as and within his Self. Everywhere he recognizes his own Self, shining bright and manifesting as the universe, as the subject and the object, and in all action. Time, space, and causation are not beyond the Self. Every other thing changes, and is therefore unreal, but the Self alone is real. One who has realized the Self is never bound, neither is he going to be liberated. He is ever free. He is the god of gods; he is Brahman. He is Śakti, manifest as the cosmic Energy.

V

This realization of the supreme Self, which is the divine essence of man, is the end of all Vedāntic teachings. The Vedānta speaks of this truth and describes the methods for its realization. One is to verify the validity of the teachings for oneself. There are various paths, but all of them lead to the same goal. All the methods are aimed at the purification of the mind, which unfolds Reality gradually according to the aptitudes and approaches of the individuals concerned. A man may begin to purify his mind and intellect through reasoning—by way of discrimination between the Real and the unreal—and finally realize his pure intellect merging itself in his real Self. This is the direct and straight method of negating all duality as unreal and merging it in the ultimate Reality, the absolute 'I'. The aspirant here says, 'Only I exist', 'I am He', 'I am Brahman'. This path is called *jñāna-mārga* or *jñāna-yoga*, the path of reason or knowledge.

There are people who are of a mystic nature. They follow the path of psychic control, *yoga-mārga* or *rāja-yoga*. Through various disciplines and exercise of the body, vital force, and mind, the aspirant, in this path, separates himself from all the objects with which he is falsely identified. His mind is freed from the play of nature, internal and external. And finally he discovers his real identity, the Ātman, the self-effulgent 'I'.

People who are emotional by nature find the path of devotion to be the easiest one. This is called *bhakti-mārga* or *bhakti-yoga*. An aspirant of this class has for his goal a personal God. He believes that the universe is His creation. With profound reverence, he stands in submissive humility before Him. To him, God is his Master, master of his person, mind, and actions. Out of love for his Master, he loves His creation and serves all creatures in it. The devotee negates himself and merges in his Master. He says, 'Not I, but Thou'. Through love and devotion, the individual loses himself in his Master, his Beloved. In the *Bhāgavata*, we find how the *gopīs* lost themselves in Kṛṣṇa. Their intense love for Kṛṣṇa enabled them to lose their separate identities and made them feel one with him. *Bhakti-yoga*, too, leads man to lose himself in God and to feel as if he was one with Him. The difference between *jñāna-yoga* and *bhakti-yoga* is not so much in their ends as in their methods of approach.

Others, again, with the same end in view, proceed along the path of *karma* or action; their path is called *karma-mārga* or *karma-yoga*. In this, the aspirant performs his duties without looking for any reward. He works for work's sake. By such work, and without any expectation of result, his mind is purified. By developing the spirit of detachment, he outgrows all selfish desires and overcomes the tendencies of his lower nature. By his devoted and disinterested actions, prompted either by his reasoning or by his intense love for his personal God, his mind becomes pure and gradually takes him to the same goal which a

jñānin and a *bhakta* reach through their respective paths.

The goal of spiritual life is the realization of the Self. In his ignorance, man seeks to find the Self in everything that is not the Self. But when knowledge dawns, he sees it within his own Self. Then he does not seek for it any more, but sees it within himself. This is what is implied when Swami Vivekananda declares: 'Do not seek Him, see Him'.

VI

Neither high up in the heavens, nor in inaccessible solitary mountain caves, man needs to seek Him. Reason shows him that nothing really exists beyond his real existence. The phenomena appear to exist only because of the presence of his 'I', the noumenon. It is this 'I' that manifests in so many forms. Nothing is foreign or alien; everything is 'mine'. 'I' is behind all conceptions and experiences. There is no more of seeking, man sees 'Him' face to face.

Neither is God silently waiting for His devotee only in a particular place of worship. He is everywhere; He is dwelling in the hearts of all. To realize Him is to see Him in all creatures, in everything of His creation, and to love Him in all His manifestations. Thus, in the intensity of burning love and devotion of the devotee, his lower self becomes sublimated, and he realizes God as absolute Love. Self-discipline, psychic control, and selfless work are all meant for realizing Him who is all-pervading. There is nothing to be hated in this world; no one is low. It is for knowing and seeing the One in all that disciplines are undertaken and work is incessantly done. This universe is the expression of God's love to man, and for love's sake, these disciplines are undertaken. Swami

Vivekananda beckons modern man to a novel way of realizing the eternal Self. It is a synthesis, a happy blending, of the fundamental principles of all the four methods that he advocates. Man's is a complex character. He has in him intellect and emotion, mystic outlook and the will to work. He can make use of all these gifts bestowed on him by nature, and quicken the pace of his spiritual progress. Through reasoning, through purification of emotion, and through selfless work as dedicated service, disciplines and psychic control will become spontaneous.

Thus, an aspirant, whether a *jñānin*, or a *bhakta*, or a *karmin*, or a *yogin*, finds a sure path to proceed towards the goal of self-realization, if he sees God and serves Him in all aspects and forms. When he tries to see and serve God in man, his service to the *jīva* gets transformed into an act of worship, for *jīva* is none other than Śiva, God Himself. His thought and emotions will be refined; his body and mind will be purified; his will will be strengthened and will enable him to control his desires and passions.

This is how Vedānta can be brought down from its Himalayan heights to the common field of man and society. To see Him is to realize human society as deified. Man cannot see Him until he sees Him everywhere, within and without. And to see Him everywhere is to make Vedānta practical. Swami Vivekananda, like Bhagīratha of yore bringing the Gaṅgā from its celestial height down to the world of man and purifying and sustaining all by its spiritual current, gave to the world his message of practical Vedānta, which raises humanity to the level of divinity and opens the gates of spiritual realization to one and all—be he a philosopher or a mystic, a devotee or a man of action.

To the wise man who sees the unity of existence and perceives all beings as his own Self, what delusion, what sorrow can there be?

DEMOCRACY AND INDIVIDUALITY

BY PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

When we survey the gradual evolution of democracy from the time of the ancient Greeks down to the present day, and evaluate critically the achievements of democratic institutions, with a view to discovering the direction in which the free countries of the world are moving, we find that the picture that emerges is bleak and gloomy. Democracies in the contemporary age seem to be plunged in doubt and despair. Democracy is the spiritual stronghold of mankind. If democracy is lost, mankind will be lost beyond all hope. It behoves us, therefore, to inquire, in all seriousness, why many free countries are losing confidence in democracy, and to devise effective measures for restoring that confidence.

It is a significant fact that, while the West is losing faith in democracy, we, in this country, are building, or, at least, believe we are building, our national life on the bed-rock of democracy. Shall we succeed where the founders of democracy seem to have failed? My answer to the question is emphatically in the affirmative. We shall succeed, if, and it is a very big 'if', we can counter and neutralize the malignant forces that are smothering democracy. Let us attempt to discover the fountain-head of these evil forces.

Democracy owes its origin to the growing faith in *individuality* that people in Europe entertained at the time of the Renaissance. It is the steady loss of that faith that is responsible for the decline of democracy. This is profoundly true, and this entire article is devoted to the study of the supreme value of individuality in human life.

Let us digress for a moment and probe into the foundations of Western democracy, and pick out the basic philosophic concepts and core values that influenced Western *Weltanschauung*. No doubt, England is the motherland of democracy, as we understand the concept at the pres-

ent moment. Like everything British, this great human institution is based on sound common sense. No systematic attempt was made by the founding fathers to analyse the basis of democracy. An envious critic of the British way of life used to say that these insular people somehow blunder through, even in war. Yes, they do, but always they blunder through to success. And so they did in building up democracy.

Be that as it may, the first attempt at finding a systematic philosophy of democracy seems to have landed thinkers in pragmatism, with the result that this school is taken by many as the basis for democracy. And we have a good reason for this. Some of the basic values of democracy, such as tolerance, sympathy, readiness to compromise, the ability to see the other man's point of view, etc., are there in pragmatism. Therefore, it may be contended, with some show of reason, that the pragmatic *view* of life comes closest to the democratic *way* of life. Let us examine pragmatism in order to highlight what is of value in it, so far as democracy is concerned. Incidentally, we shall also discover the danger point in this school of philosophy, which is likely to threaten the very foundations of democracy.

Pragmatism, as students of philosophy are aware, rose as a protest against rank naturalism and dogmatic idealism. It sought a middle ground between these two extremes. Its main emphasis was on experience. Human experience is to be the measure of all things on earth and also in heaven. It is in its attitude to Truth that pragmatism reveals its true head and front to us. Truth is what works—what works in your experience and mine. It is what satisfies us. As William James says: 'The true is only the expedient in the way of our thinking, just as the right is only the expedient in the way of our behaving.' It is this attitude of relativity

to values, so clearly seen in pragmatism, that is characteristic of humanism. Added to this, there is another source of attraction in pragmatism. The pragmatist strongly condemns the impersonal and mechanistic interpretation of the world as given by science. He seeks to escape from what he calls 'the paralysing horror of the scientific view of life, and the nightmare of an indifferent universe'. The wheels of the universe, as conceived by science, grind on, whether what is caught between them is a lump of clay or a precious human life. It makes no difference. Grind on they must. And the pragmatist rightly abhors this view of the world.

Impressed by these pronouncements of pragmatism, the upholders of democracy were tempted to see in this philosophy a very safe refuge. But they were sorely mistaken. They failed to see certain deep-seated convictions in pragmatism utterly destructive of democracy. Let us pull these out into broad daylight, so that we may see them in their true colours.

It is true that pragmatism protests against the mechanistic and deterministic attitude of science. But, when we go deep into the matter, we find that science and pragmatism are close allies. Relativity, indeterminacy, impermanence, inevitability of change, and denial of absolutism, which are characteristic of pragmatism, are also there in science, particularly in the method of modern science. It is my contention that pragmatism is merely a generalization of the scientific method at the metaphysical level. True, pragmatism does not accept the rigid mechanistic interpretation of the world which smothers human values. But it does something worse; it smothers the individual under the fatal load of society. When forced to come out in the open, pragmatism has no hesitation in asserting that it is ready to sacrifice the individual at the executioner's block of society. Individuality is the sovereign value in democracy; and a philosophy which sacrifices this supreme value should be thrown out unhesitatingly. If democracy is to survive, it should dissociate itself from all taint of sociality, and declare its faith in individuality.

A democracy founded on pragmatic philosophy is bound to end finally in authoritarianism and totalitarianism. We are witnessing just this tragedy in the contemporary world. It is not science that has killed the sacred values of man's culture, but it is the pseudo-humanism of contemporary social philosophies.

A philosophy of individuality is the only philosophy that can serve as a sure and safe foundation for democracy. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, in one of his recent speeches, said: 'The dignity of the individual, the sacredness of human personality, is the fundamental principle of democracy. . . . The world is becoming anonymous, and the individual is getting lost in it. But life is manifested in the individual. Truth is revealed to the individual. It is the individual who learns and suffers, who knows joy and sorrow, forgiveness and love. The whole history of human progress centres round individuals, those prophets and heroes, those poets and artists, those pioneers and explorers, who dare to take responsibility for their insights into goodness, truth, and beauty.'

The UNESCO Seminar on 'Traditional Values in Indian Life', held in Delhi in December 1958, clearly defined the status of the individual in the Indian conception of society. The eminent philosophers, scientists, historians, and jurists who attended the Seminar unanimously declared that, according to the Indian conception, society is for man, and not man for society. Society and state are merely the means for the attainment of the ultimate aims of the individual. The emphasis given to the individual in Indian society is greater than that given to him in any other society. Our concept of the dignity of man is the highest that human intelligence is capable of formulating.

The Seminar was only echoing the view which Mahatma Gandhi expressed in persuasive and penetrating language. 'The individual', he said, 'has a soul; the state is soulless. . . . I look upon an increase in the power of the state with the greatest fear, because, although apparently doing good by minimizing exploitation, it does the greatest harm to mankind by destroying

individuality which lies at the root of all progress.' In my view, this striking condemnation of the state is applicable with equal force to society.

Not only the thinkers in our country, but those in the West, too, have held the same view. In fact, the very origins of democracy are rooted in the growing consciousness of the value of individuality. Professor C. E. M. Joad, in his well-known book *Guide to the Philosophy of Morals and Politics*, enunciates the principle of individuality, and elaborates it to bring home to us its importance in a democratic view of life. The individual, he asserts, is never a means to an end; he is for ever an end in himself. This, of course, is only a reiteration of the well-known Kantian dictum. The merit of Professor Joad's view lies in his observation that this right to be treated as an *end* is not derived from any law or custom, but is prior to all law and custom. In fact, it is grounded in the objective moral order of the universe. Democracy can sanctify no institution or value greater than man and the supremacy of his individuality.

Democracy is an abiding faith in human goodness and human perfectability. And the first article of that faith is that the *individual* human being is of supreme worth. Here is a formidable challenge to all types of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Let me remind the readers of what Christ said of the Sabbath, the symbol of sacredness in his days. The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. The individuality of man is the only precious object in the eyes of God.

Individuality came into its own only after a long struggle, and the beginnings of democracy synchronize with the recognition of the dignity of man's personality and the supreme worth of the individual as an individual. The concepts of liberty, equality, and fraternity are merely so many derivatives from the sovereign concept of individuality. If we study carefully the cultural history of Europe, we find that, before the French Revolution, a person was rarely regarded as an individual; he was merely a unit

in a group or a class. The consciousness of one's own individuality, which is common enough today, was rare even in the subtlest minds of antiquity. Literature, which is the clearest mirror of the spirit of the time, bears unmistakable evidence to the truth which I am trying to bring home to the mind of the reader. European literature is nearly 2,500 years old; yet for the first 2,300 years, it did not reflect the life of the ordinary individual as an individual. Suddenly, there appears on the scene a remarkable type of literature, the novel, and that, too, a novel dealing with a humble individual as an individual—*Pamela*. From that moment onwards, during the last 200 years, we notice the rapid spread of this type of literature, depicting the new consciousness of individuality. There was a remarkable change-over from group or communal psychology to individual psychology. This change-over was possible, because the entire atmosphere was surcharged with the new consciousness. It is in this atmosphere that democracy was born, and it is in this atmosphere that it could flourish. It is not without profound significance that the period following the French Revolution saw the steady growth of democratic institutions.

Why, then, is it that the faith in individuality, which promised so much, is now faltering? What are the factors that have undermined that faith and corroded the spirit of democracy? These questions are not easy to answer. Of course, historians, political theorists, and others who deal with the external trappings of human nature are ready with their answers. But the real answer has to be given by the psychologist and the philosopher.

Let me restate the problem from a different viewpoint. It is true that democracy was the direct outcome of the recognition of the supreme worth of the human individual, and of man's personality as an inviolable value. Democracy steadily grew in stature, as these concepts spread amongst ordinary people. The political institution was only an index of the radical change in the attitude to human personality. This attitude, however, is the result

of a long process of evolution to the higher cultural levels, and requires eternal vigilance to maintain it. When this vigilance is wanting, or when the effort needed to maintain the high cultural level is not forthcoming, then man tends to sink to the lower primitive levels, or even to the animal level. At these inferior levels, as we are aware, man ceases to be an individual, and becomes a unit in a group. When this happens, democracy deteriorates into totalitarianism, authoritarianism, or socialism. This is exactly what is happening today.

Why should this happen? Why should individuality fail to attract and maintain the loyalty of men and women? To answer these questions, we have to go deep into the meaning of individuality. Individuality may be interpreted at different levels of significance—at the economic, physical, social, psychological, philosophical, and spiritual levels. The economic individual is moved solely by the instinct of acquisitiveness. The individual as wealth producer or wealth grabber is very powerful indeed today. His personality is enslaved by economic forces. This type of individuality is the lowest in our scale of values. Slightly higher than this is the individuality defined at the bodily level. The individual is, no doubt, or has, a body. The body, in a very real sense, defines the limits as well as the merits of the person. William James, while analysing the empirical self, gave sufficient prominence to the body as an ingredient of the self. So, it is not uncommon to equate individuality with the body. At almost the same level as this purely bodily conception is the social conception. The individual is viewed against the background of the group, community, or society in which he has to live. It is here that the danger of the background pushing itself into the foreground and suppressing the individual is ever present as a menace.

Now we take a big step upward. Individuality, which so far has been confined to the gross material level, is now interpreted in terms of *mind*. Whether mind is to be taken in the Western psychological sense, or in the Indian

philosophical (Sāṅkhya) sense, is a moot point. Still, when mind enters into the conception of individuality, it widens the horizon and confers dignity on personality. This mental level has, no doubt, a large element of materiality in it, but it has also the potentialities for pushing us upward. The next level is the philosophical level, at which individuality is transmuted in terms of the great values of truth, beauty, and goodness. The individual as the perceiver, enjoyer, and sometimes the creator of truth, beauty, and goodness is unique. Even so, he is incomplete. It is only at the spiritual, Vedāntic level that individuality becomes complete. The individual is one with Divinity. When the finite individual is united with the Infinite, the former's individuality is not lost, but only transmuted and infinitely enriched. It is only at this level that true democracy can flourish, because it is only here that the supreme worth of the individual is realized.

Now, let us get back to our original question: Why has individuality failed to maintain its place as a sovereign value in human affairs, and by this failure has led to the steady deterioration of democracy? Why has sociality (and its inescapable corollary totalitarianism) gained ascendancy over men's minds, paving the way for dictatorships? The Western mind (and the neo-Indian mind which follows closely on the heels of the West) can, at best, view individuality at the social level. The biological is most easily understood and is also very appealing. And be it said to the credit of William McDougall, the founder of Purposivistic or Hormic school of psychology, that he was the first thinker to reveal the secret hidden in the Western psychological or even philosophical conceptions of individuality. In the list of innate, inherited, and universal primitive instincts and emotions, with which man starts his life on earth, McDougall mentions gregariousness, self-assertion, and self-submission along with fear, anger, etc. as basic and fundamental. Man is an individual, but so long as he continues to live at the biological level, he is beset by fears of all kinds, generated by

dangers outside. He seeks to offset these by merging himself in the group. Nature has implanted animal gregariousness in the human mind. So man seeks brother man, and all men come together. When this happens, one man dominates over others, and these others submit to him. And all are moved by primitive fears, the leader who dominates (or is self-assertive) and the followers who submit (or are self-submissive). No one has the courage to stand apart as an individual and assert his individuality. Colossal *fear* is there. From the purely animal level of instincts and emotions, man rises to the slightly higher level of sentiments, concrete and abstract. At this level, gregariousness is transformed into sociality, as the result of the impact of civilizing forces. The 'herd instinct' gets refined into the sentiment of sociability. Man acquires and cultivates the sentiments of admiration, awe, and reverence, developing also obedience, subservience, and even servility, at the same time. And all this happens under the compulsive drive of fear, and of the passionate longing for security. Man dare not come out and stand alone as an individual. The crowd or mass, or in sophisticated language, society or community, is the safest place for one to hide who dare not measure up to the demands of individuality.

So at these two levels, the individual, moved by fear and loss of security, readily sacrifices his individuality, and is prepared to become one of the mob. Freedom, equality, and individuality have ceased to attract under the shadow of the 'great fear'. Democracy, which is, rather, which should be, an association of individuals as true individuals, has ceased to dispel this fear.

Even at this higher psychological level, which is infinitely superior to the social level, this fear is there. And so long as democracy does not offer freedom from this fear, it is bound to deteriorate.

Educational institutions have done nothing to free the mind from fear. Here is a trenchant criticism of the British public school by a renowned writer: 'In this at-

mosphere (of the public school), the standard of values is not what the boy thinks good or bad, but what the *community* thinks right or wrong. There can be no appeal from the verdict of the community to the verdict of an individual, whether the individual be a master or the boy's own conscience. ... Throughout the system, there exists no stimulus to individuality, to being in any respect distinct or different from one's surroundings. Thus the communal psychology of the public school is generically the same as that of the regiment. The boy, as a unit in his school, must be animated with the ... feeling which belongs to the psychology of the herd, rather than to the psychology of the individual.'

These observations are eminently true, not only of the British public school, but also of all institutions in democracies today. What then is the remedy? It lies in *looking within*, and drawing spiritual strength from the inner self. When we can cut ourselves away from society, which has overpowered us, and is invading even our privacy, and be ourselves, then we can look within and see what we really are—what our true individuality is like.

The great institution of the four *āśramas* was built round this aim of realizing individuality. After discharging his duties to society, the citizen had to retire into the forest-abode and, as a *vānaprastha*, had to look *inside* himself to realize his true individuality. This pursuit of true individuality was endless, till the Divine inside was completely realized. And he is the true individual who dares assert '*Aham Brah-māsmi*'—I am Brahman. Looked at from the standpoint of the main theme of this article, this is the most powerful vindication of individuality. Fear is completely shed when one can say that one is Brahman, and then real freedom is attained. In no other country and in no other culture has individuality been raised to this lofty height. A democracy built on a cultural foundation, in which individuality is realized in this sense, will never fail.

It is not my purpose to enter into a discussion of the practical measures for translating individ-

uality into political theory and practice. However, I propose to conclude this article by suggesting an immediate practical step that can be taken in our schools and colleges. It is true that our educational institutions are drifting slowly towards communal psychology. They are tending to become second-hand copies of the public school. So, it is here that reform must start. And a beginning may be made by taking these simple steps for reasserting the individuality of the learner:

1. Many educational institutions commence the day's work with some kind of assembly. It should be quite easy to incorporate into this assembly hour a short period of silent meditation. Even small children may be taught to be silent for a few minutes. During this interval, pupils should be taught to look into themselves, and by constant and forceful suggestions given by the teachers, each child should be taught to say silently within himself: 'I am an *individual*; I am a *child* of God; I am an *individual child* of God; God cares for me as an *individual child* of His.' Day after day, when the child silently practises this silent inward meditation, a marvellous change will come over him.

2. Then, in the course of the day, specially in boarding houses, and hostels where community life is too much in evidence, the boarders should be taught to withdraw from the group or community and seek solitude and silence for at least half an hour. Just as we have the study

hour, the games period, etc., there should be a period of solitude and silence. The physical environment needed for this should be provided. Completely cut away from all his companions, the boarder should be taught to seek strength and conviction of individuality *within* himself. He should be encouraged to canalize his thought along these lines: 'I am a member of this institution; still I am unique; I am an individual; God has given me individual gifts; I must grow as an individual to serve my fellowmen.'

3. Once in the session, a *retreat* should be arranged. I do not mean an excursion, nor even a camp, but a retreat in the spiritual sense, a retreat from the herd or crowd into the richness of solitude. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa used to recommend this solitude for three days, or at least for a day, for ordinary *sādhakas*. While he recommended company, the holy company of monks, he also recommended this flight into solitude from the vulgar mass. A well organized retreat with the proper type of teacher-leaders will produce wonderful results. The sole aim of the retreat should be to help pupils realize the divinity within them, and realizing it, realize their individuality.

These are simple measures, but when pursued steadily and with conviction, they will result in producing young men and women who will be competent to build up a new democracy in the Indian sense.

SOME ASPECTS OF HINDUISM

BY PROFESSOR SUDHANSU BIMAL MOOKHERJI

Hinduism, the oldest religion of India, is more a way of life than 'a form of thought' or a set of dogmas. It allows the fullest liberty in the realm of thought, but enjoins a strict code of practice at the same time. It combines religion and philosophy, and has moulded the lives of countless millions and given them 'strength, vitality, courage, and vision during

their long and chequered history'. 'It is not a congeries of fixed concepts, beliefs, and dogmas, but an organic growth.'¹ It has no historical founder. It is believed to be based 'upon truths which are eternal, without beginning, and not attributable to human intellect'.²

¹ Swami Nikhilananda, 'The Hindu Systems of Thought', *The Modern Review*, Calcutta, March 1960.

² *Ibid.*

Hinduism is rooted in the Vedas, and a devout Hindu holds the Vedas in as high an esteem as the Christian does his Bible and the Momammedan his *Quran*. But the Hindu attitude to the Vedas 'is one of trust tempered by criticism'.

The early Vedic religion has been variously described. Some call it henotheism or kathenotheism, which means 'belief in single gods each in turn standing as the highest'. Others, again, describe the Vedic religion as 'the worship of Nature leading up to Nature's God'. The principal Vedic deities are the personifications of natural phenomena. Some Vedic scholars, however, hold that the personifications of natural phenomena became necessary, as the different Vedic 'seers' (*ṛṣis*), who had glimpses of various aspects of God, or the Universal, or the supreme Soul (Paramātman), wanted to express their realizations through tangible objects for the benefit of the common man, and natural objects and phenomena came handy to them.³ The Vedas speak of some abstract deities as well, e.g. Dhātṛ, Vidhātṛ, Viśvakarman, Prajāpati, and the like. It has been suggested by some scholars that there are references to phallus worship as well as to the worship of Kṛṣṇa in several Vedic hymns.

Father Dyaus (the sky or heaven) and Mother Pṛthvī (the earth goddess) are among the oldest Vedic deities. But in course of time, both yielded the place of honour to Varuṇa (the encompassing sky) and Indra (the god of rain and thunder). Indra, in the long run, became the principal deity of the Vedic pantheon, the Indian Zeus in other words. Varuṇa receded into the background and became an Indian Neptune (the lord of waters). Among other important Vedic gods and goddesses, mention may be made of Mitra, Sūrya, Savitṛ,⁴ Pūṣan, Parjanya, Viṣṇu Urukrama, the Aśvins, Uṣas, the Maruts, Vāyu, Vāta, Rudra, Agni, Soma, and Sarasvatī.

The female deities in the Vedas occupy a

position of inferiority to that of the male deities. The Vedic religion thus presents a striking contrast to the religion of the Indus-valley people. The Mother Goddess of Mohenjo-daro stood on a footing of equality with her male partner.

Polytheistic as the Vedic religion is, we find in it an unmistakable tendency towards monotheism and even monism. The Vedic hymns foreshadow the idea of universal unity and express the belief that, various names notwithstanding, God is one and only one. The Vedic *ṛṣi* thus sings forth in the ecstasy of his realization: 'They call Him Indra, Mitra, Varuṇa, and Agni; He is the heavenly bird Garutmat: To what is one, the poets give many a name. They call It Agni, Yama, Mātariśvan.'

The monotheistic tendency of the Vedic religion is still more clearly discernible in the hymns addressed to Hiraṇyagarbha and Viśvakarman:

'Who is our Father, our Creator, Maker,
Who every place doth know and every
creature,
By whom alone to gods their names were
given.

To Him all other creatures go, to ask Him.'

Finally, the Vedic *ṛṣi* cried out, 'O Faith, endow us with belief', and raised deep, fundamental questions in a hymn called 'The Song of Creation', to which Max Müller gave the caption 'To the Unknown God'. According to this hymn, in the beginning

'... neither death nor deathlessness existed;
Of day and night, there was yet no distinction.
Alone, that One breathed calmly, self-
supported;
Other than It was none, nor aught above It.'

Sacrifices occupied a very important place in the Vedic ritual. A fire was made, and milk, grain, ghee (clarified butter), animal meat, and the juice of the *soma* plant were offered to this fire to propitiate the gods. Appropriate Vedic hymns would be chanted during a sacrifice. Image-worship and the use of material objects as symbols of gods and goddesses may not have been altogether unknown to the Vedic Aryans,

³ Vide *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. I.

⁴ Savitṛ has been identified by some with the Aurora Borealis, the luminous atmospheric, probably electrical, phenomenon radiating from the earth's northern pole.

They were not popular, however. The Vedic *ṛsis* did not have a consistent theory regarding life after death. Their hymns, at any rate, do not give any. The Vedas, however, say at places that the dead dwell in the realm of Yama, who is the king of the departed souls. The idea of the transmigration of soul was yet to be developed.

Waters flowed down the Gaṅgā. The mills of the gods went on grinding non-stop. History was made. Changes came over man and his outlook on life. His religious beliefs changed. Old gods lost their prominence. Some fell into oblivion. The sacrificial side of religion was greatly elaborated by the priests, and it became more important than before. Popular superstitions and superstitious beliefs in spirits, imps, magic spells, incantations, and witchcraft were smuggled into the sacred canonical literature. The monistic and monotheistic tendencies, which had already appeared in the Ṛg-Vedic period, became more and more pronounced. The doctrine of *avatāras* (divine incarnations) appeared for the first time. While the priests and theologians busied themselves with the formal or external aspects of religion, philosophers questioned the efficacy and utility of the rituals, speculated about the underlying unity of the universe, and strove for union with Brahman or Paramātmān (the universal Soul, the Absolute) 'that dwelleth in everything, that guideth all beings within, the inward Guide, the Immortal'.

The Hindu Dharma or Hinduism is designed to guide the embodied spirit (the individual soul) in its different stages of evolution, 'from its first individualization through identification with matter to its final liberation through spiritual illumination'. Philosophy and religion cross each other's path in the Hindu tradition. Philosophy is mainly the approach to Reality through the intellect. It shows the difference between what is real and what is unreal, and usually rejects the unreal. Religion, on the other hand, is, in the main, the approach through the heart and 'urges the soul in its onward progress'. Final liberation comes through the grace of God.

The common people did not understand the abstruse theological or philosophical speculations. They, therefore, busied themselves with the formal side of religion. So they do today. They worshipped some of the relatively unimportant deities of the *Ṛg-Veda*. One such deity was Rudra, who was subsequently identified with Śiva, probably a Dravidian or Indus-valley god. He soon came to be regarded as the great God (Mahādeva) and the lord of animate beings (Paśupati). Still later, in the Purāṇic period, he became one of the Hindu Trinity.⁵ Viṣṇu was another deity to acquire great prominence in the later Vedic age. Before the close of the Vedic period, he came to be identified with Vāsudeva, Kṛṣṇa Devakīputra of the epic tradition. He is associated in one of the Upaniṣads with a school of thought that rejected the purely ritualistic interpretation of sacrifices and considered that the practice of virtue is no less effective than gifts to priests.

The Vedic religion as described above was primarily concerned with external forms. The Upaniṣads (*c.* eighth century B.C.) gave a new turn to it. Knowledge (*jñāna*) was emphasized. Still later, in the age of the Purāṇas, devotion (*bhakti*) came to be regarded as the soul of religion.⁶ Image-worship, very rarely, if at all, practised in the Vedic age, plays a very important part in the Purāṇic or popular Hinduism.

Hinduism, says Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, 'starts from and returns to an experimental basis. Only this basis is as wide as human nature itself'.⁷ Other religious systems start with particular experimental datum or data, and the followers of these faiths are tempted to dismiss experiences and scriptures other than their own as illusory, erroneous, imperfect, and worthless. A true Hindu, on the contrary, readily admits

⁵ Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva are the three different aspects of God with different functions. Brahmā creates the universe, Viṣṇu preserves it, and Śiva destroys it at the end of the cycle.

⁶ The devotional approach to God is perhaps of Dravidian origin. Cf. '*Draviḍe upāji bhakti*', i.e. *bhakti* had its origin in Draviḍa.

⁷ S. Radhakrishnan, *The Hindu View of Life* (First Impression), p. 19.

points of view other than his own and considers them to be no less worthy of attention than his own. If humanity as a whole is God's offspring, then it must be conceded that each individual is being trained by His wisdom and sustained by His love to acquire a knowledge of the Supreme as much as he or she can. When different people aimed at and achieved God-realization in different ways, the Hindu generously recognized them all 'and justified their place in the course of history'. The scriptures of the different groups were used for their uplift. Hence the Vedas, the epics, and the Purāṇas, all are sacred to the Hindu. Hinduism is as much a religion of the Vedas as of the epics and the Purāṇas. Hinduism has accepted the significance of the different intuitions of Reality and the different scriptures of the peoples living in India. It has become in consequence 'a tapestry of the most variegated tissues and almost endless diversity of hues'. The Purāṇas, with their queer chronology and incredible stories, are an imaginative literature in the main. But they were accepted and treated as a part of the sacred tradition, because some people took interest in them. The Tantras specially deal with yogic discipline. They have influenced the life of some Indian communities for centuries. That is why they have been accepted as the sacred literature of the Hindus, and many Hindu ceremonies show traces of the Tāntrika worship. Every tradition which leads the human soul godward is looked upon as worthy of adherence. 'Hinduism is therefore not a definite dogmatic creed, but a vast, complex, but subtly unified mass of spiritual thought and realization. Its tradition of the godward endeavour of the human spirit has been continuously enlarging through the ages.'⁸

'Throughout the history of Hinduism,' to quote Dr. Radhakrishnan again, 'the leaders of thought and practice have been continually busy experimenting with new forms, developing new ideals to suit new conditions. The first impulse of progress came when the Vedic Ar-

yans came into contact with the native tribes. A similar impulse contributed to the protestant movements of Jainism and Buddhism, when the Aryans moved out into the Gangetic valley. Contact with the highly civilized Dravidians led to the transformation of Vedism into a theistic religion. The reform movements of Rāmānanda, Caitanya, Kabīr, and Nānak show the stimulus of Islam. The Brahmo Samaj and the Arya Samaj are the outcome of the contact with Western influences, and yet Hinduism is not to be dismissed as a mere flow and strife of opinions, for it represents a steady growth of insight, since every form of Hinduism and every stage of its growth is related to the common background of the Vedānta. Though Hindu religious thought has traversed many revolutions and made great conquests, the essential ideas have continued the same for four or five millenniums. The germinal conceptions are contained in the Vedānta standard.'⁹

'From the ṛṣis of the Upaniṣads down to Tagore and Gandhi, the Hindu has acknowledged that truth wears vestures of many colours and speaks in strange tongues. The mystics of other denominations have also testified to this.'¹⁰ Consequently, 'Hinduism developed an attitude of comprehensive charity, instead of a fanatic faith in an inflexible creed. It accepted the multiplicity of aboriginal gods and others, which originated, most of them, outside the Aryan tradition, and justified them all. It brought together into one whole all believers in God. ... Heresy-hunting, the favourite game of many religions, is singularly

⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 21-22.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 36. Compare the following, quoted on the same page: (i) 'Consider the birds in our forests, they praise God each in his own way, in diverse tones and fashions. Think you God is vexed by this diversity, and desires to silence discordant voices? All the forms of being are dear to the infinite Being Himself'—Boehme.

(ii) 'Beaker or flagon, or bowl or jar,
Clumsy or slender, coarse or fine;
However the potter may make or mar,
All were made to contain the wine:
Should we this one seek or that one shun,
When the wine which gives them their worth
is one?'

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 21.

—A Sufi utterance.

absent from Hinduism.¹¹ Śrī Kṛṣṇa says in the *Gītā*:

‘Whatever wish men bring me in worship,
That wish I grant them.
Whatever path men travel is my path:
No matter where they walk,
It leads to me.’

The ancient literature of India gives many examples of not only individuals, but of whole tribes being absorbed into Hinduism.

Hinduism is based upon four cardinal principles. They are: the oneness of existence, the divinity of the soul, the non-duality of Godhead, and the harmony of religions. Hinduism has thus several dimensions. Its extent includes the conception of Brahman or the universal Soul ‘transcending names, forms, and attributes’, who is the foundation of all moral and spiritual laws that guide and regulate the universe, and under whose control the stars and the planets move in their orbits. The tremendous depth of Hinduism lies in its conception of the soul, ‘subtler than the subtle and greater than the great’, guiding the activities of the body, the sense-organs, and the mind. The breadth of Hinduism is evident from its catholic attitude towards all systems of religious and philosophical thought and from its respect for those who dissent from it. One may discover yet a fourth dimension in Hinduism, in its perception of the all-embracing unity of animate and inanimate existence, of God, souls, and nature.¹²

Many Western writers have encouraged the fiction that Indians are other-worldly. The other-worldliness of the Hindus is attributed to their religion, which is alleged to have preached that the life here on earth is less important than the life hereafter. Nothing could be farther from the truth. An ‘intense joy in life and nature, a pleasure in the act of living, the development of art and music and literature’¹³ have been noticeable whenever the Hindu civilization has flourished. No culture or view

of life based on other-worldliness or worthlessness of the world could have produced all these manifestations of a vigorous and varied life. A basically other-worldly culture could not have carried on for thousands of years, as the Indian culture has done. The Indian culture, taken as a whole, never emphasized the negation of life. Some of the philosophers, however, did.

The hermitage (*tapovana*) was a characteristic institution of ancient India. The hermits who lived in these forest-homes were no lonely recluses or celibate anchorites ‘cut off from the society of women and the duties of the family’. They formed groups of householders, who lived with their wives and children. They did not run after wealth, or fame, or material advancement, like the ordinary men of the world. All their time, attention, and energies were given to the practice of virtue and the cultivation of knowledge. ‘Thus, they lived in the world, but were not of it.’¹⁴ They did not reject life. Nor did they regard material enjoyment as the be-all and end-all of existence. Their ideal was to strike a balance between matter and spirit. This is exactly what is prescribed by Hinduism for its followers.

The Vedas, which are the very bed-rock of Hinduism, recognize the enjoyment of happiness here and hereafter as a universal craving. The world must be regarded as real, as long as one is a part of it. The knowledge of the universe and the knowledge of Brahman are, indeed, the warp and woof of the texture of Hindu philosophy. The Vedas enjoin that both must be cultivated. They add that everyone should cultivate both science and super-science. Science enables one to overcome physical limitations, and by means of super-science one attains to immortality.

Hinduism does not repudiate life. It, however, emphasizes the ultimate purpose of life. While ‘affirming life to the full’, Hinduism has consistently refused to become ‘a victim and a slave of life’.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 37; *vide* J. N. Sarkar, *India through the Ages* (Second Edition), pp. 12-14.

¹² Swami Nikhilananda, ‘The Hindu Systems of Thought’, *The Modern Review*, March 1960.

¹³ Jawaharlal Nehru, *The Discovery of India* (Third Edition), p. 58.

¹⁴ J. N. Sarkar, *India through the Ages*, p. 16.

THE CONCEPT OF PHILOSOPHY IN THE EAST AND THE WEST

BY DR. P. NAGARAJA RAO

The concept of philosophy is as old as the Greeks. In a general way, it can be defined as an intellectual activity arising from the reflective consciousness of man. In the course of evolution, the human being seriously feels that he cannot live without understanding the meaning of life and without getting a systematic view of the universe in which he lives and of his place in it. To wonder and reflect, to construct ideals, and to criticize not only others, but also one's own acts are as much the characteristics of man as his impulse to eat, drink, and be merry. Many do not bother to think of getting at a systematic and rational picture of life. The incessant hurry, the exacting task of getting enough means to live comfortably, the little ambition to outdo one's neighbours, and, above all, the vanity to be considered successful in society leave little room for the average man to philosophize. It is no doubt a truism to say that every human being is a potential philosopher. It is argued that the choice before man is not between philosophy and no philosophy, but between a systematic philosophy and an unsystematic philosophy. Man is defined variously, e.g. as a rational animal, a metaphysical being, and an interrogating creature. No doubt, all this is true in a sense. To describe any diffuse and vague speculation, and the intermittent moods of questioning carried on in a haphazard way, as philosophy, in the primary sense of the term, is not correct.

The reflective consciousness arises in man not accidentally. It does not grow like grass. I am afraid, it is not even natural in man. Nature tends to lead man to live as an extrovert and makes his attachment to outward things fast. The reflective consciousness arises in very few people. It is the result of the discriminating faculty in man. Those who do not see any necessity to investigate the meaning of life are many. The emergence of the reflective consciousness

in man, and his feeling of dissatisfaction with piecemeal living, is the result of thought in man. The mere emergence of the reflective spirit is only an occasion for philosophy. Men are able to philosophize well only if they have the necessary intellectual equipment, skill in observing things, and, above all, the required integrity to think thoughts to their logical end. The term 'philosophy', as understood in the West (of course, there are exceptions), stands for a definite method of understanding and tackling problems. It is an intellectual interpretation of Reality. It affirms the primacy of reason over other faculties. It is the acceptance of examined beliefs. It argues its case, and does not simply assert. It satisfies the demands of reason, and does not surrender them. It seeks truth in an objective manner. It is no esoteric search opened only to the initiated by the illumined. Its transactions are open to inspection by all. It is not a body of private doctrines to be swallowed by all. It questions the postulates of science. It does not accept things on faith or trust. It examines the instruments of knowledge and uses them. It also does not assert when it does not know things. It suspends judgement, and does not recklessly repudiate things.

The philosopher has to be free from prejudice, and must be calm and unruffled in his inquiries. He must have an open mind and must go by evidence. He must be cautious and uncommitted to this or that theory. He must not be loud in his protests and exciting in his announcements. He must not be dogmatic and cock-sure and give the air of infallibility to his findings. He must be astute and have a penetrating intellect and insight into the intricacies of the problem. He must be alert to facts and errors. He must have a nimble intellect to discern not only the defects in others' positions, but also in his own theory. He must have the patience to doubt, the fondness

to observe, and the readiness to reconsider his own position in the light of others' criticism. He must see that his findings are not vague, and are given precise formulations. In the determination of his position, he must exert his utmost to reduce error, if he cannot totally abolish it. Most of these characteristics of philosophy are in accord with the method of science.

The kind of proof we adduce in philosophy is not the same as that of science. In science, we demonstrate theories and facts in a concrete manner. Philosophical truths are demonstrable and verifiable in a logical sense. They are tested by the criteria of consistency and non-contradiction. The deductions in philosophy are logical, and follow the rules of reasoning and logic.

The philosophical method adopted by the past thinkers in the West discloses great affinity to the scientific method. Philosophy tended to become more and more scientific in the hands of such thinkers. Even a great thinker like Kant doubted the possibility of metaphysics as a science, and admitted that it is possible only as a natural disposition in man. The subject-matter of philosophy, according to some, relates to ultimate problems, namely, Is the universe a fortuitous collocation of atoms, or is it an embodiment of a design or a plan? Has evolutionary progress any purpose, or is it mere change? Is there a God? Is there a soul? Does life survive death? Are there such things as Truth, Beauty, and Goodness? Are they subjective or objective, absolute or relative, intrinsic or extrinsic values? Traditional philosophers solved some of these problems in the light of reason. The theistic-minded philosophers made use of their philosophical learning to establish religious categories. We have a long list of philosophers who have tried to bring together religion and philosophy by arguing the case for religious truths not on the strength of revelation, but on the basis of natural reason. This has given rise to a branch of study called natural theology.

A strong school of opposition for this kind of use of philosophy has appeared and grown

strong since last fifty years. Philosophy has developed into a separate academic subject, detached from other disciplines like psychology, religion, and science. The appearance of *Mind*, a quarterly journal from Cambridge, in 1876, and, a little later, the starting of the Aristotelian Society, at the meetings of which philosophical papers were read and discussed, made philosophical writing technical and professional. Bradley, Moore, and Russell contributed to this specialism in philosophy. The technique of philosophical writing became rigorous. In some cases, it aspired to be as exact as mathematics. This school inveighed against the use of picturesque and eloquent expressions, metaphors, and analogies. They discountenanced the use of emotional and colloquial expressions that aimed at the edification of men. The working parlance of the philosophers was getting pretty stiff with logical technicalities and full of jargon. Transcendental themes and diction became unidiomatic.

A powerful movement in philosophy under the title of logical positivism started in Vienna under the leadership of Moritz Schlick. It had among its members philosophers and mathematicians. This school of thought was also influenced by Ludwig Wittgenstein, Moore, and Russell. The positivist attack on metaphysics is revolutionary. Most of them did not like the appellation 'positivism'. Professor Ayer holds the view that a good deal of the radical doctrines of the system is found in Hume.

According to the positivists, the problems of metaphysics cover a large number of extra-empirical and unverifiable themes, e.g. Reality, God, purpose in the universe, souls, and immortality. These metaphysical problems are described as meaningless. The positivist criterion of meaning is known as the verification principle. The precise formulation of this principle is a complicated matter. Proposition must be either analytical or empirically verifiable. What is not empirically verifiable in sense perception is non-sensical. It is assumed that verification must always terminate in empirical observation or sense experience. The only ex-

ceptions are the analytical formulas of mathematics. The school of logical positivism and the school of analysis concentrated their entire attention on this method. They made a strong plea for the classification of the meaning of words.

They, in their anxiety to emancipate philosophy from the apron-strings of theology and religion, have only succeeded in hanging on to the coat-tails of science and semantics. The traditional themes of philosophy are dissolved. Philosophy is no longer regarded as a body of doctrines. It is more an activity. It has no tenets, but has only a technique. Its function is to make propositions clear and examine them in the light of the principle of verification. The principle of verification is put forward as definition and not as an empirical statement of facts. It is the way we verify the facts of the empirical world. If the traditional metaphysicians reply that there are other worlds than the sense world, where the categories of metaphysics are proved facts, the positivist asks for the criteria of that world. He accuses the traditional philosophers as attempting to make the best of both the worlds. The logical positivists narrow down the world of reality to the sense plane. They themselves have produced another system of philosophy. They have ignored the meaningfulness of many scientific concepts. They have reduced philosophy to a mere activity of analysis. At best this school has contributed only to some clarification of meaning of propositions.

It is a fashion with many of this school to look upon philosophy as the concern of the specialist. Collingwood, in his autobiography, gives us the picture of the ideal philosopher: "The Oxford philosophers have excogitated a philosophy so pure from the sordid taint of utility that they could lay their hands on their hearts and say it was of no use at all; a philosophy so scientific that no one whose life was not a life of pure research could appreciate it; and so abstruse that only a whole time student, and a clever man at that, could understand it. They were resigned to the contempt of fools and amateurs."

The characteristic features of philosophy, according to this view, are not deep and widespread. Our study of the history of philosophy through the ages convinces us that philosophy is not so narrow a discipline as it is made out by the positivists. The influence of philosophy has been widespread on the conduct of men and on the affairs of the world. It has been looked upon as the noblest of all studies by Plato, and as divine science by Śrī Kṛṣṇa. It has even, in its speculative capacity, the power of liberating us from small thoughts and eager wishes. It has the capacity to lead us 'to truth in thought, justice in action, and universal love in feeling'. It may not produce goods, but it secures understanding and restores the correct perspective to us. The general influence of philosophy on man is liberal. The stress on the function of the critical intelligence of man as the essence of philosophy is a prejudice of the West.

This definition of philosophy does not take into account the entire gamut of human experience; it leaves out a good part of our experience. The stress on the function of analysis renders the analysts incapable of seeing the entire whole as it is. The whole, as we know today from the Gestalt concept, is not merely the parts put together.

Philosophy is synoptic vision, and not summation of the partial products of analysis. The integral view is not opposed to the logical view. But the integral view is not the mere result of intellectual cogitation. Plato, Kant, Bergson, and several others have accepted the method of intuition as the instrument for the synoptic vision. The acceptance of intuition as a philosophical method enables us to reconcile the claims of philosophy and religion.

Some of the modern philosophers in the West do not admit the validity of intuition. If we do not admit the fact of intuition, and if we confine our channels of knowledge only to sense perception and reasoning, it will be very difficult to bridge the gap between religion and philosophy.

If we exclusively rely on reason and the log-

ical powers of man, we will not be able to demonstrate the existence of values or religious experience. Philosophy will turn out to be at best an intellectual pastime. It will be 'a flight from the objectives of immediate living, a tempting, fruitless, exercise of the mind, the luxury of a lazy few'. It would become a form of escapism and nothing more. The positive good that may result indirectly from the art of philosophizing is at best a sort of mental discipline akin to the scientific work. To reduce philosophy to a specific type of mental discipline, and to elevate the reasoning faculty in man to the top, does not answer to the needs of man, and falsifies the expectations of the fruits of philosophy secured by men in the past, in the East and in the West.

The Western conception of philosophy, because of its narrowness, results in the divorce between life and philosophy. The philosophic quest has no effect on the life of man or society. The confinement of philosophy to the function of reason and art of argument has left man high and dry. It fills the enlightened Western man with a deep sense of anguish and a feeling of nothingness beyond his grave. 'European man', in the words of Berdyaev, 'stands amid a frightening emptiness. He no longer knows where the keystone of his life is to be found; beneath his feet, he feels no depth of solidity.' He has become rootless, and encounters the ghost of a terrific nihilism. The triumph of technocracy and science has impressed some to such a great extent as to make them feel that metaphysics is irrelevant, and to seek the meaning of existence anywhere is just moonshine. The theological creeds find that reason saps their faith and philosophy disturbs their beliefs. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan describes man in a striking epigram. To be ignorant is not the special prerogative of man; to know that he is ignorant is his special privilege.

The result of interpreting the term 'philosophy' in a narrow manner has affected its influence. The human being naturally believes; so in his distress, he seeks all sorts of remedies to get over his intellectual isolation. Some go

into the orthodox camp of fundamentalism, like that of Karl Barth. Some others, who are not totally sceptical about the powers of reason, walk into the fold of neo-scholasticism, as represented in the philosophies of Jacques Maritain and Etienne Gilson. Yet others take to logical positivism or existentialism.

The contemporary man's plight is best described by W. B. Yeats:

'Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold.
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.
The ceremony of innocence is drowned.
The best lack all conviction; the worst are
full of passionate intensity.'

Philosophy in the West, specially in the hands of the positivists and the school of analysis, is completely divorced from life. It is in this connection that the Indian concept of philosophy is more integral, for it discharges both its functions, the logical and the human. It satisfies the demands of the intellect and also the irrepressible aspirations of man. It gives lead and guidance to man in the art of life. It promotes man's happiness. It does not identify the best in man with merely the logical element in him. Nor does it minimize its glory and greatness. Indian philosophy takes an adequate view of man and plumbs the nature of man and his destiny. The German poet Goethe has summed up the nature of man in two significant aphorisms: 'Man persists in his belief that the incomprehensible is comprehensible; otherwise, he would cease to explore.' 'Man also knows that the highest happiness of a rational being is to have explored what is explorable and quietly to revere what is inexplorable.'

Human nature is not simple, nor is man a mere complicated machine. He shares a good deal of his nature with the rest of creation, but still he rises above it. The rank, unbending materialist analyses man into a few pounds of carbon, a few quarts of water, some lime, a little phosphorus and sulphur, a pinch of iron and silicon, a handful of mixed salts, all scattered and recombined.

The naturalist asserts that nature has not con-

structed man out of any special material or elements which have not gone again and again into the composition of those less exalted creatures called animals. Man is acclaimed as a product of evolution, not born faultless and finished, but ground into shape by the shocks of circumstances in the process of time.

But with all these limitations, even the biologists acclaim that man is the finest fruit of evolution. Julian Huxley describes man as the trustee of the evolutionary process and writes movingly about the uniqueness of man. Sophocles exclaimed: 'Wonders are many, but there is no wonder wilder than man.' The uniqueness of man no doubt consists in his power of reasoning, the faculty of imagination, the gift of speech, the capacity to dream, and the possession of free will to bring them into effect. He has also that wonderful power of self-correction. Man's self-consciousness enables him to stand aside and judge his thoughts and actions and condemn them if necessary.

Man looks before and after, pines for what is not, and is not content to live in the perpetual perishing present. He is the only creature who has not remained contented to be a mere creature. He has dared to be a creator. He alone can understand and invent conceptions like infinity, eternity, and immortality, as well as the square root of minus one. He alone lies awake in the dark and weeps for his sins and expresses regret. He alone can rise above the pressure of circumstances, the sway of impulses, the pull of temptations, and the terrible odds of life, by the power of his personality and using the crystal cabinet of his mind. He propounds mathematical theorems in beleaguered cities, composes metaphysical arguments in condemned cells, and cuts jokes on the cross.

The uniqueness of man consists, in the words of Śaṅkara, in his competence for knowledge and moral responsibility. The great French savant Malraux writes: 'The greatest mystery is not that we have been flung at random between the profusion of the earth and the galaxy of the stars, but that, in this prison, we can fashion images of ourselves sufficiently powerful to deny

our own nothingness.' Man is not bound by the space-time frame in which he lives. He does not merely think in terms of his limitations. He has a sense of values that is eternal.

The predicament of man is brought out well in modern literature. The man of today has to face death, with the feeling that there is nothing beyond it. This unnerves him. The phenomena of change and decay and the fact that everything is subject to time cause man to despair. Life is haunted by death, beauty by decay, strength by weakness; nothing abides and everything passes. The terrific fear of death and the consequent feeling of loneliness frighten the individual out of his wits. He asks: 'Is death the end of man?' 'Has man any other destiny than physical death?' Man's self-conscious reason teases him out of his happiness. The uncertainty of life conflicts with his instinct of self-preservation. This produces a profound unrest, a radical insecurity, and an exciting fear. All this results in a devastating experience.

Philosophy, Plato declared, is a meditation on death. The Indian conception of philosophy seeks to meet the urgent need of man to find the meaning of life in the midst of death. Philosophy does not merely sharpen the powers of one's intellect, but also sustains one and delivers one from death. Philosophy, for the Hindu thinkers, is what matters most. Death has no importance. The concept of *mokṣa* is the aim of philosophy. This unique concept integrates the view of philosophy and bridges the gulf between philosophy and life. *Mokṣa* is the master-word in Indian philosophy. *Mokṣa* is the greatest single aspiration of man. The aspiration is to experience a level of consciousness that is beyond the pale of time and space, change and sorrow, etc. The concept of *mokṣa* is the chief among the fourfold aspirations of man. Possessions and passions are only empirical values. They are instrumental in the art of human life to achieve the goal. Without passions, instinctive drives, emotions, and sentiments, there is no life. They form the physical basis of life. These two values are regulated by *dharma*.

Dharma is a regulative value. It regulates our activities towards the attainment of *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the orienting value for all other values. It is an end in itself. It is an intrinsic value. *Mokṣa* is deliverance from the fear of death. It puts an end to all types and shades of sorrows. It is a challenge to death. *Dharma* organizes our passions and possessions, orienting it towards *mokṣa*. *Mokṣa* is the unifying concept that makes us feel comforted that death is not our final extinction. The agnostic note and the sceptical questioning, arising from a conception of philosophy as a pure rational activity, are quelled by the pragmatic concept of Indian philosophy.

When I describe Indian philosophy as pragmatic, it is not the same as William James's view 'that truth is measured in terms of the practical'. Indian philosophy asserts that truth is the only sound guide for practice.

The science of philosophy is looked upon as the pursuit of that wisdom which saves us from all the ills of life. Wisdom is knowledge in action. The concept of *mokṣa* implies the faith in a state of existence which is beyond all limitations. It is a direct and an unmediated experience; it is not knowledge by description. It is knowledge by being. It is unconceptualized immediacy of vision. It is freedom from all types of conditional existence. It is the result of intuitive realization, which makes us shed all ignorance. It dispels all our doubts and overcomes all our tensions.

The Indian philosopher does not disparage reason, but seeks to assess its limitations. He is neither an abject flatterer of logic, nor is he its determined enemy. He is a critical and cautious admirer of reason. He submits reason to a thorough examination. He is of opinion that relational knowledge cannot give us immediate vision. He has further shown that reason can only work through the mechanism of relations. Besides, reason cannot prescribe the ends and goals of life. It is an instrument, and cannot work in a vacuum. Referring to the nature of man, Erasmus exclaimed: 'Look at Providence, He has confined reason to the cells

of the brain and allowed passion the whole body to range over.' Reason is no doubt the finest instrument in the hands of man. But it is neutral, and it can support any cause that seeks it. It does not have the capacity to know the ends of life; it does not judge the relative values of the different objects of life. Passionate men, full of lust, have used reason to propagate their causes. Hume described reason as the slave of passion.

The *Vedānta-Sūtra* has a significant aphorism disclosing the limitation of reason. Reasoning as a method is inconclusive. Śāṅkara comments as follows: 'Mere reasoning cannot be depended upon in matters which must be understood in the light of revelation. Reasoning rests on individual opinion. The arguments of some clever men are refuted by others. On account of the diversity of men's opinions, it is impossible to accept mere reasoning as a sure guide. Even men of outstanding intellectual eminence, such as Kapila, Kaṇāda, and others, seem to contradict one another.'

As against this, it may be contended that all reasoning is not unsound. Even this assumption is based on reasoning. However, it is possible for rationalists to argue that, if all reasoning is baseless, the whole course of our practical life in the world will come to an end. For men act on the assumption that, in the past, the present, and the future, nature is uniform. Besides, we also need reason to fix the correct meaning of a passage in the Vedas, when there is a conflict between different interpretations. We also use reasoning for detecting fallacies in others' arguments.

The author of the *Vedānta-Sūtra* and his commentators hold that the ultimate Reality is based on the authority of the scriptures, and reasoning is to be applied only in support of it. With regard to the conception of the transcendental category, the scriptures are the final authority. Reason is of no use, if it is not backed by the scriptures. This does not mean that Indian philosophy is authoritative and dogmatic. It is not the mere result of facile

intuition, nor is it true to say that it does not brook the spotlight of reason.

One has only to turn to the pages of any Indian philosophical classic, or any polemical treatise, to be regaled by the astounding feats of pure metaphysics, which baffle even the expert at times. The philosophical training is through the epistemological road. Every system has its own theory of knowledge and logic, through which it explains its categories. The Upaniṣad declares 'that philosophy is not for those that are intellectually indolent'. Reflection and inquiry are enjoined on all. The different problems of philosophy, namely, the nature of substance, the theories of relation, the dialectics of difference, the logic of identity, the concept of self-luminosity, etc., are discussed and developed with perfect freedom. There is no trace of intellectual cowardice in the arguments. Every philosophical system critically reviews the merits of rival systems and refutes the arguments levelled against it. In all these activities, logical reasoning plays a very important part. Through the ages, the Hindu habit of writing commentaries on commentaries has brought to light diverse implications of several philosophical arguments and their nuances.

The history of philosophy can be studied from different points of view. The systems of philosophy exhibit the reaction of powerful minds to the ultimate problems. The great minds of the philosophers have been influenced by the spirit of the age, the needs of the times, and the intellectual and the scientific findings of the age in which they formulated their systems. Some ambitious philosophers have seen, or want to see, the working of a universal world-philosophy in the different systems through the ages. Hegel writes: 'The different systems which the history of philosophy presents are not therefore irreconcilable with unity. We may either say that it is one philosophy at different degrees of maturity, or that the particular principle, which is the ground of each system, is but a branch of one and the same universe of thought' (Wallace, *Hegels' Logic*, p. 22). In India, such an attempt was made by Vijñāna Bhikṣu to reconcile the

several systems of Indian philosophy. Such an attitude elevates one system at the cost of the others.

The Indian tradition has another way of looking at the panorama of the philosophical systems as different standpoints adopted by men of differing temperaments and distinct points of view. The different systems articulate their integral picture of Reality from their own standpoints. Philosophy is essentially a conceptual formulation. No one formulation can claim the possession of the complete and exclusive right to represent Reality. To do so is dogmatic and unphilosophical. The love of truth restrains us from dogmatizing the view that we and our system alone possess the eternal wisdom and others are in absolute folly.

The great Symmachus in his controversy with St. Ambrose observes: 'The heart of so great a mystery cannot be even reached by following one road only.' Our sage-philosopher Whitehead declared: 'There are no whole truths, all truths are half truths. It is in trying to treat them as whole truths that plays the devil.' The different philosophical systems are ways of looking at things from different points of view. They are an eloquent commentary on the richness of Reality and the fact of the relativity of human conceptions. Reality is complex, and it is not impossible that each system represents one aspect and, at times, over-emphasizes it. This over-emphasis is what gives us an incomplete picture of Reality.

The severe intellectual discipline is not for all. Many attempt it, and a few only succeed. Its great fruit is clear thinking. We may call it the morality of thought. Philosophical wisdom is not merely the work of a sharp intellect that is indifferent to moral purity. The Hindu thinkers affirm that passions, desires, and longings distort man's capacity to think clearly, perceive correctly, or reason rightly. Morality is a factor that goes a great way towards clear and correct thinking. The *Kāṭha Upaniṣad* declares: 'Not he who has not desisted from evil ways, not he who is not tranquil, not he who has not a concentrated mind, not even he whose mind is

not composed can reach Brahman through right knowledge.' The *Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* affirms this: "That ultimate Reality is attainable by truth, by austerity, by right knowledge, by constant practice of chastity. The ascetics behold the truth with their imperfections done away with.' Philosophical thinking is considerably influenced by morality.

Contemporary Indian philosophers have not been hampered by an uncritical allegiance to what is taken as the Indian philosophical tradition or heritage. They have not taken refuge in it and avoided thinking. They have selected the eternal and perennial ideas from their tradition and have applied them to the exigencies of the new periods in history. They have not made tradition a prison-house for them to be lulled into quietude. They have constructed imposing systems of metaphysics which have

taken the conclusions of modern science into account. Some, like Sri Aurobindo, have made a discriminating use of tradition. He observes: 'There cannot be a healthy and victorious survival if we make of the past a fetish, instead of an inspiring impulse.'

In the survey I have made of the concept of philosophy, I find the term, as interpreted by the Hindu thinkers and sages, covers the required range, and does not make it a pure intellectual game without any effect on life. The nature and function of philosophy can comprehensively and collectively be described in the language of the *Upaniṣad*: 'Its nature is truth; it is the delight of life; its mind is bliss; and it abounds in peace.' Such a conception of philosophy influences life well, answers to man's needs, and helps him to grow to his best.

VEDĀNTA AND COEXISTENCE

BY SWAMI NIRGUNANANDA

In recent years, remarkable progress has been achieved by science and technology in every department of human knowledge. The tremendous power released by modern science has created both admiration and a deep sense of awe in the minds of the thinking people all over the world. In fact, it is science that has widened immensely man's circle of knowledge in the domain of nature. And man has become, as it were, the master of the three worlds—water, land, and space. Most of the old, crude theories and beliefs regarding life as well as the universe are being discarded in the light of modern science. Day by day, the world is passing through such rapid changes that it is becoming an increasingly difficult task for the backward nations to keep pace with the march of science. But nations have to accept the challenge of science willynilly, and rise to the

occasion. We cannot cut ourselves off from the current trend of the world and go back into the shell of out-moded theories and ideas, like an oyster. Isolation is not possible in this supersonic age. Moreover, the power of destruction of modern missiles should not be underestimated. Human genius, working in the field of nuclear research, has brought this tiny planet of ours almost to the brink of a precipice. Rightly observes C. E. M. Joad in his book *Decadence*: 'At the end of the corridor along which modern science advances, there sits a blind, deaf, and palsied cripple who, by the pressure of his finger upon a button, can destroy an army corps of hundreds of thousands of healthy men. . . . As distance contracts and the world becomes a whole, a conflict which breaks out anywhere tends to spread everywhere. . . . The power of modern weapons seems to be such

that no densely populated community can survive another war' (pp. 332, 385). So, all the problems that confront us today should be examined against this background of science and the present-day world situation.

PROBLEMS OF PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

Nowadays, in the international sphere, nations are endeavouring to establish peaceful relations among themselves on the basis of what has come to be known as the theory of peaceful coexistence. In the course of this article, we shall examine the problem of peaceful coexistence in the light of Vedānta and seek to find out an enduring basis for it.

Science and technology have undoubtedly complicated the problems of coexistence. But the root cause of these problems lies in the internal conflicts of man, which are fraught with greater dangers than science. Due to such conflicts, negative forces like distrust, fear, and hatred have polluted the mental horizon of many leaders of the world who are guiding the destinies of their respective nations. In the name of world peace, world community, and the like, nations are engaged in a dreadful race of arms. The two power blocs are trying overtly or covertly for supremacy and domination over others, which has resulted in a cold war or a war of nerves. Consequently, the tie of peaceful relation among different nations has suffered a serious set-back. But in the interest of the progress of humanity, the present tense and trying situation should not be allowed to continue any further. The choice before man now is either coexistence or co-destruction. There is no other alternative. Since no man wants his own extinction, he must be prepared and trained properly for creating ideal conditions for peaceful coexistence.

POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF COEXISTENCE

Of late, attempts have been made by nations to solve the problems of peaceful coexistence on the basis of political expediency. Today, we have what is called Panchashila or the five principles of peaceful coexistence. These prin-

ciples do not, however, solve the real problems of coexistence. They deal with only the superficial part of the human problem. They do not go deep into the core of man and awaken in him a genuine desire for peaceful coexistence. The motive behind the enunciation of these principles may be politically sound, but it cannot create the necessary conditions for solving the crucial problems that face mankind today. Without solving the root problems of mankind, peaceful coexistence or lasting world peace seems to be a far cry. We have seen that attempts based on purely socio-political principles cannot be successfully directed towards the total transformation of man's outlook. History tells us that an unregenerate mind does not sincerely respond to the lofty ideals of peaceful coexistence and universal brotherhood. Honesty, sincerity, and integrity of character are required for the fulfilment of these ideals. Scientific inventions or socio-political creeds are not capable of building up human life with such noble ideals. Because of this, in spite of the fact that science has made stupendous progress in several directions, humanity as a whole has not advanced a step further towards its much coveted goal of world peace.

MISUSE OF SCIENCE

There is no denying the fact that the wrong application of science has multiplied human misery and paved the way for many armed conflicts. It is also true that it is science which has conferred immense blessings on human life and society. The pursuit of science and technology has been instrumental in the ushering in of the present state of civilization. The contribution of science in mitigating human suffering is by no means negligible. Fire can be utilized for cooking a sumptuous feast, or for burning the neighbour's house. The fault is not with fire. It is in the method of application of fire. Similarly, science is not to be blamed for its misuse. Unless wisdom born of spiritual insight guides the course of scientific progress, science will always constitute a major threat to lasting peace or friendly coexistence.

THE PROBLEMS OF HUMAN EXISTENCE

In order to attain that spiritual wisdom, mankind should pay more attention to a deeper study of man and his problems. Every man in this world wants peace and happiness. When there is peace and happiness in the life of every individual, then there is the possibility of establishing genuine peaceful coexistence among the different nations of the world. But at present, man has become, as it were, cut off from his natural heritage of peace and bliss. He is confronted, both inside and outside, with serious problems. When we analyse the problems of the modern age, we notice that two types of forces have made this world of ours a playground of chaos and conflict. The destructive forces of science, being coupled with the forces of the internal conflicts of man, have presented a very gloomy picture before us. But this situation cannot last for long, for the world should 'get out of its present mood of spiritual chaos, moral aimlessness, and intellectual vagrancy'.

Upon calm reflection, we come to know that the forces of destruction, internal as well as external, which threaten our very existence, have their source in human nature itself. Unless these forces are completely annihilated at their very source, and humanity moves forward with an unshaken faith towards the realization of some ennobling ideal, 'no United Nations plan of itself will bring peace in the world. An international meeting of understanding may be the road to peace; but peace itself is possible only by forces powerful enough and widespread enough among the sons of men to overpower the prejudices, resentments, hates, or differences of people' (A. E. Armstrong, *In the Last Analysis*, p. 95). Therefore, we have to seek the perennial source of a great power which can completely put an end to all the dark forces that rise within.

What is that powerful force which can strengthen the bond of healthy relations among nations, and thereby bring about peaceful coexistence among them, as well as lasting world

peace? Has man found any way to get out of this encircling gloom and attain supreme peace and happiness here and now?

VEDĀNTA AND THE SOLUTION OF MAN'S PROBLEMS

The two world wars have taught us that the ideals based on materialistic science or political and economic theories are incapable of meeting the challenge of the present-day world. For an effective solution of the problems of human existence, as well as of the problems of international friendly coexistence, we must turn to the universal principles of Vedānta.

The baneful influences of materialistic science and the perversion of human nature can be successfully counteracted by the theory and practice of Vedānta. Vedānta aims at the total transformation of man the brute into man the divine. It is the practical application of the spiritual principles of Vedānta that enables man to discover his true nature as well as the purpose of his existence. When he discovers it, he no longer gropes in the dark. He finds the way to real peace and happiness. Life becomes meaningful to him. To realize this ideal, Vedānta urges man to shift the centre of his emphasis from external matter to the indwelling spirit.

Matter and all its manifestations should be made to serve the ends of man as far as possible. Man is greater than machines, state, society, or any institution. These external aids are created by man, so that they may protect, like hedges, the growing human plant in its initial stage. But the plant must outgrow that stage and become a tree to find its fullest manifestation. Moreover, man is not merely a conglomeration of material atoms. He has a spirit within. Nay, he *is* the spirit itself. Vedānta proclaims this eternal truth of man and of his spirit. Machines cannot kill this spirit; neither scientific rationalism nor socio-political Utopianism can suppress this spirit in man for a long time.

At present, the world needs men who have strong faith in the power of the spirit. Faith in the spirit brings about an automatic trans-

formation of man. Truly says Dr. Radhakrishnan: 'Mankind is still in the making. Human life as we have it is only the raw material for human life as it might be. There is a hitherto undreamt of fullness, freedom, and happiness within reach of our species, if only we can pull ourselves together and go forward with a high purpose and fine resolve. What we require is not professions and programmes, but the power of the spirit in the hearts of men, a power which will help us to discipline our passions of greed and selfishness and organize the world which is at one with us in desire' (*Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, pp. 33-34). Therefore, at this critical juncture, the world needs a living faith in the power of the soul or spirit. The religion of Vedānta, which is the religion of the spirit, offers such a living faith.

THE SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES OF VEDĀNTA

We shall deal with five basic principles of Vedānta which, in addition to the five principles of peaceful coexistence on the political plane, can offer a sure remedy for the ills of the modern age. There are convincing reasons to believe that, when these Vedāntic principles are seriously studied, intellectually assimilated, and spiritually realized, they can work miracles and bring about the required change in the outlook of man.

Vedānta occupies a unique position in the field of religion. It is not a dogmatic religion. It can be practised by everyone, irrespective of race or religion, creed or community. The universal principles of Vedānta are in accord with the fundamental teachings of the great religions of the world. Moreover, the Vedāntic outlook is perfectly in tune with the temper of science. And, indeed, Vedānta can be called the scientific religion of the world.

Let us now turn to an elucidation of the five principles of Vedānta.

1. *Man Is Divine*

Vedānta declares that man is by nature divine. Peace, love, blessedness, and other divine qual-

ities are inherent in every man. Though mankind is divided into several segments because of the accidents of geography, history, race, and language, all men are essentially one because of this common heritage of divinity.

2. *The Goal of Man*

To fully manifest this latent divinity, either through the discipline of work or through any other means best suited to the temperament and aptitude of an individual, is the supreme goal of man. The main function of a state, or a society, or a religion should be to help man in the unfoldment of this divinity, by removing all obstacles in his way.

3. *The Microcosm and the Macrocosm*

The external world is moulded by our own thoughts and actions. It is nothing but an extension of our internal world. The more the internal conflicts of man get resolved through a gradual process of the unfoldment of his divinity, the more his personality becomes spiritually transformed and integrated. That is why Vedānta says that we should first achieve an enduring peaceful coexistence with our own inner lives by constantly strengthening constructive and unifying forces such as sincerity, honesty, love, and justice. Otherwise, disruptive forces will break our personality by creating internal tensions and conflicts. 'External events and their consequences', says Jawaharlal Nehru, 'affect us powerfully, and yet the greatest shocks come to our minds through inner fears and conflicts. While we advance on the external plane, as we must if we are to survive, we have also to win peace with ourselves and between ourselves and our environment' (*The Discovery of India*, p. 626).

Vedānta expects us to create such an atmosphere of peaceful relation, first internally and then externally, by cultivating a spiritual outlook. For this, we have to rehabilitate the *spiritual man* in the hierarchy of human values. When we recognize the common divine principle in all beings, and make earnest efforts to improve our life and society on that basis,

irrespective of all superficial differences, we can certainly develop the universal outlook of Vedānta. The practice of Vedānta starts with the individual, no doubt, but it should include the whole of creation in its all-embracing fold.

4. *Unity in Diversity*

Coexistence does not mean the existence of identical pattern of states side by side. Nor does it mean that a powerful nation allows weak or backward nations to exist by its side under its protecting arms. The attitude of merely tolerating the existence of other nations does not promote friendly relation among them. Such an approach to the ideal of coexistence is entirely negative.

Vedānta takes a very practical and positive view of things. It declares that unity in variety is the irrevocable plan of creation. Propounding this idea, Swami Vivekananda explains: 'Variety is the very soul of life. When it dies out entirely, creation will die. When this variation in thought is kept up, we must exist; and we need not quarrel because of that variety. Your way is very good for you, but not for me. My way is good for me, but not for you.' 'Everyone born into this world has a bent, a direction towards which he must go, through which he must live; and what is true of the individual is equally true of the race. Each race, similarly, has a peculiar bent; each race has a peculiar *raison d'être*; each race has a peculiar mission to fulfil in the life of the world.'

Thus, each nation should function in its own particular sphere, which is determined by its past history and traditions, and thereby contribute to the general growth of humanity. There need not and should not be any fight for supremacy and domination. In spite of variety in humanity, there is an underlying spiritual unity. When the vision of this wonderful unity dawns in the human heart, hatred, fear, and all other dark forces will be completely effaced, and man will become imbued with a genuine spirit of love and compassion. That will provide an enduring basis for lasting peace and good relationship among nations.

5. *The World Is a Moral Gymnasium*

Lastly, Vedānta makes another bold statement, when it declares that this world is a mixture of good and evil. It is perfectly balanced by these two forces. Good and evil, happiness and misery, construction and destruction, and all such dual phenomena follow each other in regular succession, like the hollow and the crest of waves on the ocean. As happiness and misery are inseparably connected, it is not possible to eradicate evil completely from the mechanism of the world. If we want to avoid the one, we have to avoid the other also. If we want to avoid death and misery in this world, we have to avoid life and happiness too. There is no escape. Therefore, perfection *par excellence* is not possible while wallowing in the mire of this world. It has to be sought after in the spirit of man, which transcends all dualities and contradictions, and which is identical with the universal Spirit. We should bear in mind that, behind this phenomenal world of diversity, there is the universal Spirit, which is infinite Existence, infinite Knowledge, and infinite Bliss. The entire creation is firmly rooted in this Spirit, which is one and universal.

It may be argued that, if life in this world is subject to the inexorable laws of good and evil, and if we cannot enjoy unalloyed happiness in this world, what is the utility of fellow-feeling or doing good to others? Love, compassion, and other ennobling virtues spring from the essential divine nature of man. Subjectively, man himself becomes peaceful and happy by possessing such virtues. Prompted by his divine nature, man cannot avoid helping others. Moreover, a philosophical and practical understanding of the contradictions of life takes away much of the baser tendencies of the human heart. Man then acquires the real perspective of life. To him, the world becomes a stage, where different actors play their respective parts for making their lives noble and spiritual. The world cannot be changed objectively. As long as we cannot go beyond the world of duality and directly experience the

spiritual essence of our being, we need this world to help us in the proper exercise of our faculties.

VEDĀNTA IS A SCIENTIFIC RELIGION

Vedānta, it must be said, is in tune with the scientific temper. It satisfies the aspirations of the modern mind. We find that most of the conclusions of Vedānta are wonderfully scientific. Science should have no quarrel with the religion of Vedānta. 'It seems to us,' says Swami Vivekananda, 'and to all who care to know, that the conclusions of modern science are the very conclusions of the Vedānta reached ages ago; only in modern science they are written in the language of matter.' An earnest Vedāntin, who wishes to penetrate into the mystery of existence, follows a scientific approach as far as human reason and intellect can help him. 'It is the scientific approach,' says Jawaharlal Nehru, 'the adventurous, yet critical temper of science, the search for truth and new knowledge, the refusal to accept anything without testing and trial, the capacity to change previous conclusions in the face of new evidence, the reliance on observed fact and not on preconceived theory, the hard discipline of mind—all this is necessary, not merely for the application of science, but for life itself and the solution of its many problems' (*The Discovery of India*, pp. 623-24).

Vedānta fulfils this demand of the scientific attitude. The laws of causation, generalization, and conservation of energy have been rationally explained in Vedānta. As such, the lofty teachings of Vedānta have proved to be of absorbing interest to many a well-known scientist. The religion of Vedānta is sure to appeal to every sincere scientific worker.

Vedānta can be practised by one and all. While practising it, one may remain a Hindu, or a Christian, or a Buddhist, or a Mohammedan. There is no harm in it. A true understanding of Vedānta frees man from all religious bigotry, narrowness, and prejudice. Thus the religion of Vedānta not only enlightens modern science, but also helps all earnest reli-

gious endeavour in its search after the ultimate Truth.

IDEAL CONDITIONS FOR PEACEFUL COEXISTENCE

When the principles of Vedānta become truly effective in the practical life of the people of the world, the kingdom of heaven will be established on this very earth. Swami Vivekananda, who was the greatest exponent of Vedānta in recent times, prophesied thus regarding the advent of such a golden age: 'I have seen some scientists who were equally practical, both as scientists and as spiritual men, and it is my great hope that, in course of time, the whole of humanity will be efficient in the same manner. When a kettle of water is coming to the boil, if you watch the phenomenon, you find, first, one bubble rising, and then another, and so on, until at last they all join and a tremendous commotion takes place. This world is very similar. Each individual is like a bubble, and the nations resemble many bubbles. Gradually, these nations are joining, and I am sure the day will come when separation will vanish, and that Oneness to which all are going will become manifest. A time must come when every man will be as intensely practical in the scientific world as in the spiritual, and then that Oneness, the harmony of Oneness, will pervade the whole world. The whole of mankind will become *jīvanmuktas*, free whilst living. We are all struggling towards that one end through our jealousies and hatreds, through our love and co-operation. A tremendous stream is flowing towards the ocean, carrying us all along with it; and though, like straws and scraps of paper, we may at times float aimlessly about, in the long run, we are sure to join the ocean of Life and Bliss.' That, indeed, is the ideal condition for peaceful coexistence among men and nations, which will be universal and everlasting. With deep conviction in our mind, with immense enthusiasm in our heart, and with unshakable faith in our spirit, let us march with unfaltering steps towards the realization of this supreme goal.

THE ENGLISH DISCIPLES OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA

BY SHARADA

'No one ever landed on English soil with more hatred in his heart for a race than I did for the English. . . . There is none among you here present who loves the English people more than I do now', said Swami Vivekananda in his reply to the Calcutta Address. His admiration for the English nation knew no bounds. In the same speech, he went on to say: 'The bold, brave, and steady Englishman. . . . That immense practicality, that immense vitality of the race, you do not see anywhere else. . . . They are a nation of heroes; they are the true Kṣatriyas. . . . Therefore, in my opinion, my work in England has been more satisfactory than anywhere else. I firmly believe that, if I should die tomorrow, the work in England would not die, but would go on expanding all the time.'

When Swami Vivekananda uttered these words, in fact, his work in England had not yet been established on a firm basis, compared with that of America. Neither had he a great following in England, as he had in America. But the few disciples that he had gathered in England were so true to him, and so sincere and steadfast in their devotion to him, that they actually inspired him to give such high compliments to the English nation.

The most famous of Swami Vivekananda's English disciples were Miss Margaret Noble, Captain and Mrs. Sevier, and Mr. J. J. Goodwin. The Swami himself considered these four as the 'fairest flowers' of his work in England. The names of Mr. E. T. Sturdy and Miss Henrietta Müller can also be mentioned in this connection. Though they did not become his disciples, they were his great admirers and friends. Especially during his first visit to England, the support of these two helped the Swami greatly.

Miss Margaret Noble, or Sister Nivedita as she came to be known later, was the foremost

of the English disciples of the Swami. Born of Irish parentage, and thoroughly English in her education and upbringing, Miss Noble was equipped with the best of the Western culture of the day when she came in contact with the Swami.

As a typical English woman, the first reactions of Miss Noble towards the Swami were very cold and conservative. After hearing him for the first time, she said: 'It was not new. . . . All these things had been said before.' But as days went on, the words of the Swami began to haunt her; they fascinated her so much that she went and listened to the Swami wherever he talked in London. Writing about the effect of the Swami's talks, she writes in her well-known book *The Master as I Saw Him*: 'It occurred to me that, though each separate dictum might find its echo or its fellow amongst things already heard or already thought, yet it had never before fallen to my lot to meet with a thinker who, in one short hour, had been able to express all that I had hitherto regarded as highest and best.'

One day, while talking with her, the Swami said: 'I have got certain plans for Indian women, and I know that you would be of great help in carrying them out.' Miss Noble at once understood that the call for which she had been waiting all her life had at last come. Though she understood it, she could not accept all his ideas and dedicate herself to his cause immediately. She, a woman of towering personality, had to pass through the most bitter days of trials, doubts, misunderstandings, and arguments, before she could call him 'Master' and accept his discipleship. Thus was transformed Miss Margaret Noble into Sister Nivedita, 'the Dedicated'.

The dedication was so complete and so thorough that, after she came over to India, she never mentioned, either in her talks or in her

writings, 'Indian people or Indian problems', but always used to say 'our people, our problems'—in fact, her love for this adopted country was unique. 'Of all the persons who truly loved India, Sister Nivedita was the foremost', says Abanindranath Tagore. Rabindranath Tagore says: 'Like Satī's love for her lord, Sister Nivedita's love for India was steadfast in single-minded devotion; she loved us in spite of our poverty, miseries, our failings and shortcomings.'

Sister Nivedita had to suffer greatly for the sake of this love of India. Poverty, loneliness, severe criticism from her own friends, all this she had to face. But nothing could shake her spirit of dedication. She was only too happy to sacrifice her whole life for this country; indeed, till the last moment of her life, the welfare of India was the one thought that occupied her mind.

The Sister Nivedita School at Calcutta, which stands today as the symbol of her service to Indian womanhood, is only one of the aspects of her many-sided service to India. She is, in fact, in no little way responsible for the cultural and spiritual awakening of India of the present century. It is no exaggeration to say that the greatest men of her time, not only of Bengal, but of the whole of India—whether a poet or a painter, a scholar or a scientist, a historian or a social worker—whose names shine today in the pages of contemporary history, were all indebted to this spiritual daughter of Rama-krishna-Vivekananda.

Captain J. H. Sevier and Mrs. Charlotte Elizabeth Sevier were a very devoted couple and earnest seekers of Truth. They had searched for spiritual solace in almost all the creeds that existed in Europe, and had also studied all their scriptures, but none had satisfied the yearnings of their souls. So, when they heard from a friend about Swami Vivekananda and his classes on Indian philosophy, they went with high expectations to listen to him. The Swami was then lecturing on *jñāna-yoga*. His thoughts were so profound and so penetrating that Captain Sevier doubted if it was actually possible

for one so young to conceive them in all sincerity.

After the lecture was over, seeing Miss J. Macleod, whom he knew very well, amidst the friends of the Swami, he went up to her and asked: 'You know this young man? Is he what he seems?' She briefly said: 'Yes.' Captain Sevier, at first, was a little taken aback, but soon came the decisive reply: 'In that case, one must follow him, and with him find God.'

He came home and asked Mrs. Sevier whether she would mind if he became a follower of the Swami. To his utter surprise, she, too, asked him the same question. Thus both of them had at the same time felt, when they heard the Swami, 'This is the man and this is the philosophy that we have been seeking in vain all through our life'.

The very first time they met the Swami in private, he addressed Mrs. Sevier as Mother, and asked her: 'Would you not like to come to India? I will give you my best realizations.' From that day, they looked upon the Swami not only as their *guru*, but also as their beloved son. When the Swami started for India, they also resolved to renounce the world; so, selling away all their possessions in England, they accompanied him to India.

On their way, when they were in Switzerland, the Alps roused in the Swami his deepest love of the Himalayas. It was the cherished desire of the Swami to establish a monastery in the heart of the Himalayas. He spoke about his plans so enthusiastically with Captain and Mrs. Sevier that it inspired them to devote themselves for the fulfilment of this plan.

Soon after their coming to India, the search for a suitable site in the Himalayas began. After diligent search, at last, the present site of the Mayavati Ashrama was found out, which satisfied them in every way. So they immediately made arrangements for its purchase, and on the 19th March 1899, the Advaita Ashrama was founded there, which has ever since been the home of *Prabuddha Bharata*.

Captain and Mrs. Sevier's joy knew no bounds, because, at last, they were able to fulfil

their master's desire. They began to work with the greatest enthusiasm to develop that centre. But hardly a year and a half later, Captain Sevier passed away. The Swami, who was then in Europe, had the premonition of Captain Sevier's death; so he suddenly returned to India and went to Mayavati to console Mrs. Sevier. In many of the letters which the Swami wrote during this time, we can find the deepest sorrow that he felt at the death of Captain Sevier, whom he considered a martyr to the cause.

Mrs. Sevier, of course, continued to stay at Mayavati. Bold heart! Soon, she had to face another great shock, the passing away of the Swami himself. But nothing could shake the heroic heart of Mrs. Sevier. Once, when a friend asked her how she could manage to stay at Mayavati, a remote and lonely place, she said: 'When I feel time heavy on me, I remember the Swami.' Even though she had to spend her last days in England, she continued to be a great source of inspiration and guidance to the workers of Mayavati till she breathed her last.

Mr. J. J. Goodwin met Swami Vivekananda for the first time in New York. At that time, the friends and admirers of the Swami were searching for a good stenographer to take down his lectures. All those who had till then been engaged had proved failures, as they could not keep pace with the speed of the Swami's speech. At last, they found Mr. J. J. Goodwin, who, being an expert stenographer, was very expensive. But the friends of the Swami did not like to lose even a single word of his. So they appointed Mr. Goodwin. Indeed, Mr. Goodwin proved a great success; he could take all the utterances of the Swami exactly and accurately.

After a week, when Mr. Goodwin was paid the salary, he refused to accept it. Those who had appointed him for the job were surprised. When he was asked the reason for his refusal, he said quietly: 'If Swami Vivekananda gives his life, the least I could do is to give my services.' A man of the world, Mr. Goodwin re-

nounced the worldly life the moment he came in contact with the Swami. In fact, a moral revolution took place in him, and he was a completely changed man.

He became a great devotee and an ardent disciple of the Swami, and even attended to his personal needs. He used to work day and night over the lectures of the Swami. Sometimes, he used to sit up the whole night and prepare the notes of the Swami's lectures, so that they could be published the very next day. The Swami loved Mr. Goodwin very dearly, and used to call him as 'my faithful Goodwin'.

Mr. Goodwin followed Swami Vivekananda wherever he went, and also came to India. He died of enteric fever on the 2nd June 1899, at Ootacamund. The Swami's sorrow at his death was almost inconsolable. He said: 'My right hand is gone. . . . My last public utterance is over.'

Swami Vivekananda wrote a consoling letter to Mr. Goodwin's mother, in which he says: 'The debt of gratitude I owe him can never be repaid, and those who think they have been helped by any thought of mine ought to know that almost every word of it was published through the untiring and most unselfish exertions of Mr. Goodwin. In him, I have lost a friend true as steel, a disciple of never-failing devotion, a worker who knew not what tiring was, and the world is less rich by one of those few who are born, as it were, to live only for others.'

Posterity should remember with the utmost gratefulness the name of Mr. J. J. Goodwin, for, if it were not for him, the world would have lost the precious volumes of the Swami's works. And how much poor the world would have been by that loss is, indeed, beyond one's imagination.

These English disciples of Swami Vivekananda should be remembered by each and every Indian, not only as martyrs to the cause of the Swami, but also as true lovers and faithful workers of India.

NOTES AND COMMENTS

TO OUR READERS

'Democracy and Individuality' is by Professor P. S. Naidu, M.A., of Vidya Bhawan Govindram Seksaria Teachers' College, Udaipur, Rajasthan. In his article, he emphasizes that the recognition of the dignity of man's personality and the supreme worth of the individual should form the basic principle of a true democracy. ...

'Some Aspects of Hinduism' is by Professor Sudhansu Bimal Mookherji, M.A., a frequent contributor to *Prabuddha Bharata*, who is now attached to the Department of Letters, Gadjah Mada State University, Jogjakarta, Indonesia. The article is a part of a chapter from Professor Mookherji's forthcoming book on Indian culture. ...

The article on 'The Concept of Philosophy in the East and the West' by Dr. P. Nagaraja Rao, M.A., D.Litt., of Karnatak College, Dharwar, Mysore State, is based on his presidential address given at the History of Philosophy Section of the Thirty-fifth Session of the Indian Philosophical Congress held at Waltair, Andhra Pradesh, in December 1960. ...

'Vedānta and Coexistence' is by Swami Nirgunananda, who is a member of the Ramakrishna Order. ...

'The English Disciples of Swami Vivekananda' is by Sharada, a monastic member of Sri Sarada Math, Dakshineswar, 24 Parganas, West Bengal.

PHILOSOPHICAL STUDIES IN INDIAN UNIVERSITIES

India is the land of religion and philosophy. From the dawn of her history, she has devoted herself to the pursuit of these two things with a passionate zeal, no less intense, if not more intense, than that which is noticeable among the Western nations in their pursuit of science, technology, and the conquest of outside nature.

Love of wisdom and knowledge and an unquenchable thirst for the higher things of life have been the distinguishing features of the Indian character. Not to speak of the men in the universities and educational institutions, even the most ordinary peasant, with no pretensions to higher learning, and carrying on the humble duties of his simple vocation, was keenly interested in matters religious and philosophical, and at times could throw valuable light on questions of abstruse philosophical nature. About the busy life in the universities, we can do no better than quoting the memorable words of Hiuen Tsang, the Chinese pilgrim. He says in his memoirs: 'In the establishment were some thousands of Brethren, all men of great ability and learning, several thousands being highly esteemed and famous; learning and discussing, they found the day too short; day and night they admonished each other, juniors and seniors mutually helping to perfection. ... If among them were any who did not talk of the mysteries of the Tripitaka, such persons, being ashamed, lived aloof.' He was speaking particularly of the Nālandā university, but it was equally true of many such institutions spread over the length and breadth of the country.

But the tremendous impact of modern science and its wild promises for the future have changed the outlook of the people in general. The age-old interest in religion and philosophy has waned, though not altogether disappeared, and other interests, quite foreign to her nature, are fast taking its place. Religion and philosophy are the very breath of life in India. She can give them up for the sake of something else only at her own peril. The Akhil Bharatiya Darshana Parishad has, indeed, done well in taking due note of this and drawing the attention of the public and the government in power to this sad state of affairs, so that immediate steps may be taken to set things right. A resolution, passed at its sixth annual session, held at Udaipur in October last, states:

'This session of the Akhil Bharatiya Darshana

Parishad notes with regret the deteriorating condition of philosophical studies in the field of Indian university education, as well as the lack of provisions for teaching this subject in several educational institutions in the country;

'This conference therefore requests the Central Government, the various State governments, as also the university and other authorities, that, in view of the vital place of the study of philosophy in the cultural life of any nation, and specially of this ancient land of ours famous for its philosophical pursuits,

'(1) adequate provisions for the teaching of philosophy should be made in each collegiate and university institution in the country, besides encouraging the study of logic at the level of secondary education; and that

'(2) in the competitive examinations for the administrative, judicial, and foreign services, there should be a compulsory paper on "General and Moral Philosophy" (with special reference to Indian thought).'

A statistical study of the students appearing for the B.A. and M.A. courses in fifteen Indian universities shows that only about five per cent of the total number have offered philosophy for the examination in 1960. It is really unfortunate that the number of students taking up philosophy should be diminishing, as has been pointed out by the Indian University Education Commission, headed by Dr. S. Radhakrishnan. The Commission, in its report, rightly says: 'Any course of education intended to prepare men and women for the business of living should include philosophical studies, which deal with conduct and the ends of life. . . . Our present condition is in part due to the failure of our education to cope with moral and spiritual uncertainties.' And it adds: 'There are many thinkers in Great Britain who advocate a compulsory study of philosophy even in the high school.'

The problem, however, is not so much a question of the government's taking some legislative measure to introduce philosophy as a compulsory subject for competitive examinations, as of reviving the genuine interest which

the people of India naturally felt for the subject in olden days. Herein is the crux of the problem: To make out of dry philosophy and intricate mythology and queer, startling psychology, a religion which shall be easy, simple, popular, and at the same time meet the requirements of the highest minds. The abstract Advaita must become living—poetic—in everyday life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering yogi-ism must come the most scientific and practical psychology—and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it (*The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. V, 1947, p. 80). Philosophy cannot attract young minds and the general public if it is only academic, with no practical bearing on life and its problems. In ancient India, unlike in the West, philosophy was an integral and inseparable part of one's life. It provided the necessary basis for one's way of life, in that it was a handmaid of religion. Unfortunately in modern times, philosophy as a subject of study has tended to be more and more divorced from life. The teachers and professors have to address themselves first and foremost to the task of bridging this gulf between the two and of finding ways and means to present philosophy in a lively and impressive way. To wean the students from the glamour and attraction of a materialistic civilization and from the lure of wealth and enjoyment and to make them interested in religion and philosophy is a stupendous task requiring inexhaustible patience, will, energy, and imagination on the part of the teachers and professors. The responsibility is, indeed, great, but it has to be discharged religiously if India is to rise once again to her pristine glory. Fortunately for her, there are men, even at the present moment, who are perfectly competent to shoulder that responsibility, men who are vastly learned and at the same time deeply religious, humble, and devoted, men who have achieved a happy synthesis of the old and the new in themselves, men for whom knowledge is no mere bread-winner. Therein is the hope for the future.

REVIEWS AND NOTICES

THE BALANCED LIFE : AN ESSAY IN ETHICS. BY HANS FREUND. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1959. Pages 186. Price \$ 4.50.*

What is the good life? How can it be attained? These are the two questions with which the volume under review is concerned. To answer them, the author analyses human desires into self-centred and world-centred, each being further subdivided into desires to act and desires to possess. The good life or balanced life should allow for the satisfaction of all these desires (Chapter 2). Such satisfaction is not easy of achievement, as there is conflict between desires; and unless this conflict is controlled and resolved, life will be wrecked (Chapters 3, 4, and 5). Leading philosophers have shown, in their moral theories, how control can be exercised. Three major theories—the hedonistic, the humanistic, and the Judaeo-Christian—are singled out for full discussion (Chapters 6, 7, and 8). The ethical thoughts of Epicurus, Bentham, and Mill are carefully analysed and shown to constitute a progressive scale of moral values. But there is no lofty, ideal goal presented to us in their scale. So Aristotelian ethics, with its ideal of individual perfection (Areté), is brought in. Arété of mind by intellectual education and Arété of conduct by the cultivation of good habits receive detailed treatment. The author, however, thinks that Aristotle's ethics is far too intellectually oriented to be within the reach of the ordinary person (p. 106). So he passes on to expound Christian ethics, and he is at his best here. Christian ethics is socially minded, but man's perfection is unattainable unless divine grace descends on him. Thus, Christian ethics is mystically (the reviewer would say, spiritually) oriented. It is democratic, too, in that the ideal is within the reach of all.

On the basis of these three great moral theories, the author attempts to evolve a scale of moral values and to determine the constituents of the balanced life (Chapters 9 and 10). For him, the good life depends primarily upon the realization of community, fellowship, and creativeness (p. 141). He concludes by giving suggestions for the proper education of the individual for attaining the balanced life, which, he believes, is beyond the reach of the present-day society.

Taken as a whole, the book makes very stimulating reading. It presents the age-old ethical problems in a fresh light, appealing to the mind of the modern youth. Still the reviewer must confess to a feeling of a slight disappointment. The spiritual orientation of moral values, and even basic moral concepts, is not

sufficiently emphasized. Morality without spirituality is utterly hollow and meaningless.

PROFESSOR P. S. NAIDU

MODERN MATERIALISM: A PHILOSOPHY OF ACTION. BY CHARLES S. SEELY. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1960. Pages 83. Price \$ 2.50.*

The book deals with various human problems of the present-day world and suggests boldly that materialism in its present form is the only panacea that can heal all the social, moral, and political diseases of modern life. In support of his contention, the author has remarked: 'Modern materialism is a philosophy of humanitarianism, of humanity, of man. It holds that thought and action should be concentrated mainly on efforts to aid humanity; that human welfare must be the chief concern of science and society' (p. 9).

To an Indian reader, a perusal of the book is likely to bring a different impression, because our feeling about materialism as a philosophy of human life is, however, different from that of the author. We find that modern materialism has moved away from the centre of human life to its outer circumference, and has lost its way back to the centre. It has simply shown how, by using science as a means, man can increase the creature comforts of life; so far as the true goal is concerned, it has kept man in complete darkness. Under the pressure of modern materialism, the true end of life has receded far from the vision of the present-day world.

The book has described the potentialities and achievements of modern materialism in a very exaggerated manner.

DR. ANIMA SEN GUPTA

CREATIVE EDUCATION. BY M. A. PAYNE. *Indian Agents: Chetana Ltd., 34 Rampart Row, Bombay-1. 1959. Pages 197. Price Rs. 12.*

All over the world, most children, who are naturally inquisitive, active, and happy, become dull and apathetic as they grow, because at home and in the school the adult members of the community impose on them attitudes and modes of behaviour which are thoroughly foreign to their natures. The smooth flow of life-energy gets trapped, as it were, in this process, resulting in the dwarfing of the personality of the individual, who then continues to function throughout his life on a low 'tone-scale'. How to restore to the individual the 'creativity' which is natural to him, by making available to him the plentiful reservoirs

of energy now cut off from him, is the question which this book sets out to answer.

Early in her career, the author became interested in children. Then she studied scientology from Dr. Ron. Hubbard. This gave her new insight into the subject, and later during the course of her work in India, she developed the 'processes' and 'games' that help children to 'look', 'feel', and 'know' in the real way. Quite obviously, the techniques of imparting 'creativity' can be successful only in the hands of a teacher whose own personality is integrated and who has found a joy and a meaning in his or her own life. That such a teacher is a rare commodity, particularly in the conditions obtaining in India, is a common experience. Miss Payne claims to have transformed such teachers, so to speak, in the course of a few days by subjecting them to the techniques developed by her.

The practising teacher and the parent will find the book interesting. The games and processes may prove useful in the hands of an understanding teacher. He will also find the instructions for preparing simple material for games quite helpful. The present reviewer is, however, unable to subscribe to the view that the techniques described in the book can by themselves affect the teacher's outlook in any material way. To train thousands of happy, satisfied, mentally alert, and professionally competent teachers for our primary schools is a task of great magnitude, which this country will have to face in a courageous and imaginative way. There can be no short cuts, and unless the methods of recruitment and training and conditions of service of teachers are changed radically, it is difficult to see how 'creative education' can take root in our schools.

A. H. HEMRAJANI

TALKS ON RELIGION. BY HERMON F. BELL. *Published by Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York-16. 1958. Pages 73. Price \$3.*

Today, all over, there is a crisis of faith. Man does not believe in God, nor in himself. The Frankenstein's monster of the atom bomb is challenging his very existence. He is in a dilemma. At this moment, *Talks on Religion* comes as the summer freshet to slake the parched lips of humanity and to revivify life. The author has rightly observed that all our troubles are sought outside of ourselves. Man should see the truth within and realize that 'honour and justice are more worthy, more fundamental, than might and power and force that may oppress whether exerted on a large or small scale'. Seeking the eternal life is the true purpose of humanity that will usher peace on earth and goodwill among men. In other words, man should turn to religion for his survival. But religion, the author warns us, is not in the ex-

ternals, exclusive and denominational. 'Religion is one, the life of God in the souls of all mankind.' Religion, like chemistry or art or music, is universal; and provincial or even nationalist art has no meaning except as part of a larger whole. Sect is a contradiction in terms. 'All history is the record of man's endeavour to find his true life, his life in God, and to progress from less to more and more knowledge.' The author wants us to look upon religion as we look upon science and art, to cultivate the same true spirit of objective enquiry, and to arrive at the truth at whatever cost. The 'Talks' are quite suggestive and stimulating. It looks as though so many passages have been lifted bodily from the Vedāntic literature and incorporated into the book.

A. V. RAMAN

SANSKRIT

PRABANDHA PARIJĀTAH. EDITED BY DR. VIRARAGHAVACHARYA. *Published by Samskrita Sangha, Samskrita College Lodge, Chamarajpet, Bangalore-2. 1960. Pages 140. Price Rs. 2.*

Our educational system has so far been looking to foreign lands for its inspiration and content; and the growing emphasis on science and technology is encouraging this trend. Day by day, we find that our educational institutions are turning out generations of students who are not having any of their mental and spiritual moorings in our thought and culture.

The present work in Sanskrit is a commendable venture in this context. The first four sections of the book take us through the Upaniṣads and the *Gītā* in an easy, flowing Sanskrit. They are a digest; and they succeed in stimulating one's mind and heart. The remaining six brief chapters are devoted to Saint Tyāgarāja, prayer, food, and other social problems.

The humanistic and spiritual values of life form the undercurrent of the entire book. While going through it, one is convinced that it should be taught compulsorily. But the attitude of the educationists to Sanskrit being well-known, one would wish for a free rendering of this highly valuable book into all our Indian languages.

DR. P. S. SAS TRI

BENGALI

JANANI SĀRADĀ DEVĪ. BY SWAMI NIRVEDANANDA. *Published by Sri Sarada Math, Dakshineswar, P.O. Ariyadaha, 24 Parganas, West Bengal. 1959. Pages 104. Price Re. 1.50 nP.*

On the occasion of the birth centenary of Sri Sarada Devi, the Holy Mother, a magnificent volume

entitled *Great Women of India* was published by Advaita Ashrama, Calcutta. This book contains an illuminating article on the life of Sri Sarada Devi, the spiritual consort of Sri Ramakrishna, from the scholarly pen of the late Swami Nirvedananda. The present book is a literal translation of that article into Bengali by Swami Viswasrayananda. The book portrays the various aspects of the life of the Holy Mother. Her simple, unostentatious, and spiritual life, which was moulded by Sri Ramakrishna, is bound to impress any devout reader of the book, who

will surely be elevated, at least for the time being, above the ordinary cares and anxieties of this mundane life.

The book also reflects the writer's deep love, devotion, and reverence for the Holy Mother. The translation, though ably done, is not quite up to the mark at places. The language could have been more lucid and expressive. However, this Bengali rendering will be welcomed by those who are not able to read the original monograph.

SWAMI NIRGUNANANDA

NEWS AND REPORTS

THE RAMAKRISHNA MISSION ASHRAMA CHERRAPUNJI

REPORT FOR 1955-1958

Ever since its inception in 1938, the Ashrama has been carrying on philanthropic, educational, religious, and cultural activities at Cherrapunji and in the nearby areas of the Khasi hills in Assam. The following are the details of the activities during the years under review.

The Ashrama at Cherrapunji: Regular *pūjā* and prayers at the Ashrama shrine, weekly religious classes, and the observance of the birthdays of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, and other great religious leaders are the main activities of the Ashrama on the cultural side.

The High School, Cherrapunji: The institution, originally started as a middle English school in 1931, was raised to the status of a full-fledged high school in 1938. Since 1948, it is affiliated to the Gauhati University. It is the only recognized and aided mixed high school in the whole of the Khasi hills outside Shillong, and attracts students from even beyond the borders of Khasi hills, such as Naga hills and Mizo hills. So far, 120 students have passed the matriculation examination from the institution. Weaving is taught as a vocational subject, and arrangements have been made for teaching tailoring and typewriting. The school has a fine library, containing nearly 5,000 books, and also a reading room. The school publishes a wall newspaper. There is a literary and debating society, managed by the students themselves. It organizes weekly meetings and occasional lectures by distinguished visitors. The students conduct a manuscript magazine. A music class was started in 1959. There is adequate arrangement for different kinds of sports. Total strength of the school in 1959: staff: 25 teachers; students: boys: 207; girls: 103.

The Students' Home, Cherrapunji: Prayer, study, work, and games form the daily routine of the boarders in the Home, which is attached to the

Ashrama. The boarders themselves do most of the work of the Home, such as cleaning the dormitories and helping in the kitchen and the shrine. There is an apiary section attached to the Home, where some students learn the art of bee-keeping. Special care is taken to develop in the students a universal religious outlook. Total number of students in the Home: 1955: 26; 1956: 55; 1957: 62; 1958: 82; 1959: 69.

The Sohbar Sub-centre: This sub-centre runs a middle English school, with a technical section, a primary school, and a students' home attached to it. In the technical section, weaving, basket-making, and tailoring are taught. Total number of students in 1959: middle school: boys: 11; girls: 4; primary school: boys: 42; girls: 42; students' home: 6.

The Shella Sub-centre: This sub-centre consists of an Ashrama with a shrine, a free reading room and library, a middle English school, and a primary school. The Ashrama conducts religious classes and celebrates important religious festivals, besides conducting daily *pūjā* and prayers at the shrine. Total number of students in 1959: middle school: boys: 14; girls: 3; primary school: boys: 34; girls: 22.

The Nongwar Sub-centre: This sub-centre runs a middle English school, with a nursery and primary section and a library and free reading room attached to it. Total number of students in 1959: middle school: boys: 33; girls: 31; primary school: boys: 29; girls: 40.

The Laitduh Sub-centre: This sub-centre runs a middle English school, a primary school, and a hostel. Total number of students in 1959: middle school: boys: 5; girls: 7; primary school: boys: 13; girls: 14.

The Wahkaliar Sub-centre: This sub-centre runs a middle English school, with a total strength of 10 students.

Nursery and Primary Schools: Besides the above institutions, the Cherrapunji Ashrama runs three more nursery and primary schools at Cherrapunji, Maraikaphon, and Pomsahmen.